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A STUDY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MISSION

IN THE TRANSVAAL FROM 1903 - 1960

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The writer would like to thank the Human Sciences Research Council for its grant which made this study possible and all those men, both black and white, who ministered God's Word in the Transvaal during the period under review and who made themselves and their papers available.

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The aim of this study is to present a picture of the circumstances and the manner in which the mission was undertaken. With this in mind reference has been made to individual men and their particular importance and also to the decisions of the Church Assembly as they affected Mission. In part, the thesis is fuller for the earlier years, for the writer holds that these were the most formative as they established the pattern. Furthermore the writer wishes to make clear that the Mission became the work of black men with the white Mission Secretary of the 1950's filling an administrative role. This does not mean he was unimportant but for the nature of this study and its desire to emphasis the role of the black man, the work of these individual administrators has been largely omitted.

In the concluding chapters the writer has shown the effects of political changes and African Nationalism on the Mission with a further chapter on the Mission's educational work.

Missionary endeavour and the Transvaal are not normally synonymous in the history of South Africa. Mission is more usually associated with work undertaken by European Missionary Societies in the Eastern Cape region of South Africa. The Transvaal interest developed with the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886 and the subsequent growth of the city of Johannesburg. The correlation between the two is strong for the first street of the infant metropolis was laid the same year. The age old attraction of the glittering metal soon saw the presence of a sizable foreign interest which brought wealth and a change in lifestyle for thousands of black and white South Africans. Previously these men had earned their living from the land, now they secured a higher wage and enjoyed greater material benefit through service on the mines. As early as 1888, just three years after the discovery of gold, forty-four mines were in operation on the Reef with a nominal capital of £6,800,000 and a gold output worth £1.300.000 per annum. (1) In 1890 the goldfields employed 100,000 men increasing to 325,000 by 1912 of which number 285,000 were Africans. The census figures for 1960, seventy-four years after the discovery of gold, put the resident Witwatersrand population at 1,665,000 which figure constituted one third of the total South African urban population thereby making the Witwatersrand the greatest single population centre in the country. (2)

Johannesburg rose like a giant mushroom where previously there had been open veld. All manner of men flocked to it some coming from as far as Britain, Australia, the United States, Germany and elsewhere in Europe.

"They included some of the human flotsam and jetsam that accumulated around all the great gold strikes of the nineteenth century, from California to Western Australia; a solid core of skilled artisans; a considerable number of engineers, lawyers, and other professional men; and entrepreneurs of all sorts and conditions, the most successful of whom dominated the great gold-mining corporations and became known as the 'magnates'." (3)

1. Ox.Hist of SA Vol II p14.
2. Leo Marquard, The Peoples and Policies of SA p41.
3. Ore. Hist of SA Vol II P309; 1911 80% of whites from outside of SA - from the UK 10%; Russia 9%, Germany 5%; Australia 3%.

They were not alone in their migration for South Africans, both black and white, made the pilgrimage in search of work and a steady wage. African men from the Transvaal, Natal, the Cape Province, the Basutoland mountains, the plains of Bechuanaland, Swaziland, Nyassaland and the Rhodesias together with the Afrikaners from all trekked in hope of a brighter future.

For the clergy Johannesburg was not an amazing statistic, neither was it primarily a symbol of industrial advance or an amorphous mass of humanity. Rather it represented an opportunity unique to the previous history of mission and evangelism in South Africa. In this instance not Native mission alone but also that directed at the European 'flotsam and jetsam' attracted to the goldmines. All the mainline churches saw these Europeans as rightful, if lapsed, members of their particular denomination. Consequently the churches were called to find men to minister to both black and white miners; a demand which placed a considerable burden on the church for mission to one of these groups would have been telling enough in itself. Work of this magnitude and potential could not be allowed to go unanswered and besides it offered an opportunity to place all one's eggs in one basket. How much more convenient to serve three or four congregations with healthy membership in one place than three or four congregations of varying size in three or four places. The logic of this city concentration is clearly evident and while the denomination could never relinquish its responsibility elsewhere the attractions of city work were obvious.

The advantage of this scheme was even more relevant as regards African work. These people, unlike their white brethren, very rarely gathered together in units resembling a town. Consequently mission had continually to seek out the people in their respective kraals. The kraals were small and widely spread thereby making contact with more than those in the immediate vicinity difficult in the extreme. In practice this meant

that many went without any sort of missionary contact either because of the great distance, difficulty in getting there or more frequently ignorance as to their existence. If mission concentrated on the Reef, then they might well achieve the dream of a native agency reaching the kraals the itinerant missionary failed to cover. Johannesburg was not intended by the ruling authority to be the home of the Native people, hence, inevitably, they must find their way home after six or eighteen months on the mines; not the most ideal living conditions but nonetheless one which for the first time brought the people to the missionary rather than vice versa. For all that the work was made none the easier. From a statistical angle alone the huge increases in the Native urban population appeared formidable, having consequent repercussions upon the various Christian denominations and their attempts to meet the need. For instance a population of 285,000 working migrant men in 1912 could never be served by a single missionary. Rather this work with its increasing congregational load had to be served by an ecclesiastical structure of some complexity. But financial considerations together with the availability of white missionaries proved restrictive. Besides, European recruits, called to serve in African Missions were far more disposed toward service in a more romantic African setting. To them and to the majority of Europeans who rendered financial assistance Africa was synonymous with wild animals, untamed country and kraal, fireside evangelistic meetings. Such an impressionistic incentive to mission assistance proved a very real stumbling block. C.B. Hamilton wrote in 1904 :

"No-one who has visited Johannesburg, and seen the numbers of natives who throng its streets and crowd its mine compounds, can doubt for a moment the facilities which the Rand affords the missionary for evangelising the tribes of South Africa. But our Missionary Societies in Britain have not yet realised how great these



opportunities are. If they only did, many of our men and much of the financial support which are at present given for mission work in the native territories of South Africa would be more profitably diverted to Johannesburg. But then there is not the same glamour of romance about mission work in a huge centre of industry, as there is in the tribal home, and we know how much that appeals to the sympathetic community over the sea" (1)

The reluctance of foreign mission societies to become party to the Johannesburg mission was due in part to their fear that the city was yet another boom town, here today and gone tomorrow. For the outside world gold mining towns were a common phenomenon of the nineteenth century ; many had lasted only a few years. South Africa was to prove different for many of its mines were still viable eighty years after their discovery in 1886, a time period during which the city grew enormously. The South African situation was also different because the major incentive in the move toward the city was not only the discovery of gold but the multitude of factors which made farming an unviable proposition for many people. The number of push factors were not inconsiderable and happily for most the discovery of gold and the accompanying wealth rescued an otherwise desperate situation. Had it not been for the possibility of work on the mines very little would have been gained from leaving the land, as beside the mines, South Africa offered no other place of employment and could have promised little more than abject poverty.

Amongst the forces pushing men from the land was the population pressure begun with the closing of the frontier. Linked to this was the process of subdivision inherent in Roman-Dutch law. Many a farmer was to write in his will that 'Geen nakomeling van my moet ooit nodig hê om te severwe nie ; elkeen moet sy eie sitplekkie behou'(2). Malherbe cites a case of a Transvaal farm where as a result of subdivision a hundred poor whites were produced in three generations.

1. Mission Work on the Rand. PC Feb. 1904 p193
2. Albertyn : My Eie Boeresitplekkie p 35

The inheritance of some was less than one thousandth of a farm; (3) hardly sufficient for the production of a viable crop. Furthermore the farms of the interior produced food largely for their own consumption as they lacked the incentive of a foreign market. Their unhappy lot was further aggravated by the introduction of the railways as this allowed for the importing of foreign foodstuffs at competitive prices. These considerations were not the farmers' only problem. De KIEWIET reports that between 1882-1925 South Africa, on average, experienced a severe drought every six years. Whilst throughout the 1890's farmers were confronted by a severe plague of rinderpest which made profitable farming almost impossible. Added to these natural phenomena was the devastation of the Anglo-Boer war. The British policy of laying waste farms had resulted in large numbers of destitute families. At the Peace of Vereeniging, 1902, De Kiewiet says ; 'Not less than ten thousand individuals had been torn loose from the land which was their way of life and the pillar of their self-respect.' (4) Hence the attraction to the golden city and work according to a secure fixed rate of pay became all the more alluring to those whose livelihood was governed by such uncertainty.

The push factors mentioned above affected the Blacks no less than the Whites. The Black was subject also to additional pressure in the form of land legislation. The immediate effect of the Land Act of 1913 upon the Black was to uproot hundreds of these tenants/bywoners from white-owned farms and to send them wandering round the roads of the country seeking a new place to live. Hardest hit were the Black bywoners who had spent much of their lives farming land under the half-share system. From this position of relative wealth and independence they were called, all over the country, before their landlords and faced with the alternative of either becoming servants and, in many

3. Ox. Hist of SA Vol II Pl26

4. ibid pl29

cases, of handing over their stock, or of leaving the farm. Many chose the latter option under the misapprehension that work according to the old system could still be obtained on other farms. For many, this road led nowhere and with their stock either dead or sold for a song, they made their way to the towns.

"The next three decades were to see the almost total elimination of that class of rural African who, in the words of Sol Plaatje's policeman, had once been 'fairly comfortable, if not rich and (who) enjoyed the possession of their stock, living in many instances just like Dutchmen'". (1)

This denial of basic human rights although still totally deplorable is better understood in the light of the Native Affairs Commission's Report of 1903-5. This report was responsible for the fear entertained by many in the Transvaal that the Natives were buying up huge tracts of land as farms. Land which the boer had been hard pressed to win now seemed in danger of passing into the hands of the highest bidder. In reality the situation was far different from the popularly expressed fears but nonetheless the prospect of a mixed rural population remained unacceptable if the 'absolutely necessary social and political distinctions' were to be preserved.

The prejudice which led to the demise of the African bywoner was not absent in the urban setting and is an integral part of the history of Johannesburg, having besides, an influence on the course of Christian Mission both within the city and the more distant rural areas. Racism of one kind or another is not confined simply to questions of colour but also to those of nationality and it is these considerations which make any study of South Africa and a microcosm of that macrocosm complex. Thus at the outset it is best if these problems are alluded to for whether directly or indirectly they have a bearing on the course and development of mission. Perhaps it is enough to note a speech delivered in 1938 by Dr D.F. Malan. Its value lies in what it so clearly expresses and that is, that with the growth of Johannesburg, the wealth of the mines and the emergence of industrial townships, conflict<sup>of</sup> white with Blacks increased thanks to the new frontier which had arisen.

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"The battle with weapons is over. That was the 'Voortrekkers'. But one, even more violent, more deadly than this is being decided now. The battle-field has shifted. Your Blood River is not there. Your Blood River lies in the town .... at that new Blood River of our people white and non-white meet each other in much closer contact and in a much tighter wrestling-hold than one hundred years ago .... Where he must stand in the breach for his people, the Afrikaner of the new Great Trek meets the non-white at his Blood River, half armed or often completely unarmed, without a barricade, without a river between them, defenceless in the open plains of economic competition." (1)

This underlying fear for survival was to dominate the politics of the country. Sadly the romance of die swart gevaar was all too real for many white South Africans and with the help of the ballot box they took up Dr Malan's challenge. Political considerations were to prove a continuous obstacle to mission in the Transvaal and to the daily life of the native peoples. Between 1951 and 1962 for instance an average of 339,255 Africans were convicted a year under various pass law offences. (2).

In March 1941 the Minister of Native Affairs, Colonel Deneys Reitz, condemned the pass law, which he said, had resulted in the conviction of 273,790 Africans in the Transvaal alone in 1939 1940 and 1941. Such a state of affairs was undoubtedly very trying and became the centre of feelings of bitter resentment amongst the Native people. For the missionary social injustice and its accompanying poverty were to prove a continuous headache as not only did these call for solutions in themselves but the Gospel had continually to be made relevant to the particular situation. Nonetheless it would be wrong to see these as the major considerations. What was far worse was the effect of the city itself. It must be remembered that for the most part, those who came to Johannesburg were totally unaccustomed to the bottled pleasures of the West.

The Rev. B.J. Ross highlighted the real problem when he wrote:

"In no city of the empire is there, for its size, a greater gathering of adventurers, male and female, from all the civilised races under the sun. The young savage, cut off from all that has guided and controlled him, with plenty of money in hand, unlimited supplies of brandy to be had, full, as few Europeans ever are, of animal life, power and passions, turned



loose in such a city, almost inevitably fall prey to those adventurers. When they have educated him he is educated in crimes and vices unknown in his own territories, and even worse than this, he is cut off once and for all from the real religion and morality of his fathers." (3)

The nature of the problem caused a German missionary to see the only solution as the removal from his congregational register of all who went to work in town. He wrote :

"When numbers of my congregation go to Johannesburg I cut their names off the Communion Roll, and replace them when they come home and give full proof that they have not lapsed." (4)

The Rev. R.J. Ross was of a similar mind arguing that mission should be limited to the rural areas. For him the idea of a city mission was complete folly for he believed the Africans, once within Johannesburg, to be beyond solution. Far better to equip him before the journey than to try to do so once he had arrived. Such sentiment was, however, little more than a desire to see the African equipped with an 'industrial' mentality ; one which allowed him to survive the breakdown of his tribal life and its normal restraints. Undoubtedly a new morality, a new rule of life was needed within the confines of the city. Again and again, South African statesmen stated that if the natives were to come through this state of transition with safety, Christianity seemed a necessity. In view of this need and in response to Rev. Ross, C.B. Hamilton wrote :

"... and while missionaries on the Rand admit that it is easier and more satisfactory in several ways to carry on such work in the homes of these people, not one of them will support the contention that it is too late to begin to preach to the heathen when once they are on the mines. The result of their labours are a sufficient refutation of that unguarded assertion. As a matter of fact many of these heathens never heard the gospel until they came to the mines. .

No doubt, as Mr Ross suggests, it would be much better if the natives all became Christian before they went to Johannesburg, just as it would be much better to Christianize a section of our white population before it showed a tendency to drift into slum areas. But unfortunately the slums are there already, and growing at an alarming rate, and the mining industry

has been steadily expanding for a quarter of a century. If, as Mr Ross admits (5) practically every able-bodied young heathen male is again and again going through the furnace of temptation at our labour centres, and if, as he tells us further on, 'it is too late to begin to preach to the heathen savage when he is in the fire' what is to become of the 400,00 natives to whom he refers? Are they to be abandoned as hopelessly lost, and are missionaries in the native territories to confine their efforts to women and children?"(6)

The General Missionary Conference of South Africa, Commission IV addressed itself to this problem when it reported :

"In face of this grave situation in the compounds and town locations, it must be manifest that the Christian Church has no alternative but to concentrate and unfold its strength at these strategic positions.....

We know of no call so clamant as this in the whole of our mission field. It is not enough to say it is unfortunate that Christianity was not more generally established before the mineral exploitation of the country introduced such tremendously disturbing elements. We are called upon not to sit down and wring our hands but sanely and practically to recognize the critical character of the situation and address ourselves to cope with it". (7)

Finally, the study of the Transvaal mission is as much a study of the growth of Johannesburg as it is of the spread of Christianity amongst the Black people. The emergence of the city of Johannesburg heralded something new in the history of the land. It was the start of a move away from an agriculturally based society toward industrialisation. The Reef became a golden web into which were drawn all manner of men. Amidst the expansion of the city and its cosmopolitan populace the call to preach the Gospel of Christ assumed an increasingly important role. Those in need of salvation were not confined to one racial or national group but incorporated the full spectrum of Johannesburg society. The high incidence of drunkenness and hard living was a cause for great concern for it was not only harmful to those already so inclined but was a ready pitfall for those new to such practices. Christian action was made a great deal more difficult in a city whose social interaction so fearfully mirrored the ideological, racial and political conflicts of South Africa. Boer, Britain and African all

found themselves at odds one with the other. To such a community, the Church sought to bring the message of salvation.

1. D.F. Melan : Glo in U Volk p123-7
2. Ox Hist of SA Vol II P200
3. Rev. BJ Ross - The Tragedy of SA : PC Jan 1915 p5
4. Ibid p6
5. ibid p5
6. ibid p7
7. ibid p7
8. The Presbyterian Churchman was the official Magazine of the P.C.S.A.

### The First Years of Mission.

The early history of Johannesburg was dominated by a restive spirit associated with the transformation of its society because of rapid industrialisation. In consequence much of the early missionary activity ebbed and flowed with this development as an impulsive response to each new need; such certainly was the early history of the Presbyterian Church's Johannesburg Mission. Its origin lay not in any missionary society but in the Johannesburg Presbyterian white church's realisation of the need to evangelise the numerous black peoples resident in the city. This interest was not simply the spasmodic concern of individual congregations, but one which commanded a measure of uniformity because of supervision by the Transvaal Presbytery while at the same time being subject to the restriction incidental to the growth of the city and the church. Ultimately the Transvaal Presbytery was to find the strain of this missionary interest too great and as a consequence was unable to cope. The resources of the Presbytery were sufficient to cater for the white influx alone and then only if the mission work was allowed to lapse. In order to save the mission from neglect the Free Church of Scotland's Synod of Kaffaria, decided to take charge. Their interest in mission six hundred miles distant arose from the number of Xhosa men drawn to the mines for work. They felt it their duty and privilege to minister to these Xhosa men whether at home in the Transkei or at work on the Rand. To this end they inducted the Rev. E.T. Tsewu, a Lovedale graduate, to the Van Weilligh Street charge in July 1891, thus relieving the local Presbytery of its burden.

The Transvaal Presbytery took a decreasing interest in the mission after the transference of control. They came to regard it as the responsibility of the Synod of Kaffraria, and sadly, isolated themselves from the native congregation. Though official relations between the two Presbyteries tended towards separation this did not prevent individual members from bridging the gap. Members of the Bree Street congregation, for instance, expressed interest in the mission throughout this period and were only finally prevented from

continuing this practice by the outbreak of the Anglo Boer War. The laity were however isolated individuals who held no position of authority in either the Transvaal Presbytery or the Synod of Kaffaria, and consequently had little authority in the supervision of mission. The separation of the two Presbyteries had created a situation which could not be bridged by lay interaction. The laity were denied, through the separation, any effective power or means of communication with the Kaffrarian Synod and consequently were in no position to correct or report on shortcomings. For the Transvaal Presbytery the mission was best left in the hands of the Free Church representative. Though they were on the spot it was not their responsibility to supervise this work or to see to its proper function ; that belonged to the other official body six hundred miles distant which was : - - - - - to maintain a level of regular and reliable enough, on which to make accurate assessment of the work. Under these circumstances proper supervision became an impossibility ; it took crisis to goad the distant authority into action. The first such occasion concerned the Rev. E.T. Tsewu. He became embroiled in a controversy over the proper administration of the congregation's finances. This led to his removal in 1897 ; at the same time the congregation reverted from its status as a fully sanctioned charge to that of a district mission charge. Unhappily changes were often made without first hand experience and consequently numerous alterations were made to the structure of the mission. For instance the Synod became uncertain whether it was best to have a white or black man serve their interests in Johannesburg, or, for how long it should appointed a man to this charge. This indecisiveness prevented any one man or the Synod from taking positive, progressive action for the care of the Johannesburg community. This state of affairs was clearly unacceptable, so it was suggested that the Transvaal Presbytery being in closer contact with the field and the missionary, take over the care of the mission from the Synod of Kaffraria.



The Presbyterian Churchman of May 1903 commented :

"A strong feeling has sprung up not only amongst the members of the Transvaal Presbytery but also amongst the missionaries in Kaffraria, that it is high time this condition of affairs was rectified. Past experiences teach us that work here should be permanently in the charge of a European and not a Native missionary, and that mission should be handed over to the Transvaal Presbytery and not administered from Kaffraria."

Further it stated that the value of such co-operation was evident in the interaction between white and Black in the Methodist Church, this despite the experience of Ethiopionism. The time had come to face responsibilities and evangelise the multitude of natives who were neighbours. This call for action was realised the same year. The Rev. C.B. Hamilton of the United Free Church of Scotland was dispatched as an associate member to the Transvaal Presbytery of the PCSA, to take charge of the former Kaffrarian work and that of Mr and Mrs Shemeld in Pretoria. (1)

Understandably the initial response of the Transvaal mission congregation to the change in leadership was hostile, particularly as they had had no part in the decision. Hamilton found they resented his intrusion and saw it as a restrictive measure against themselves. Rather than submit to the newly imposed authority a number seceded. The loss of a whole Deacon's Court, three fourths of a Session, and half the total number of preachers did not create a very cheering condition in which to begin work. (2) The missionary faced the congregation in its depleted state, prayed earnestly for its revival and by the end of the year, membership had doubled as people returned to fellowship. New office bearers were appointed, and new preaching stations were opened and Hamilton reports : "a more devout and loyal spirit (took) possession of the congregation." (3)

The following facts and figures complement this picture of the early days. There were 8 preaching stations in March 1904: Boksburg, Germiston, Roodepoort, Doornkop, Krugersdorp, Randfontein, Johannesburg and the location beyond Fordsburg. During the year twenty members who had temporarily removed, returned. One hundred and twenty three were received by certificate and eighty seven disjoined. Thirty were received by baptism, and two candidates who had been baptised while infants were admitted as full members. Of this number sixteen were Basutos from the Transvaal, ten Xhosa from the Cape Colony, four Tshongoans and two Bechuanas. Membership stood at one hundred and seventy two. Money was given through the Church Door collections and the Sustention Fund at a rate in excess of £1 per head. In addition £32:9:7d was contributed for building purposes, making the total received £187:10:9d.

Statistics can be misleading as not only do they make the task seem a great deal easier but lead one to believe the mission more successful than it was. The first few months of Hamilton's stay were particularly trying as not only did he have an apparent failure on his hands but his work and that of other missionaries ran counter to the tide of popular opinion. The newspapers of the day carried articles and editorials the subject of which was the detrimental effect mission the missionary had on the native. That Hamilton stayed, indicates his strength of character, devotion to duty, faith and hope; qualities which proved to be essential prerequisites

1. Rev. W. Shemeld had worked amongst the Pretoria Zulus. In 1897 he applied to the Rev. James Gray to have his mission connected with the PCSA. This was not possible then and he continued for the next few years, until broken down in health he returned to America. The PCSA took over the work in 1903 using his Arcadia centre as a base, appointing a native evangelist at the same time to the charge.
2. PC March 1904 p12
3. ibid p12

if the missionary was to maintain any vision for the mission's future, such as caused him to write :

"..... the prospect, too, is encouraging. Two evangelists will soon be employed at the extremities of our district, and two new churches erected. Calls are reaching us to begin work at new centres, which only the lack of means and workers prevents us at present from responding to. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth labourers into His harvest."(1)

He wrote this even although he admitted in the same article that the work would not see the formation of a large, permanent, native church. Migratory labour could not produce permanence. The African who professed conversion and entered candidate classes, often moved from the area to new employment or back home before the conclusion of the classes. The spirit of the man comes through when he views this, not as a cause for despair, but rather as a marvellous opportunity for the spread of the Gospel. He saw the migratory labour as having great potential for producing evangelists who would spread the Gospel from Johannesburg to the remotest corners of the Transvaal. Hamilton was thus continually seeking to find the way ahead not simply out of his present difficulties, but also to ensure the growth and stability of the mission. His successes were not startling in relation to the huge numbers of natives passing through the mission field; but having said that, one has to concede that he did the best he could with the resources and time available. Ultimately, what was of importance, was not that huge numbers were brought to conversion but that the possibility of hearing, receiving and drawing strength from the Gospel was steadily maintained, no matter how small the outpost. The presence of the mission secured for migrants a home from home ; a place where they might strengthen and renew their faith. Thus in transferring

1. PC, March 1904 p12.



control to the Transvaal Presbytery, the Free Church missionaries had ensured the continued life of the Johannesburg mission, affording as it did, a refuge for Xhosa Christians and the possibility of evangelising other Johannesburg natives.

The appointment of the Rev.C.B. Hamilton was not the limit of the Transvaal concern. His presence did not relieve the church of its obligation to the native. The General Assembly hoped that each individual congregation would join in the effort by creating in their fellowship a Missionary society. (1) That such a response would be made by some rather than all the church realised, yet it was essential if any positive work were to be done. Mission, it was argued, represented not so much an official department of the Church, but demonstrated the concern of White Johannesburg for the multitudes of uneducated heathens and dislocated Blacks who found their way to the city. No longer could the White Johannesburg church think of itself in isolation : the presence and interaction of the two racial groups in daily life was such that a gospel which took no account of these conditions was inane and hypocritical.

An outlook with such catholic overtones owed much to the cosmopolitan nature of Johannesburg's unredeemed masses. For the Presbyterian Church there was a further reason besides. The union of the church in 1897 gave it a broader area of concern and allowed it to recognise the problems of Southern African life as a whole. Provincial attitudes were exposed and challenged in a united forum representing all shades of opinion. Unfortunately the union of 1897 was prevented from implementing a programme for Southern Africa because of the Anglo Boer War. The disruption was such that the General Assembly of 1899 which was to have met in Johannesburg failed to convene.

1. BB. Native Missions 1903. Report of Missions Committee  
BB ; 1906 Resolution 3.

The Church was prevented from taking any positive action during the three years of war in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. Not until the General Assembly of 1902 was the PCSA in a position to consider the possibilities of mission work in the Transvaal. Thus the war had not only prevented action on the part of the Church but had even prevented it from meeting.

The Church's concern with native mission immediately after the war was strange. The resumption of normal services affected by the war was an obvious priority and allied to it the extension of its work amongst the white community. The trauma of ministering to a post "civil" war society incorporated problems which might well have justified the absence of a native interest at so early a stage. This interest on the part of the church is therefore of paramount importance because it attests the vital significance of the Native in Southern African life and in particular of Johannesburg. In line with this thinking the General Assembly of 1903 appointed a committee to collect information and formulate a plan for mission in Southern Africa. In 1905 it was decided that each Presbytery should appoint a Mission Committee, the Convenor of which would be a member of the Assembly's Mission Committee. An executive of four members was selected from the AMC for ad hoc meetings during the year. Further, Assembly resolved that, whilst local mission should continue in the hands of the appropriate Presbytery, its (the Assembly's) Mission Committee would try to introduce uniformity of organisation and method in mission throughout the Church. Union within the Presbyterian tradition afforded the time and scope for reflection besides providing the means to implement any policy decision made by the church in council. Therefore, Union must receive its place as one of the contributing factors in the development of the Transvaal Mission.

Perfection is found in Christ alone and the Christian in order to live victoriously within the will of God must approach daily the throne of grace with a humble and contrite heart. Such men are rarely found and hence it is idyllic to seek them everywhere. Yet mission deals with man and God : hence this study examines the merits of a particular attempt to manifest the Kingdom of God and the degree to which the people concerned were able to live together under God.

The Presbyterian Church's attitude toward Native mission was thus stabilized. Besides a few initial difficulties with regard to its control and the provision of suitable staff, an air of permanence now existed, enhanced by a directed programme for expansion. The PCSA and more particularly the Transvaal Presbytery showed a determination previously lacking in its effort to create a mission for Black Johannesburgers. However the mission was not without its problems for it was, in essence, another "branch" of the PCSA in that it was directed to a particular section of the community defined on the basis of colour. Admittedly the majority of Africans were not resident in those areas served by white churches; thus integrated worship was difficult. To confine oneself to this type of consideration is to miss the point for no matter the type of difficulty to be surmounted, the church should have made provision for integrated worship taking a stand against those who criticised members of the clergy who made a positive attempt to preach the goodnews to both Black and white. Division at the level of religious service is only possible so long as it is contaminated by human preferences and prejudices. The common worship of God was the greatest single denominator in South Africa and should never have disagreed with the mission's direction, it was nonetheless faced with the inescapable pressures of South African life which frowned upon racial integration. Segregation was so universal that it affected the thinking of the Churchmen. For those not party to the popular belief, a church in separation, seemed the best means of ensuring the evangelisation of the Natives. They reasoned it was far better the mission be served by Black clergy than by none at all. What many in South Africa failed to realise was that Christian service only begins once one has risen from Golgotha. For many the price of dying to self proved too great a sacrifice and consequently they preferred to remain obedient to those laws of charity which convinced them of their righteousness without altering their lives in any disturbing fashion. Christian service stems from the acceptance of crucifixion and daily leads the Christian back to the cross.

The preceding two chapters have dealt with the early development of the city of Johannesburg and the Transvaal mission; a city of such material wealth and with so great a human concentration was for South Africa a new experience. It transformed the Transvaal from the poorest, most backward and administratively least competent of the four white territories into the hub of Southern African life. (1)

Johannesburg society came to mirror every mood and idea fashionable within the country. It represented every national and racial division to the point where they became cause for hatred. Johannesburg was dominated by ideologies founded on racial separation, racial superiority and racial persecution each in marked contrast to the brotherhood of believers preached by the Christian Church.

Since this study is concerned with Johannesburg as a secular and religious city, all material, political and physical interests are important to understand the ethos of its society. Yet secular influences are only part of our concern, for mission has also to do with man's response to religion. Belief in a creed removes the study beyond the realm of the secular into the world of religious mystery. A world not unconnected from the business of daily living yet real enough to demand an understanding at its level. The religious world is one in which the value placed upon individual and corporate life assumes far greater prominence. Its chief concern is not simply the study of man but man in relation to God, that mystical communion which is not always mundanely historical. The realisation of the kingdom has an earthly component in the existence of the Church. Its congregations represent the collective gathering of those whose life is devoted to the service and worship of God. Through its communion with God the Church represents the Kingdom of God more closely than other institutions, yet in an imperfect form. Hence the record of its decisions, its structures, restraints and ideas assume significance as a possible manifestation of the will of God. The nature of the Church's decision was important for it came in response to the church's prayer for guidance in the world. Thus the history of the Church might reveal in some measure the comment of God upon contemporary

1. Ox Hist Vol II p13.



society.

The following section is devoted to the history of the structures of mission. Examination is made of the missionaries' role, of the developing theory and practice of Native ministry and the participation of Black and White laity in mission. It is hoped by this study to show man in relation to both God and mankind and how this might demonstrate the will of God for South Africa. The study of mission organisation is the history of the interaction between its divine and human participants. The Church as part of the present realm is affected by every ideology; at the same time it is the earthly manifestation of a heavenly realm. The manner, in which it conducts its ministry, trains its ministers and the level of its lay interaction indicate the extent to which South African conditions and attitudes have affected its ministry and correspondingly the measure of conflict between these and the will of God. Moreover the present study might be divided in two : the response of the clergy and that of the laity. This division is important for in the first one meets theological reflection upon contemporary society in an effort to determine the direction of the Church; in the second, the history is removed from the world of Christian theory into that of daily practice as one examines the measure with which the Church has been successful in living out the Gospel.

#### Staffing from 1903 to 1936

Our first point studies the way in which the mission was staffed. The passage quoted earlier from the 1904 (1) Presbyterian Churchmen stressed emphatically that work in the Transvaal had shown the need for the care and direction of a white missionary. What is perhaps not so obvious is the "justificatory" nature of this passage. It sought to explain why a white man was needed. From this two points can be made (1) the church might have felt it more fitting to have the mission under Black control (2) that since the mission had been under Black control, the church was somehow embarrassed to have to inter-

vene racially. Hence the mission, far from being an extension of the Church in Johannesburg, was more accurately a church in itself. As such it was to become increasingly reliant upon its Black members for its continued existence, supplemented by the occasional White handout. The latter only helped highlight the measure of separation between the two. Capricious donations by Whites to the Native mission although materially valuable were nonetheless indicative of a feeling of "otherness". Such thinking saw the mission as a charity rather than as a member of the same communion. It was a feeling entertained by those who, by virtue of their race, might become benefactors of less fortunate brethren. Donations increasingly became the means whereby moneyed classes in a capitalistic society felt themselves to have done their duty toward humanity. Correspondingly the individualism of modern life allowed many to believe their duty done if their actions were not immediately responsible for the hardship of others. Ultimately a society governed by "keeping-one's-distance" led to even greater ignorance and lack of communication between the various nationalities, such that the Christian Church was hard pressed to maintain its universalism. This universal dimension became increasingly the responsibility of individual men whose perception of Christ's Kingdom gave them vision enough to transcend the petty dictates of human relations. They saw the furthest extent of the Gospel and, changed in themselves, sought to bring others to a similar change. Their life was lonely as the majority never shared in their discovery.

Most churches aware of the difference between the developments of mission in Johannesburg and that of previous rural activity were wise enough to dispatch experienced men to this new field. For the missionary the work was not an exciting adventure or a flight of romantic philanthropy but the serious concern of serious men. Experienced as they were they did not regard this new field of activity as just another extension of missionary endeavour. Rather it involved preaching the

Gospel to heathen people within a developing industrial setting. Hence the attendant problems were not only those normally associated with preaching Christ crucified but also problems associated with the birth and the growth of a large city. Men as experienced as the Rev. C.B. Hamilton could never enter glibly into this new work. He wrote :

"There is nothing of the so-called 'Romance' of Missions in such work as this, and little of the picturesque" (1)

The process of industrialization and urbanisation has never been pretty no matter the culture, the community, the time or the place ; to serve there calls primarily for a love of God. Those ministering in the rural setting had now to seek the proper welfare of the Native migrants to the Rand. For them mission meant more than a mere show of hands at the end of an evangelistic meeting. Their concern was not simply to be able to point to a time in the life of each Native when he received Christ but stemmed from a genuine concern for the daily welfare of these people. They wished less to be itinerant evangelists than pastors in God and so took a genuine interest in the particular problems and joys of their congregation. The Rand Mission can be seen then as a move by pastor and congregation to this centre of work, undertaken together so that each might afford the other strength in the trials ahead. For as much as the people needed the pastor, he, too, needed a hard core of fellow believers to sustain his strength.

In a very real sense the Rand Mission was the continuation of work already begun in the rural districts. Its advantage or disadvantage lay in being in more intimate contact with white South Africa. The chance for interaction across the racial barrier was heightened by the industrial interdependence of the races. For the missionary the city congregation offered an opportunity to come out of the cold.

1. PC Feb. 1914 p21.



For the first time the Native people were in a position to enjoy fellowship with Christians of another skin colour. Johannesburg offered the opportunity to dispense with the Mission and Settler church mentality that dominated the ecclesiastical policy of the country and afforded the gateway to a South African church. Such development was prevented by the vast numbers of Johannesburg Natives still in a heathen condition. The number of Christian men who first made their way to the mines was very small indeed and consequently the major task facing the church was the evangelisation of those still unconverted. Work of this nature was limited to the missionary <sup>(1)</sup> because of his knowledge of the Native language and culture. Initial cultural restrictions prevented any development toward integrated worship. Further any hopes for the immediate future were quelled by the system of migratory labour which meant that the numbers of heathen arriving in Johannesburg would not be substantially decreased for many years. In the face of these difficulties, the missionary's appointment, was the only light in the darkness, affording hope for the future.

Aware of the above limitations, the Rev. C.B. Hamilton isolated a second area of concern when he wrote :

"Besides, the Johannesburg native is not quite the simple, unsophisticated creature that public opinion in Britain believes him to be. He has a veneer of civilisation. Besides, he is earning regular wages which are more than ample for his immediate wants, gaining thereby for himself a feeling of independence, and with it a desire to act and think for himself in everything which does not concern his immediate relations with his master." (2)

1. "But we would venture to point out that it is a mistake to send inexperienced missionaries to the Rand. There is such a variety of language and dialect amongst the black population here that new missionaries have not the opportunities for the thorough acquisition of any which can be obtained in the native territories."

2. PC Feb. 1904 p194

In other words the natives' contact with Johannesburg and their introduction to Western Life was revolutionising their thinking. For those who made the trip to the mines or were resident in the city, many of the European practices had become second nature. The Christians amongst these were in a unique position for though they were neither heathen nor unused to European pleasantries they were barred from integrated fellowship. Hamilton and his contemporaries had thus to deal with this two headed problem. On the one hand they had to preach in a Native dialect to a primitive, heathen gathering and on the other to a community able easily to fellowship with their white brethren. This dilemma was all the more difficult as it questioned the place of the missionary. Such men could not restrict their work to the primitive and heathen natives yet their very existence sanctioned the separation of the races. Resignation was no solution as it would have left the Natives without a Minister or, more probably, only have encouraged the spread of sectarianism. Ultimately the missionary was the natives' only contact with the white church and it remained for the missionary to overcome the difficulties of integration through his effort in individual congregations. He had no other alternative for he could never resolve the South African dilemma by abandoning the Native peoples. Moreover the missionary was acutely aware of the changes which Johannesburg had wrought in South Africa. The future held the prospect of even greater industrial change together with a marked increase in population and its attendant racial conflict. The mission work undertaken in 1903 was a small beginning to work which continued to grow but was dependent upon the missionary for its proper function and direction. Thus once started the missionary became immersed in Johannesburg and its particular problems, difficulties which no responsible man could desert. This sense of duty was to become so strong in C.B. Hamilton that he and his mission, he and his people became one. The idea that mission owed its

origin to patronage finds no support here. It is one of the grave errors of modern times that the fervour of evangelism should be equated with a bad social conscience. The Christian Gospel carries a message so compelling that it demands to be proclaimed for all to hear. More than any other factor the abundant grace of Christ motivates sinful men into the service of mankind. Finally the missionary was not deterred by political considerations nor by his "church's" separation : the call of God burned bright in his heart. His service was not dependent on the merits of humanism but was commanded of his out of love for God. Hence his dilemma was how to serve God in a situation of acute conflict in which the right was far from obvious, and in which none of the choices available were unexceptionable.

After Hamilton's death in 1924, the Rev. S.S. Dornan wrote :

"The day after he died a native woman came to see Mrs Hamilton to offer to her the sympathy of herself and other members of the Women's Association. She was heartbroken and Mrs Hamilton had to try and comfort her herself. She said they'd get another missionary who would work for them as Mr Hamilton had done. Whereupon the woman exclaimed, "Well, we may get another missionary, but we'll never get one like Mr Hamilton, for although he was a white man, he had a black heart".

This moving tribute to a great missionary highlighted the degree to which the nature of the individual missionary mattered for the success of the mission.

The historical importance of the rapport established between the first missionaries and their congregations is not obvious. Since Christianity is an individual and corporate association under Christ the level of contact enjoyed between the pastor and his people is naturally considerable. The minister as shepherd is in intimate contact with both his individual members and the worshipping congregation. For the early

missionary the situation was a little different. The difference lay in his role as "superintendent", (1) which required him to attend to all congregations equally. In the first year of Hamilton's work the number of his congregations did not constitute a problem. Thanks to the relatively small membership he was able to visit each congregation personally, becoming acquainted with names, faces and particular problems. In time, and even before Hamilton's death in 1924, the situation was to change. The burden of administrative duties and the vast extent of the field prevented successive superintendents from enjoying the same rapport with the ordinary members of congregations.

To present the initial period of mission history as an ideal lost in the march of time would be a gross error. Admittedly the rapport enjoyed between Hamilton and his people was of tremendous value. What is not so obvious is the necessity of such happy relations for the success of mission. Unlike the later superintendents Hamilton took charge of a mission which had only two congregations, one in Johannesburg, the home of Christian miners with some prospect of new conversions, and the other in Pretoria, the home of government workers drawn from the rural districts of the city. This task meant in practice that he himself had to establish churches, centres of concern with adequate resources for Christian instruction wherever he saw fit. As the missionary appointed to the Transvaal, Hamilton was responsible for all the work and while the mission was confined to the respective Johannesburg and Pretoria congregations and any others established in 1903 he found he could cope. Consequently much of the activity depended upon his own programme for evangelism. His conscientious devotion to duty received the praise of the Presbyterian community who recognised his vital importance to the missionary cause. Praise for a job well done was mixed with relief that someone was attending to the natives. Hamilton's isolation was not the fault of the church. The leadership clearly recognised the need for work amongst the Native people but with the additional demands of other centres, lack of resources and workers, prevented them from adding to his staff. In fact



his appointment was in itself a sincere endeavour to give the mission proper attention. Prior to his coming there had been a period when the local congregations had seen to Native Mission. Under their care work had begun but was subject to the fluctuating fervour of individuals and individual congregations. Besides, the laity were highly susceptible to variations of public opinion which responded emotively to racial problems. In view of these considerations the church determined it was more satisfactory for a missionary to undertake the work, even if he had to do so alone. He at least could give all his attention, regularly and without bias to the Christian service of these people. Consequently the importance of this solitaryman for mission was tremendous. He became an embodiment of the mission activity; the 'Word' became flesh.

The missionaries' concern with the native peoples, as it had in the past, was to alienate them from the white community. (1) The Presbyterian Churchman spoke of Hamilton : "Who for love's sake, became a 'lonely creature in the world'". Hamilton's concern with native needs, his interest in their salvation and the Christian brotherhood he preached were popularly believed to be a threat to the white community, which protested in the press and congregation against such activity. Johannesburg with its concentrations of White and Black highlighted the tensions already magnified by its multi-racial accommodations. Hence the interest of the missionary appeared to many an intrusion associated with former frontier conflicts and thus unwanted in what many regarded as the economic frontier of South Africa. (2) His isolation extended a great deal further than the statistical solitude evident in the initial mission staffing. He was a Kafirboetie which alienated him from many of his own race ; lonely, because God called him to a task among the lowly ; sometimes ostracised because of such association.

1. PC October 1924 p110

2. Dr DF Malan Ox Hist Vol II p204

"He was so much in himself. His nature was so generous and understanding, his mind so alert to any situation, so easily addressed to an emergency, and his judgement always so sane and sure.... a man gentle but not soft; firm, but not rough supporting, encouraging, rebuking, as occasion demanded; following God's lead, neither running ahead nor lagging behind, but treading step by step in the tracks of His master."(1) Qualities like these are rarely found in a single individual and it is all the more significant that they should be deemed necessary in the missionary if he were to succeed.

We have stressed the place of the missionary because in these early stages Hamilton was largely responsible for the maintenance of the mission. He alone remained when all about seemed to be transitory. His congregation was made up largely of migrants, here today and gone tomorrow, allowing them just enough time to receive Christ and be baptized into the Church. The General Assembly of the White church was pleased with his undertaking and responded in its congregations' irregular attention to mission. For the missionary, the haphazard nature of his support, and his congregation, forced him to rely almost totally upon his own abilities, his own insights and his power to lead and direct the mission. By 1904, the extent of the work was beginning to make itself known : he had no less than eight congregations under his charge representing an area of ± 900 square miles, the organisation of which would prove difficult enough. Even if these eight congregations had been close together, they could not hope to be visited by the missionary each Sunday. The obvious solution was a system already in operation within the Wesleyan Mission, which made provision for a single white missionary responsible for the oversight of all native charges in town locations and along the Reef. Such supervision coupled with the notion of self-support inculcated amongst the Natives was believed to be

1. PC October 1924 p110.

the cause of the Wesleyan success. Faced by the pressure of work Hamilton had made his own arrangements in the latter half of 1903. He found that he was unable to cope without the help of the leaders of the various congregations. Consequently whenever he was unable to attend service these men assumed responsibility. Hamilton's use of lay help proved ultimately to be unsuccessful. As he himself summed up :

"The fault can hardly be said to rest with the missionary, who, with seven stations to look after and with the few native workers that assist him closely employed at other avocations six and sometimes seven days in the week, finds his energies taxed to the utmost." (1)

Hamilton saw the only solution was to have a number of native agents who could devote their entire time to visiting and evangelising in the compounds and locations. Presbytery therefore agreed in 1904 to appoint Hamilton as Superintendent with three native evangelists as helps. He appointed one evangelist each to the three most important centres of his work : Pretoria, Grootvlei in the Heidelberg district and Johannesburg. Even so, this arrangement excluded Bushbuck Ridge in the Northern Lydenburg district where there were already several large congregations. By 1908, five years after Hamilton's arrival the mission incorporated twelve separate stations served by the Superintendent and five evangelists. The magnitude of this development raised again the need for ordained black ministers. Two considerations were paramount : first, if the mission was to continue to grow it must be served by men who were able to administer the sacraments, as to rely only on the missionary for such service was far from satisfactory. Second, a programme of training for the ministry would ensure that those who filled leadership positions had been trained to the church's satisfaction. Consequently the General Assembly in 1908 resolved :

"...the course of training for European students for the Ministry of the Church being inapplicable to Native students, it appoint a representative committee... to prepare a course of study suitable for these students...." (2)

1. PC Feb.1904 p194

2. BB 1908 Overture re Training of Native Students

The Committee's report to Assembly in 1909 stated that in its investigation the Committee had concerned itself with the following four questions, (1) the supply of native students for the Ministry, (2) the possibilities of work for them (3) the method of their training, and (4) the curriculum of their study. The committee felt that (3) and (4) were entirely dependent on affirmative findings for (1) and (2). In replying to the questions three of the five missionaries on the committee answered that they had both suitable men for training, and places for them once they were trained. One missionary went further, arguing that as the church could only ever hope to raise funds to employ one or two at the most, white missionaries per Presbytery, the only solution lay in training Black men to fill the vacant charges. In view of the pressing need for men the committee stressed nonetheless that candidates for the Black Ministry should be selectively chosen. They thought that only men of well tested experience should be encouraged to go forward for ordination, drawn from the evangelist class or from the unsalaried church workers. Concerning points (3) and (4) no definite conclusion was reached, although Lovedale was suggested as a possible place of training with the curriculum best left in the hands of a further committee. In conclusion the report advised the church to examine the possibility of having two orders of ministry. Such an investigation was deemed necessary, the fear being expressed that the Church would be unable to meet its present responsibilities if ministry were limited to university trained men. Consequently it was proposed that the members needed to meet mission requirements be derived from a second, supplementary class of minister, who whilst unable to administer communion could nonetheless ensure that every congregation received spiritual instruction on Sunday. The report submitted in 1910 opposed the idea of two orders of ministry ; it chose instead the more traditional order evident in the mother church. As to a curriculum, the report suggested it was impracticable to have an Assembly Committee decide on a curriculum without consulting those who



would undertake the instruction. Lovedale posed a special problem in this regard, for if chosen, instruction would be in the hands of members of a Synod that had elected not to join the PCSA because it disapproved of the way the PCSA handled the affairs of Black members.

Plans for a Native Ministry received a serious setback in 1911 when the committee appointed to continue the investigation discovered no students academically qualified to train for the order of ordained ministry. Having made this startling discovery they saw no further point in pursuing the matter just then. Nevertheless the immediate absence of men suitable for training could not be allowed to prevent discussion as to the nature of their studies. Far better to continue with the discussion since suitable candidates would present themselves in the future, and for these the church needed to prepare. Hence the Blue Book of 1912 carried the following resolution :

"That the proposed Syllabus for Native Theological Students be referred to the Theological Training Committee for consideration and report; ..... "Whilst these concerns dominated the Committees of General Assembly the daily business of missionary endeavour continued and with it the pressure of new demands.

The senior evangelist, James Gqosho, was granted permission in May 1913 to dispense the sacraments as a help to the hard pressed Hamilton. In 1919 a similar honour was awarded evangelist Charles Mpulo in consequence of the otherwise

impossible task left the Superintendent. The vast gulf between the recommendations of the committees and what was necessary in practice is sharply highlighted in this brief report. The Superintendent was not in a position to await the final verdict of the Assembly. His mission was even now growing rapidly demanding additional workers chosen not because they had received approved training but because their past history proved their suitability. By 1919 the Transvaal Mission was served by two ordained men, Hamilton and the ordained evangelist Mpulo, together with a further staff of eight evangelists. Thus

although the church had been forced to grant men such as Mpulo authority to dispense the sacrament it had not moved to a position where such privilege was a part of an order. Rather it came to be regarded as a personal honour afforded only to the most senior and trusted evangelists, a dual order thus came into being under the pressures of black work.

The church had not forgotten its plans for an ordained Native ministry. The intervention of the First World War prevented its committees from arriving at a perfected formula without quelling the interest. The post-war depression caused the church between 1919 and 1922 to concern itself with matters related to the redirection and reconstruction of South Africa. In 1923 the cause was revived when the Orange River Prebytery brought an Overture, the result of which was the commissioning of the Rev. Hamilton and Dornan to prepare a course of study for native students. No report appeared in 1924, the year in which Hamilton died. This year did see however the payment of the Church's first instalment toward a hostel at Fort Hare. A final decision was once again delayed and the matter again came to light only in 1936. During the intervening years the church had not been inactive. Though her training had been for the evangelist class alone, it also extended to considering a "correspondence" course for potential candidates.

Although 1904 had changed the mission's organisation by introducing a system of superintendence, it was to be some time before this ideal could be realised. Basically it depended upon the existence of a strong force of workers, under the missionary superintendent to carry out the work the lone missionary had previously performed. The problems the church encountered in its endeavour to create this force of workers have been recorded above, at least until 1936. The fundamental difficulty lay in deciding on the nature of the service which these native men would render ; was order possible where so much flexibility was required? The Transvaal mission was clearly urban and the growing prominence of cities within

South African society made an ordinary ministry essential. If sacrament were to accompany the Word, then more ordained men were needed. This latter consideration won the day because the lack of sufficient ordained men meant that the ordained minister had time for little else than itinerant administration of the sacrament. By and large the Native evangelists, given charge of some area of the mission, were men of deep devotion whose appointment was only ratified thanks to the abundant evidence of their past trustworthiness. Their steadfast and humble service had been the cause for their elevation within the individual congregations and thus it was sensible that men who had already proved their worth amongst their own people should receive the official sanction of the church. Ultimately very little change was affected despite the numerous committees convened to resolve the issue of an acceptable black ministry ; the mission continued to function under Superintendent C.B. Hamilton and his staff of native evangelists.

Charles Hamilton found that despite his authoritarian elevation in 1904 the daily business of his service remained much the same. Far from being confined to a desk his real presence was still vital to the mission function. The work never passed completely into the hands of the Native helps. He was still as active preaching in the compounds, travelling for days to the rural churches and meeting with his town people as their father in God. His contact with the people was in no way diminished by the changes and despite the presence of his seven or eight evangelists the mission still hinged largely upon his ability to commune with the ordinary people.

His day to day concern for the people and its incessant demands upon his time called for more than the provision of Native evangelists. They were a help and controlled the future of the mission but for Hamilton his degree of contact with the people trapped him in an exhausting schedule. The church, aware of his "fatherly" role, saw the need to appoint

a second white missionary to the Transvaal. Only in this way could the idea of Superintendence develop and at the same time keep the much needed contact between the missionary and the people. As early as 1909 Assembly expressed the view that the work was too great for one white missionary even though Hamilton was assisted by thirty-eight native preachers and evangelists.(1) Unhappily the funds available for mission were insufficient for an additional missionary. Though overworked Hamilton understood the position and might well have managed on his own had he been allowed to control the growth of the work. As it was, development was not dependent upon the extent of his activity or even that undertaken by his evangelists. The real pressure arose through the activity of the laity in the business of evangelism. The migratory worker, having found Christ in Johannesburg, returned to communities scattered throughout the Transvaal. There he preached his new found faith and gathered together ten or twenty people for worship. Having started the work he appealed to the missionary, the man who had first converted him, to send an evangelist or come himself in order that the congregation might be nurtured in the church which had first given him life. Hamilton found it absolutely impossible to respond to all these demands and was forced to leave them in the charge of the migratory evangelists. Those "rural congregations" which continued to grow and expand to neighbouring kraals came to need more than the migratory evangelists could provide. Having proved their viability, Hamilton appointed either a migratory evangelist to the charge or added the congregation to the responsibilities of his nearest native helper. Consequently the extent of the church's influence was for ever stretching the available resources. Moreover these new charges were more often that not in rural districts and visits to them consumed valuable mission time in travelling to and fro from Johannesburg. Nonetheless if Hamilton was to supervise the mission properly such journeys had to be undertaken. Some took as long as three weeks to complete. Hence the mere geographical extent of the mission demanded a second missionary. Migratory labour had thus

(1) B.B. 1909 Native Mission's Report.



complicated the unenviable task of the missionary : the work among urban migratory labourers only allowed for six to eighteen months contact ; the sporadic seeding of new congregations by returning migrants took him further and further from his centre on the reef. Ideally the work needed one man for the central, or southern work, another for the northern, rural district.

For "the natives themselves the mission (was) a thing of vital importance. Shut off from the literature, the recreation and diversions of a higher civilisation ; shut up as they (were) to any debasing influences, .... religion became to many of them the only thing worth living for."(1). It transformed their poor uninteresting lives into an effort after the highest and noblest aspirations. For many their church became the centre of their lives. The congregation became for the migrant a home from home where he might fellowship with others and devote his energies toward an intuitive worship of God. This devotion, this religious interest, had some connections with the natural world to which he was used. It belonged to the realm of unseen powers, to the world of superstition and other-worldly authority. The manifestations of the Christian presence ; the Church building, the preacher, a bible, a bell, the taking of collections, clerical garb, assumed for the native great importance. They became physical manifestations of belonging to a heavenly, other-worldly realm and as such provision for these attendant, material manifestations became cause for concern. Their wages provided the means whereby they were able to ensure that all these manifestations were clearly evident. Hence they were greatly concerned to have a building set aside for worship and having secured one for themselves many congregants assisted others to build their own. The importance of a church bell became for many a pressing Christian concern, some congregants devoting their entire effort to this end. Some, having financed one bell, only found



direction once they began to collect for a second. It was almost as if this material interest, the evidence of physical properties were finally what convinced them of the Christian reality. As essentially spiritual or abstract faith was inconceivable to these primitive people and thus the worker returning home had often to create the material structures before he might once again feel secure. A faith in an incarnate Saviour and Lord brought the old outlook and the new together.

This preoccupation on the part of the Native was responsible for the view expressed in 1910 that the missions seemed destined to spread throughout the Transvaal, and is highlighted by a 1915 report which stated :

"The report dwells on the ever-expanding character of the work. In spite of any desire which the Superintendent may have to keep the sphere of operations within reasonable limits for the sake of greater efficiency, the movement of converts are continually spreading the influence further afield. While this is, of course, desirable and encouraging, it makes the task of thorough supervision increasingly difficult. This feature must be kept in mind and our Church should anticipate the need of assistance which may become an absolute necessity before long."(1)

The missionary in addition to seeking the will of God for the mission, meeting with and preaching to the people, guiding and correcting his evangelists, offering suggestions for improving the mission's ministry, was constantly detained by the consuming business of church building : endless letters and interviews with location and compound managers over proposed sites, purchasing of material, raising of finances and other matters tied to building operations. Within Johannesburg the problem was further complicated as the growth of the city often overran a church site or people moved from one area to another because of better job opportunities or in response to government legislation. Church buildings became too small or had to be relocated in another area of the city.

The time consuming business of the Johannesburg work caused Hamilton to write in 1922 :

"Owing to the growth of stations on the Rand (1)  
I am not able to give much time or attention to  
the district stations inside that area. I depend  
largely on ordained evangelists doing that work.

The Lydenburg district has had unfortunately to  
be left to a large extent to local preachers for  
the reasons mentioned. Even the ordained  
evangelists have their hands full, and like myself,  
are almost constantly travelling."(2)

By 1922 the need for an additional missionary had become a number one priority. Developments on the Far East Rand, and the prospect of that neighbourhood becoming the centre of mining and industry foretold the need of not one new missionary but two. The claims of the North; Pretoria, Lydenburg, Marico and Potgieter's Rust however had immediate priority. The headquarters for this Northern Superintendent, the 1922 Assembly suggested, should be Pretoria. This arrangement would then leave the Southern section the Rand, Potchefstroom, Heidelberg, Standerton and Wakkerstroom to Hamilton. The long sought after assistance came in 1924 when the Rev. S.S. Dornan was appointed to assume charge of the Northern District. He had barely done so when Hamilton died. The Rev. D.W.L. Mathieson who had recently completed his M.A. in Scotland accepted the position made vacant by Hamilton's death, stipulating that he would serve for an initial period of five years. The Superintendence fell to these two men, Dornan and Mathieson, who assumed responsibility respectively for the Southern and Northern Districts. At the end of the five year period Mathieson decided not to continue with the Transvaal work, and instead took up duties within the Bantu Presbyterian Church. The immediate problem of his departure was solved thanks to an investigation, first

1. Three new churches opened in that year alone. BB 1922 p111
2. BB 1922 p117

started in 1928, into the possibilities of buying a car. The reports received concluded that if he had the use of a motor car, the Transvaal Mission could be served by a single Superintendent. In the same year two ordained native assistants, Lediga and Jolobe were appointed to the mission in place of Mathieson. By 1934 the pressure of work was beginning to tell upon the Rev. Dornan and the Assembly report of that year carried suggestions that a colleague should be appointed to the Rev. Dornan, who would be able to undertake the long and exhausting journeys necessary to retain contact with all the mission's congregations. Dornan could thus superintend the work upon the Rand.

The Rev. R. Wilson was appointed as Missionary Superintendent of the East Rand in 1939, but he resigned the next year and his position was immediately filled by his son, the Rev. H. Wilson, part-time Superintendent to the mission on the East Rand. Beside these official appointments two sets of voluntary workers offered their services to the mission. In January 1936 Miss Carmichael joined the staff as a worker amongst women and young people and in 1937 Mr & Mrs Searle were appointed Honorary Workers in charge of the Western Townships. In 1940 the mission received additional staff in the persons of the Rev. M. Kumalo B.A. (Assistant Missionary at the Central Mission) and the Rev. J. Graham Young M.A., the latter undertaking work in the Alexandra Township as well as European Extension in the Northern suburbs. However the Second World War drew both the Revs. H. Wilson and J. Graham Young away on active service, and so considerably undermined the strength of the mission. The gap left by these men was filled by the Assembly's Mission Secretary who assumed superintendence of the Central and Eastern areas leaving Dornan responsible for the far-flung Northern District with Pretoria as its centre. The western area together with Orlando was left in the hands of Mr Searle.

The period from 1939 had thus seen a great deal of activity within the internal arrangements of the Transvaal mission. It had

not developed quite as suggested in 1934 as Dornan was left to supervise the Northern rural districts while Johannesburg and its surrounds were cared for by various individuals who assumed charge of one area of that work, sometimes together with European interests in the same vicinity. These interests have a parallel in the revival of discussions in 1936 for the creation of a uniform system for the training of native assistants. Before documenting that history we conclude the previous section with a further paragraph on the period to 1939.

The period 1903 to Dornan's death in July 1941 was one very largely controlled by the activity of the White missionary. By the time of Dornan's death this was beginning to fade as the Black assistants assumed charge of the congregational work. Nonetheless it is true to say that the importance of the missionary for the daily mission activity was throughout much of this period as important as that of particular native men.. It was really only from the 1930's with the appointment of increasing numbers of university qualified, ordained native men that Native leadership began to assume primary importance. Prior to the 1930's Black accomplishments had depended greatly upon the Whites who represented them. An instance of this is the manoeuvring of the Pietersburg B.P.C. congregation in the 1930's. In their concern to retain a standard VI class at the local school the congregation decided the best means of achieving this was to secede to a white church. They felt this would give them access to the power of White representation and ensure their success in retaining the standard VI class.(1)

Within the church, the missionary's racial classification allowed him the privilege of being received and granted the opportunity to expound his views on the Native and Mission. Both Hamilton and Auld had used their influence as Moderators of General Assembly to bring mission interests to the attention of the church and nation. The inclusion of missionaries within the General Assembly also helped to create a mission lobby.

1. P. Ramalibana, Pietersburg 1980.



Hamilton, for instance in 1912 called upon all missionaries to gather a day before Assembly proceeding in order to distinguish their collective needs and then decide on a united approach to the proceedings. Further their presence meant that Native men similarly employed in the future, would by virtue of their position, be drawn into the deliberative machinery of the church. The democratic government of the church was not confined within the Presbyterian tradition to a once-a-year church-in-council. Rather it was found throughout the church from congregational level upwards. The existence of Sessions, Boards of Management and Deacons' Courts gave the laity opportunity to participate in the decision making of their church or the local Presbytery. Native men from the start participated in discussion on matters relating to mission. The missionary, reliant upon occasional visits to each congregation, could never hope to keep his finger on the pulse of every congregation. Neither could this be obtained through the evangelists as they were themselves often as itinerant as the Superintendent. For this reason contact with church sessions was to prove invaluable as the elders of each congregation were intimately associated with the daily and spiritual life of the congregations.

The importance of these contacts is clear from the following :

"In none of our European congregations have we office-bearers who take their duties more seriously than do the Elders in the Native Church. Once a month the Session and Deacons' Court meet, the representatives from Pretoria, Boksburg, Roodepoort, Krugersdorp, and the other 'out-stations' coming in to take part in the meeting. The meetings usually last about four hours, and, under the guidance of the Missionary, who presides, the multitudinous details of administration and discipline and planning of new work are carefully dealt with. And the office bearers themselves receive a practical training in Church government such as will fit them to be leaders in the Native Church in Africa is ready to become a self-governing body."(1)



In addition to these regular meetings there were special meetings and meetings of commissions of Session which visited the outstations to deal with local matters. Besides these "council" meetings the Native preachers began in 1913 to meet three times a week for prayer, which in the view of the missionary only increased their incentive to work. By 1933 the Deacons' Court had become the indicator of Native need, as the Court of that year, devoted itself entirely to the problem of the depression and its effect upon the Native. The existence of these courts was important because they provided a structure for preserving collective memory and experience from the beginning, thereby filling a particularly important place in the history of the transient.

What the respective courts decided is not as important as that they afforded 'a practical training in Church government' for future Church leaders. The goal of a self-governed native church or participation in the General Assembly of the PCSA, possibilities exciting in themselves, were not as important as the opportunity for Native leaders to share in the decision making of the mission. They were able to come once a month to air their views, discuss their problems and seek new ways for more effective mission management. Thus the mission became so much more part of themselves. For those in rural areas the Courts offered the opportunity of seeing that they were not alone, but belonged to a body of like minded men. They were regular occasions where native men and their missionaries might meet together as an expression of Christian brotherhood and discuss the problems peculiar to the African Church. Such members were all the more important in view of the sparse number of paid evangelists serving the mission. For instance in 1914 there were thirty-two elders and deacons compared to the seven evangelists. In succeeding years the numbers of lay helpers was to top the hundred mark whilst the number of evangelists remained less than ten. Session and Deacons' Court meetings were thus vitally important as they gave lay helpers the opportunity to participate in church discussion ;

moreover lay help went a long way to ensure the mission's proper function.

Hence though one part of the discussion has dealt with changes and proposed changes in the provision of white and Black clergy another part has had to deal with what, so to speak, was manifesting itself on the streets. For much of the period between 1903-1936 the situation remained much as it always had been with the load shared between the missionary and a variety of Native helpers. From 1936 on, however, the situation began to change which will be the concern of the rest of the chapter.

#### Staffing from 1936 to 1960

On the 14th March 1936 the Rev. J.J.R. Jolobe, a strong advocate for the proper training of native men, wrote a letter to the Rev. F. Stakes, the Mission Convenor, expressing his concern over the use of Native evangelists.

"As a result I believe the Church will reap a harvest of reliable service (ordained ministers) which the Church can hardly expect following a policy of ordained evangelists. By this system we do not only create a sort of inefficient ministry but we will in course of time antagonise the entire Native membership against the Church, for while respecting an Evangelist as such, there is nothing a Native Presbyterian despises as much as an Evangelist who pretends - (1) they put it - to be a Minister. Further, this muffled complaint has a tendency to breed an ill feeling against European Authority, for they imagine you think any kind of man is good enough as a Minister for Natives. Please do not misunderstand me. Natives do not hate Native Ministers, as I heard it at one time given out. What they resent is placing of Evangelist over them as Ministers.

1. For services to be maintained by uneducated, or insufficiently educated persons reflected adversely on the community they served as being primitive while they themselves were brushed aside as unfit to share or lead in the general black advance.

As regards ordained Evangelists, from the above you will notice that in my scheme of things I have no place for them. I believe there ought not, in the Native Ministry, to be such a class of people except in very, very exceptional cases."

Jolobe was not the only one so concerned : the Assembly Mission Committee and the African Theological Training Committee deliberated over the issue through 1936 and 1937. They decided at the end of 1937 there would be two courses of study : one for Teacher-Evangelists and another for students for the Ministry. A course of study for both groups was presented together with an assessment of their job potential. A period of probation was prescribed at the conclusion of academic study : in the case of an evangelist, a four year trial period before he could be considered as a student for the Ministry and for the ministerial candidate one year before ordination. General Assembly, satisfied with the recommendations, passed the resolutions necessary to implement the training programme.

The changes aimed at replacing a peripatetic ministry with one that was truly pastoral. The strong forces disintegrating African family life demanded a counter in men who could minister pastorally. Moreover a ministry based on itinerant visiting did not lay on the Minister the responsibility for developing congregational life. The previous arrangement had not brought the best out of either the Minister or the African congregations. A further subtle danger had arisen when the people came to think of their Ministers as occasional visitors : mainly for the dispensing of the Sacraments : the Sacraments could easily come to be regarded as magical rites and quarterly attendance on Sacrament Sunday as the norm of Christian duty. The emphasis of the Mission needed to be changed to allow for bigger staffs so that the responsibility of the work could be spread more evenly.

It was only when the church could arrive at a one-to-one relationship ; one man to one congregation that it could expect the "clergy" to achieve success. Then only could they visualise the area of their responsibility and in so doing be open to God's vision for the mission. Prior to that congregations were hardly more than an endless mass of people with the odd face recognizable.

General Assembly's awareness of the need for more and better trained Native staff, though admirable in itself, could not succeed without the men and finances so necessary for its implementation. Besides education was not something that could be allowed to remain static particularly as the Native student was caught up in his people's state of flux. The students represented a diverse society where educational standards varied because of the gulf between rural and city people. The training had to overcome these differences, to create unity out of diversity and then induce confidence that the student could return to the two separate worlds, effective for Christ in either. It was essential that the training did not qualify a man for a particular ministry. In this instance either to the more sophisticated city work or that of the traditional rural community. Rather all had to receive the same training so as to be fit for service wherever there was a need. By this means the Evangelist class could be eliminated. In the new scheme all candidates for the ministry were to assemble at one place, receive some training and then assume duties wherever there was a vacancy. Ordination would signify a general authority rather than one arising from a ministry in a particular place.

The education of the clergy brought with it an accompanying degree of sophistication. It elevated the minister above the mass, which in the African's awakening desire for education, was an essential prerequisite for men in office. Somehow his education lent authority to his instruction ; for he had had access to the knowledge which gave the European power. For the young, the old traditions were obsolete. Only as an



educated man could he hope to retain their interest. Education helped him understand the individualistic religion of the West and offer it in place of that tied to ancestral and family roots ; a tradition isolated township life made impossible. Yet despite these considerations life within the towns and on the farms was very different. As cities grew so did the contrast between city life and rural. Education was vitally necessary for ministry in the towns but in the rural regions a man's education might make him unintelligible to his congregation. The training of native clergy had to take account of these difficulties. It had to equip a man for work amongst the traditional rural peoples and for that amongst the "sophisticated", "civilized" city dwellers. The city preacher had to deal with depersonalization and other industrial evils ; the rural preacher with dying old men and women and "abandoned" women and children - a world also overcrowded with people living in poverty on exhausted ground. The Black preacher was faced with social and economic evils at every turn few of which the Bible handled directly.(1) Yet it was just such an answer which they had to bring. Already in 1949 (2) their congregations, the people, had begun to look elsewhere - to political ideologies - for some solution to their predicament. Christianity for them was stained white and had become a tool of the oppressive regime.

Faced with these pressures the Black preacher had to discover God's answer. The search called for deep devotion, a child-like faith, great wisdom, love and humility, for men so sincere and steadfast that others might recognise the truth of their word. Personal qualities like these are not necessarily learnt at a Theological College and hence just as good instruction was important so too was the all compelling nature of each man's call.

Although a step forward, the decision taken at the end of 1937 did not create the numbers needed for the work. By then the church was looking toward a mission almost completely staffed

1. The church undertook to send some of its black ministers to to Hofmeyr School of Social Service in 1950. (PC 1958)
2. AMC Minutes 1949 ; General Assembly discussions on the threat of Communism, PC Oct 1937 p 241. The Danger of Communism.



by native men. In 1936 it had created the post of Missionary Secretary to be general overseer of Missions, and appointed the Rev W. Samson. His task was to co-ordinate and organise the Mission of the PCSA throughout the country. Unfortunately he was prevented from undertaking this work alone, but had to assume charge of the Central and Eastern Johannesburg Mission in 1940. When Dornon died in July 1941 he became his successor co-ordinating work in the Central, Southern, and Northern districts while Mr Searle supervised the Western. The loss of Harland Wilson and Graham Young on active service in 1940 reduced the mission by two, but created an additional need for Native men. By 1945 the church was well advanced in its plans to place the missions more completely in the hands of the Natives. Consequently it did not endeavour to replace Wilson and Young but left Samson in sole charge. This emphasis created an additional need for Native clergy, evidenced by this report in 1947 from the African Missions Committee.

"With staffing as one of the major problems confronting us in our mission work, your Committee devoted considerable time to this subject. The selection of suitable candidates, both for the ministry and for training as evangelists, is a matter to which great care and fully enquiry is given." (1)

The lack of staff was further aggravated by difficulties experienced amongst the students studying for a degree. In 1953 the following report appeared :

"The AMC regards with profound uneasiness the way in which its students are finishing their term of study without gaining the degree or certificate for which they have been working." (2)

Though these men still entered the ministry of the church the PCSA was nonetheless unhappy with this state of affairs. In order to combat this and ensure that candidates for ordination gained the necessary qualification the AMC devised a plan

1. AMC Minutes 1947
2. AMC Minutes 1953
3. AMC was the African Missions Committee of the General Assembly of P.C.S.A

whereby ordination and the full minister's stipend would be withheld until such time as candidates gained their degree. In 1956 the church was forced to consider a two year Theological course in place of a three year degree, an expedient that saved time and also allowed men who might previously have been rejected for failing to meet the educational requirements to commence study. In the same year it was hoped the Lovedale Bible School could be reconstituted to train Evangelists through a one-year course. Upon examination the AMC found that the course was structured for three years, five months of each year were spent in study, the remainder given to work in the field under a minister. Despite this however five men began training there in 1956, increasing to six by 1958. The church found to its delight that the education offered and the work of these evangelists was of such a high standard that the PCSA proposed to ordain them subject to these three regulations:

1. Whereas owing to the scattered nature of African congregations and the large number of preaching stations demanding oversight and the administration of the Sacraments, it is becoming increasingly difficult for African Ministers to devote sufficient time to the teaching and upbuilding of the uninstructed in Christian Faith and Doctrine ; and whereas such instruction is increasingly left to men who are themselves often inadequately instructed.
2. Provision is hereby made by the authority of General Assembly whereby Presbyteries may licence and ordain such evangelists as have been recommended as suitable to the Assembly's African Missions Committee, from among the number of those who have been trained under its direction, or where standards of education have been approved by it in consultation with the Committee on the Education of the Ministry.
3. Ordination shall be for life, subject to ordinary rules of discipline in the Church.

The problem the church was faced with was either one had a degreed, ordained, itinerant Ministry with the congregation Monday to Friday in the hands of untrained lay officials or one allowed the ordination of Evangelists - whose training

had improved and whose number had increased in the last two years. The obvious solution was the latter, so the church finally gave way in its endeavour to "restrict" the ministry to men with degrees. Whilst this had been the ideal for a long time, the evangelists had always done most of the work, although from the mid-1930's increasing numbers of degreed men found their way into the Mission staff. Ultimately it was the second order of the 1937 two-tier system that enjoyed the most success in the period to 1960. However its demise was already evident when in 1958 the Methodist Church withdrew its subsidy for the Lovedale Bible School. The PCSA tried to ensure its continued existence but the burden proved too great. From 1960 the dilemma was continued in the battle between Fort Hare and the Federal Seminary, plans for which were drawn that year.

The question of education - degreed minister or Bible School evangelists had another side. It was hoped that the increase in University trained Black church leaders would help meet the tensions growing between Blacks and Whites. The call was for Black and White Christians to unite into the believers' brotherhood of which all were part. An AMC report for 1956 saw it this way. "The Missionary work of the church is a vital necessity, not a pastime for the well meaning or one more good cause among many. Only as Christian contacts between Black and White are strengthened and extended will the tensions between races be resolved."

Too often the white in South Africa has believed the Black most in need of education. While often the case in formal academic education, the real business of the Church in Africa is not to create a model of one in Europe but to build the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. Before this happens not only must the Black learn but also the White, for ultimately, the church must serve Black and white together. What happened instead was somewhat different ; no matter how closely an African

following the pattern of a White minister he was at the end of the day left out in the cold. In a very real sense the success of missionary endeavour depended upon the response of the White clergy toward their Black brothers and sisters in Christ. If they refused to hear, refused to be one, one might ask : "What price salvation now?" Moreover the separation of the races was part of the present political system and as such cause for resentment. If the church, which preached equality, was indistinguishable from the state then it was no more the friend of the Black than was the state. The failure of the church to practise what it preached would open the possibility of the two becoming synonymous in the mind of the Black.

For the church the service of Christ must remain the most pressing priority. It could never become the champion of either a White or Black South African ideology. The creation in 1958 of a Director of Missions is, in part, an end point in this discussion. It signified the end of the Missionary Superintendent as this had developed from Hamilton onwards. The Director now became a desk man who co-ordinated the work, saw to its proper administration, collected money due to the PCSA for property rented to the state, arranged the training of students, the welfare of ministers and their appointments : in general the anchor man for those who might need advice or other help. The parts of the work of mission were now the responsibility of Black men. This development saw the White man take on ever decreasing interest and while the position of mission Secretary was undoubtedly important at best he served an administrative function and the real work of mission was very much that undertaken in the locations and reserves. In 1958 the church accepted that congregations under the present government would never be multi-racial.(1) In view of this Deacons' Courts, Sessions and Boards of Management became one of the few places where Africans might meet to

1. PC 1958



build a church of their own. The question which must go unanswered here is whether the PCSA did its duty by developing a fully fledged, independent Native Church beside the white one or whether it should have pursued a more "practical" line insisting on a multi-racial union? Was it enough to train Native men to man an autonomous church and if so why not let them join the BPC.?

### The influence of the laity.

To date we have been concerned with mission clergy and particularly with the development and training of an "indigenous" ministry. In this third section we shall look at the influence of the laity.

South African society comprises both Blacks and Whites. The relationship between these groups is defined by racial qualifications which stipulate the inferior role of the Black man within the white domain. For the Christian Church such restrictions are contrary to her beliefs, for all who receive Christ are brought within the family of God, which comprises both Blacks and Whites. This difference between the Church and the political ideal meant the laity have a dual membership; <sup>membership in</sup> the church and in society. It is our purpose to examine the difficulties produced and to investigate the success of efforts to uphold the Christian ideal. The value of the study lies in its frame of reference, for the laity are the front ranks of the christian army.

The principle of racial discrimination went beyond that of educated and uneducated, rich and poor, male and female. For the Christian, notions of racial superiority were undermined by the Church teaching man's depravity. All had sinned; they were bound both by common failure and by

Christ's vicarious death for all. For any man whom God's gracious action in Jesus Christ had redeemed could not entertain any grandiose human pretensions. The gift of undeserved grace was the Christian's humble admission into the family of God. For such men the value of others lay in their being creatures of God, who irrespective of their personal attributes, were worthy in God's sight. Love of God and one's fellow man helped them transcend social dictates, accepting one another in a shared love of God.

Unhappily the Church always has a second group ; those who behave as if we are justified by works. A consequence of this view is an elevated view of their own importance, which makes them worthy in themselves of service to God. Believing in the necessity and value of their good deeds, consciously or unconsciously, they assume a role reminiscent of big brother. Their God given duty, they believe, is to help those less fortunate than themselves. But they act not as fellow creatures but as elevated members of God's family, themselves the saviours of mankind. Consequently they tend to patronise rather than to evangelise ; they preach a verbal Gospel truth, whilst their lives are anything but Gospel for their neighbour. Their self-importance within the Christian fellowship is hardly removed from the superman ideology of their worldly counterparts.

The difference between these two expressions of salvation is quite fundamental. In the first, salvation is possible only by means of God's grace whilst in the second, man's activity predominates. In the latter man tends to assume responsibility for the salvation of mankind and demands suitable recognition and status as saviour ; salvation is roughly equated with the merits of civilised life. Hence Christianity becomes identified with a daily bath, decent clothes, a sound source of income, a standard X education and adherence to proper social custom. Secular western civilisation had made such goals its

own : it is objectionable to equate them with the gospel or to set them up as social goals to the exclusion of all others. Such views prevent the creation of an indigenous church because of the preoccupation with a "civilised" norm. On the other hand salvation as the activity of God is preached by men disillusioned by human values, attributes and possibilities and is founded on God's gracious love. As such it directs itself not to the externals of life but to the soul of each individual. It seeks to preach good news to the poor ; to proclaim release to the captives ; recovery of sight to the blind and set free the oppressed.(1) It directs itself at man's enslavement to sin and brings release from all the bonds of human existence. At this level it is less concerned with making people respectable than to reveal Christ to them ; less concerned to instruct by means of the classroom than to show in the business of daily living what it means to give Christ dominion over every sphere of daily activity. (2).

The conception and practice of mission, particularly exhibits one or other of these patterns. Its understanding in this instance is of Christian activity directed toward the Native peoples of Southern Africa, who in terms of the technology, science and literary achievement of the West were decidedly primitive. Without dealing with the merits of education or its particular uses this study has rather to examine the development and history of the PCSA within South Africa. From sections I and II it becomes evident that the mission developed as a separate "church" from that which served the whites. The value of which lay in the opportunity it gave Black men to minister to Black men, the ability to participate and gradually to assume control. (3). The creation of a "mission" church

1. Luke 4:18

2. "...for it is not in social reform or economic development alone that the task of saving the African native lies : it is in bringing to Them the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ in such a form in our daily contact with them as will convince them of our sincerity". PC Jan 1938 p17.

3. "And the office-bearers themselves receive a practical training in church government such as will fit them to be leaders in the near future when the Native Church in Africa is ready to become a self-governing body." PC Feb 1914 p22

might well have been justified because it (1) allowed the Native freedom, autonomy and control of its direction, (2) the difficulties of white/black contact because of geographical, cultural and political boundaries. Nonetheless such a start was unfortunate.

A strictly missionary church was only possible so long as the numbers of heathen demanded special treatment. In time the Black congregations became more stable, filled by Native Christians not much different from those of the white church thus removing the need for special treatment. For this reason many Whites felt uneasy at the prospect of Christian integration ultimately destroying the separation of Black and white. A report in the Blue Book for 1915 recorded the objection voiced by white congregations against their foreign ministers. These Scottish preachers, filled by a missionary zeal, extended their service to the Black people. This action proved unacceptable to their white congregations who felt this to be the duty of especially appointed missionaries. If the preachers were allowed to continue it would lead to the presence of increasing numbers of Blacks at his services. Their presence would be the end of a specifically "Settler" church. Hence they were strongly prejudiced against such activity and sought to ensure the separation of the mission church from their own.

Mission owed its origin to the presence of large numbers of Natives on the Rand. Its motivation came from concern expressed by rural missionaries for their people in Johannesburg. With PCSA control in 1903 Hamilton's appointment ensured its proper care. However many whites felt decidedly uneasy about the work because they believed it to be a threat to themselves. The missionary activities of the Scottish ministers did little to reassure them as the possibility of integrated worship was their dominant fear. Moreover the



Whites claimed that the missionaries were making the Natives cheeky, had increased the crime rate through their education and had altogether spoilt the urban Native, so many preferred to employ rural people instead. These accusations were largely unjustified and did not take into account the appalling, disruptive conditions of migrant and township life as a root of anti-social behaviour. In the face of such prejudice the church chose to ignore these popular prejudices and continue with mission. At times reports that expressed the hope of a change in popular opinion appeared in the Presbyterian Churchman. For instance in 1909 it talked of three stages in white opinion; the age of opposition, the age of indifference and finally the age of conviction. In the event this view was over-optimistic: after Union the rights natives enjoyed in the Cape were not extended but further diminished. Thirty years later just two years after the Native Acts of 1936 the church in 1938 again voiced the hope that attitudes were changing;

"For Africans, these laws constituted a crisis comparable to those of the constitution of Union and of the Native's Land Act. Their significance for the cause of race relations, and for African nationalism, was not that Africans were thereby disillusioned and move to militant action, but rather that the laws raised formidable barriers to co-operative political actions between Africans and Whites"(1)

Little that had happened in the interval supported the hope of any basic change of attitudes. In fact the age of opposition, indifference and conviction are not three separate steps in the chronology of change, but each is represented in every generation of South Africa. The swart gevaar electioneering of 1948 and the increasingly repressive legislation of the 1950's (2) served to accelerate and heighten the separation gradually begun.

What was important for the church was the nature of developing white politics. The steps of 1910 and 1936 to exclude

1. Ox Hist Vol II P450
2. Group Areas Act (1950), Immorality Act (1950); Population Reg. Act (1950) Suppression of Communism Act (1950)

the African from any effective political representation were part of a policy that aimed at the total segregation of South African life. Measures like the Bantu Labour Regulation Act (1911), The Native Affairs Act (1920), the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, the Native Administration act of 1927, and the Group Areas Act (1950) laid the basis for the separation of Whites and Africans. Legislation devoted to that end was not confined to one government but formed the basis of political manoeuvring throughout the twentieth century; new modifications or redraftings made the laws more explicit. The problem for the church was the extent to which the politics of separation pervaded its own structures. A separate Mission-church had been created to meet particular Native needs. However with the advance of the Native and particularity of these needs lessened to the point where white and Black could fellowship together. This happy situation was some time coming and developed at the same time as political measures to ensure separation increased. Hence the development of the church was very much against the mainstream of South African life. The onus thus fell upon the Christian people to ensure that good race relations were maintained and the possibility provided for integrated worship. This study will be concerned to determine whether (1) the church followed the dictates of grace or works and (2) the degree to which the Christian laity managed to withstand the mainstream of popular South African politics.

Lay participation must be seen from the following angle : where the church called for lay action within certain prescribed 'conciliar' bodies with set objectives. Thus for instance, resolutions such as :-

"All European congregations in the Church shall be expected to contribute to the funds of the Assembly's Mission Committee" or

"It is strongly recommended that a Missionary Association be formed in each congregation and that Women's Association

Guild, Christian Endeavour Societies, Bible Classes, Sunday Schools etc. be encouraged to contribute to the funds of the Assembly Mission Committee."

were important as they provided a basis for action and were intended to motivate lay participation. Their success depended upon how much importance the laity themselves assigned to these ends ; the proposers not only needed to provide information but they had to develop a new attitude towards the information provided. Hence to ensure lay participation it was not enough merely to suggest mission activity as a good work ; the church had to demonstrate why this was so. The Presbyterian Churchman of 1938 saw three areas that needed re-education.

Firstly the attitude of some whites who regarded Blacks as 'hewers of wood' :

"We have for too long regarded them as a race providentially provided to save us from the disagreeableness of menial toil and thus they are beginning to view us with disgust ... we are challenged to see a future for them which is not necessarily involved with our domestic comfort and arrangements."(1)

Second, it was necessary to develop a sense of personal responsibility towards the conditions of native life prevailing in each person's particular area. Third, the need for extensive education to show how the 'native problem' affected the whole of South Africa. Church resolutions and educational programmes were not in themselves enough ; some personal contact was needed to dispel the various stereotypes that deputed for hard thought. Such points of contact were vitally important for both Black and white ; for the white, to provide the necessary opportunity to learn first hand, and so to overcome ignorant prejudice ; for the Black, to be convinced that white preaching of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man was not stark hypocrisy.

1. PC Jan 1938 p18.

Any programme for re-education, mission interest and inter-racial contact had to begin with the minister. His attitude toward mission would reflect itself through the congregation's organisations, either for or against such activity. If he favoured mission he immediately opened the way for others interested, as his position brought with it a measure of knowledge which could be supplemented by the provision of Native and missionary contacts. It also legitimized their interests in the face of the prevailing social prejudice against such contracts. The Rev. David Hunter of the Yeoville congregation was a fine example of such a clergyman. He was close friend of the Mission Superintendent C.B. Hamilton and thus had access to a variety of information. He also seized every opportunity to involve himself in some aspect of mission. He campaigned beside Charles Hamilton at all meetings of Assembly, as a well informed and witty debater. Hunter's interest was shared by his wife who was equally active in the cause of mission. On numerous occasions the Churchman records donations given on behalf of the Yeoville W.A. after successful sales of work. Such ladies were to be especially useful to Mrs Dornan in her endeavour to organise the Native W.A. and other related programmes. This disadvantage of the minister's control of mission activity was that it sometimes limited lay initiative. When the Hunters left Yeoville for instance, missionary interest faded altogether. From being the foremost contributors to mission finances Yeoville slipped among those who rarely gave at all. Yeoville contact with the Natives had been largely vicarious : Hunter, who by means of regular appeals to his congregation, and his extensive personal knowledge, kept the money flowing. But with his departure mission appeals ceased and with few lay people to fill the breach, mission interest floundered. Thus the ideal relationship between Mission, minister and laity was to have the minister in an intermediary role, supplying the backup whilst the bulk of the work



rested in the hands of the people.

There was a second reason for this arrangement. The church found that for most South Africans it was not unusual for a Christian Minister to support missions. Consequently many believed his interest caused him to overrate or over-stress the importance of the work. Ironically, he triggered an area of their conscience which they were able to ignore under the pretext that the clergyman had exaggerated anyway. As a result the church found that the best method to ensure lay co-operation was to place the ball squarely in their court. Some congregations began to take laymen into the townships and let them mingle with the natives so that they might see for themselves. Other methods included bussing Natives to a white suburban church for Sunday worship, or showing a film and slides of the Native mission in the church hall. These measures failed to convey the reality of mission need : they also allow<sup>ed</sup> most of the White congregation to remain detached from personal involvement. The church found instead, that taking men to the natives in their environment, letting them see and feel, achieved far greater results. It found, too, that white laity were more prepared to learn about the Native mission from laymen like themselves, but whose prejudices had been overcome through contact and co-operation. No longer were they able to dismiss calls to help with mission as being part of the minister's job and, secondly once raised in this way open discussion was easier amongst the laity in the absence of often "restrictive" presence of ministers.

Yet more often than not, mission interest depended in the first instance on clergy enthusiasm. As early as 1903 General Assembly supported "the formation, in congregations where they did not exist agencies for the purpose of cultivating interest in Missions". In 1913 the Church sent out a circular enquiring into the number of Missionary Societies within its bounds. Some 70% of the churches took

the trouble to reply, of which 50% had such a society. Despite repeated calls by the General Assembly only 35% of all white congregations showed some missionary interest. This poor response was significant since race relations were not yet as bitter as they became later. If only one third of the congregation signified their belief that they owed mission to the heathen of the land, <sup>the</sup> proportion of members was far less. Such lack of interest did not augur well for lay involvement. In later years the increasing independence of the African church and the effects of the government's segregation policies diminished this small percentage even further. Early interest was vital, for it established a pattern for later generations who through consistent contact with the native mission would go far to prevent later isolation induced by legislation and also increased Native leadership within the Mission Church.

The following sentence in the Presbyterian Churchman of 1911 is therefore significant: "Too long have the interests of missions been left to the advocacy of the ministers and the energies of ladies and children." (1) These sentiments were expressed in support of and as justification for the creation of the Layman's Missionary League; an offshoot of preparation for the Edinburgh Conference of 1910. It was formed "in order that the business men of the PCSA might find their own particular place in relation to the great work of the evangelisation of the world." There were four objects which the League undertook to further : intercession , information, influence and liberality. These objects were to constitute the business of the local bands. One band decided on the following programme : "It intends to hold a meeting for prayer once a month on Sunday morning ; to co-operate with the minister in arranging a missionary meeting on one Wednesday of each month; and to distribute literature." (2)

1. September 1911 p115
2. PC April 1912 p39

These interests, they felt, were sufficient, as the church was already involved in other works which were just as time consuming.

The league's challenge to the average Christian in the words of Mr J. Parker were this :

"Now the average Christian is neither a student of nor an enthusiast about anything that really matters in life. Immediately he is, he ceases to be an average man, and becomes one of that small and elite circle, which leaves some mark on the plains of life. The world is composed chiefly of average men, and until this great inert mass can be got to move the progress of missions must be slow." (1)

For this reason, Parker's outlook was pessimistic, and stressed that mediocrity alone was not the problem but an insufficient interest in Christ. His only hope was that the challenge offered to men's Christianity on a definite issue would provoke some response. Many believed the future of South Africa to depend not only upon its mining, its agriculture and its industry: but also, and to a greater extent, on the Native. For this reason the Rev. Hamilton viewed the League's formation as an exciting prospect. He hoped the interest of Johannesburg business men in his congregation would enlighten their attitude toward these people. If men of commerce and industry could grasp the situation fully then perhaps there was some chance the native would receive proper attention. It was not enough to preach Christ without in some way trying to better living conditions. The League was essentially a mission of men to men and as such he hoped it would explore enterprising avenues of South African life, which if abandoned to their course, foretold dark, troubled times ahead. Beside the practical advantages of such contact a large part of

the League's time was to be devoted to prayer. Its value lay in man's subjection of himself to God to discover God's will. Its connection with mission ensured that numbers of leading South Africans daily gave prayerful consideration to the Native question. Such devotion many believed must bring a welcome change to the present pattern of development.

Unfortunately the League which started in South Africa in 1911 had only three years of life before the advent of the World War. In that short time it had given itself fully to the problems facing South Africa, bands being formed in many centres throughout the country. It served its purpose of constantly reminding white men of the South African Native and their duty toward him. But the war drew away many of the young men who were its champions. By 1918 General Assembly called upon the Native Missions Committee to take steps to revive the League. Conditions had changed : the Johannesburg businessman was largely lost to the demands of big business. The League nonetheless demonstrated the concern felt by Christians for mission, to the extent that the men felt they too had to have their own society. This desire for an exclusive male organisation lost its value after the war and with the increase in mission activity, many felt it best if missionary interest were left to more specialised bodies such as the various Presbytery and Assembly Committees which absorbed many of the more interested males.

The General Assembly of 1912 expressed the hope that the Layman's League would devote itself to activities similar to those of the W.A. But while the war saw the demise of the League, the mission work and interest of the W.A. continued to grow. By 1916 a Native Association in Johannesburg had been created. Their concern was not simply that of mission but of women for <sup>one</sup> another.



The urbanisation of the South African male was at least as traumatic for native women, because it brought changes to their status. According to Kenneth Little (1) these changes included (a) the independence of these women from the restraints of elder women, tribal traditions and enslavement to family ties (b) their ability to earn their own living (c) the haven the city afforded those who wished to escape the boredom of rural life (d) the high incidence of prostitution and the profitable business of running shebeens. These together with the disproportionate ratio of male to female gave the Native women a degree of independence, power which formerly she had been denied. In itself the developing freedom of the African women was not unsatisfactory ; what was disturbing was its setting amidst so much vice, immoral degradation and undisciplined, directionless life. The Churchman of 1919 commented :

"The Rand's demoralising influences on native female life are notorious. It has special attractions for the worst characters and confirms them in a course of crime. But it too often proves the undoing of the innocent." (2)

Thus the initial policy of White Women's Associations was not one intended to overwhelm the African with knitted goods or food parcels but to create Native Women's Associations. In the words of Mrs D. Hunter :

"Association work is a splendid outlet for our Native women's energies. Many of those fine, strong women, of splendid physique, require some healthy, interesting work to occupy them, and if this is denied, they work off their superfluous energy in wrong ways." (3)

The Church was also aware that the African women's emancipation brought with it a greater potential for work amongst society. No longer bound by traditional taboos the women were making inroads into numerous fields taking with them new energy and vitality. By the provision of a

1. K. Little : African Women in Towns.

2. PC May 1919 p53

3. PC April 1924 p43

Native Association it was hoped to channel some of this energy into the church. The policy worked remarkably well :

"In little companies they regularly visit some of the plague spots of Johannesburg, hold their meetings with the women who congregate there, and do what they can to lead them to a better life. Once a month, they go further afield, to the locations on the Reef where our churches are situated. They travel as far as Boksburg and Krugersdorp, and on every occasion at their own expense."(1)

The church believed these Native Associations would ultimately best serve it in its endeavour to reform Native women. As Native women they were intimately aware of the problems and pressures of their society and could thus converse with others at the most fundamental levels.

"It is amongst these unhappy people of their own sex that our Christian women seek to exercise a purifying influence. It is not an easy task, nor is it always a very encouraging one. But it is certainly a Christlike one, and being so is far from hopeless."(2)

The initial plan of the church had been to create Native Associations to provide both a centre where Christian women might meet and a vital supplement to the forces of missionary endeavour. By 1924 the membership of the Transvaal Association was 173 which by 1935 had increased to 280. Having established a Native W.A. the white associations had a certain obligation toward them as many skills like sewing, knitting and other womanly pursuits were unknown to the African. Moreover some direction was necessary concerning the structure and normal activity of such bodies. Finally Assembly realised that contact no matter the pretext or the extent would undoubtedly benefit race relations.

1. PC March 1916 p.24 ; May 1919 p53

2. PC May 1919 p53

"It is because there is a wide gulf between the status of South African European women and her black countrywomen that I am led to wonder that if more understanding and sympathy were to exist between them, a great contribution might not be made to the settlement of the race problems." (1)

Consequently in 1934 it was proposed that each European branch should adopt a native branch and help it along. Five European branches responded ; they undertook to visit their adopted branch once a month to address the Native women and to give them advice. (2) The meetings were greatly appreciated by the Natives as they felt themselves to be part of a fellowship which, for a brief moment, took them outside the restrictions and segregation of daily life. The meeting also provided the vital contact necessary between white and Black that each might come to understand and appreciate the other. In May 1939, it was decided to supplement this by issuing a quarterly leaflet of mission news to all Sunday Schools and Women's Associations. (3). In the same year Presbytery decided the missionary's wife should guide the white work amongst the Native Association. Various methods for closer co-operation with the African branches of the Association were suggested and discussed ; the church again called upon European branches to adopt the neighbouring Black one. As before the level of response varied considerably ; the work fell largely upon one or two branches. In the Transvaal, St. Mark's and St. George's were well to the fore and involved not only their senior members but also the Junior Branch of the Association. Yet in May 1950 the situation was reported as follows ;

"It has been urged on us for some years at our Annual General Meetings that European Branches should endeavour to take an interest in the African ones within their district, thus helping and enabling them to have a clearer idea of the aims of our Association." (4)

1. PC Mr J. Hudson Stockil Feb1939 p40
2. PC Nov 1937 p260
3. PC May 1939 p40
4. PC May 1950 P64

In the same report, only St. Mark's and St. George's received acknowledgement for their work in Alexondra Township and at Meikle Street respectively.

This arrangement, though not the ideal of a united Association, was nonetheless important for while the Churches sought for union, the existence of the Association allowed Native women the opportunity to become part of an organisation, the activities of which afforded a measure of co-operation with their white sisters.

It was perhaps fortunate, though lamentable, that the Association's work from its inception had concerned itself with the creation of an autonomous Native Branch. This gave the African women a more significant role as by and large the activity was her responsibility. Thus the Native Association was to become an integral part of the Mission catering for its women and fulfilling at the same time an evangelistic role within the community. White assistance to particular branches was a boon as it enabled the branch to learn more quickly those skills (knitting, sewing etc.) essential to its fund raising campaigns. However such assistance was not as important an aspect of the interaction, as the opportunity such contact gave for bridging the prejudice of South African race relations. The poor response of White branches to the Assembly's plea illustrates the particular nature of this work. The response was never general because few people had the liberty and breadth of ideas to see the situation in the light of the Gospel. Consequently the church turned increasingly toward educating young people, believing that it would be possible to change attitudes this way.

Belief in the value of educating children was not a late



discovery. From the very beginning Hamilton realised that the Presbyterian Churchman offered him the opportunity to counteract in some way the reports of the popular press which engendered notions in the heads of young children like the following :

"In a classroom, in a very prominent Girls' School a discussion was initiated on the relation of the European to the African. Amongst other things, the suggestion was put forward that the African would have been very much happier if he had been left to his own devices and if there had not been so much interference with his traditional ways of thinking especially by the missionaries!"(1)

The majority of girls accepted the proposition as true. Hamilton arranged, with the editors of the Churchman to run an essay competition intended to make the children think about Mission and feel part of it. The title chosen for the essay was "Why Mission to the Natives?"(2) It was hoped to bring the children face to face with the world of adult thought opposed to native education to which they were already exposed ; and to initiate in their young minds some understanding of the difference between those views and the ones a Christian should hold. In addition Sunday schools tried to create an interest : they encouraged Mission giving and at different times of the year devoted Sundays specifically to instruction about the mission. During the period of the Rev. W. Samson's superintendency he devoted time each month to writing a missionary letter. This was published in the Churchman and contained all sorts of detail about the lives, work, hardships and joys of the African people. Samson moreover wrote the letter in story form with a romantic style. He also took great pains to draw the children in by encouraging them to contact him, by asking them to pray, by generating in them a concern for particular individuals and so making the letter a special communication between the children and himself. But these efforts of one or two Superintendents, and of Sunday Schools to educate the children had to contend with an overwhelming opposition. The numbers of children reached by these methods was

1. PC Jan 1909p3

2. PC Jan 1911p119

small ; nor could the church ever hope to educate with just one hour a week at its disposal. It needed at the very least the support of the parents which the letters in the Churchman hoped to achieve. But just how many parents took interest in these and discussed their merits with their children cannot be known.

The degree of Mission interest was thus subject to two influences (1) the development of an African church and (2) the segregation policies of the South African Government. Initially Mission had resembled a white church extension charge and as such many whites felt a particular interest. It was, they believed, their Christian duty to make the Gospel available to the Natives. The native living on the periphery of Johannesburg society in the 1890's was moreover not the "threatening mass" of later generations. Consequently white society hopoily undertook their Christian work amongst the mine 'boys'. However by the time the Presbytery resumed control in 1903 the numbers of Natives had increased substantially and the ensuing years saw an even greater increase. By 1911 and 1913 these increases saw the white community beginning to take steps to legislate a position of safety for themselves. The Native had become a threat to their safety and reports began to appear denouncing missionary activity in Johannesburg because it made the African "cheeky" and increased the crime rate. The physical assault of a number of white women received extensive press coverage and served to incense white prejudice and direct it onto righteous indignation. The instability of white income because of the post-war depression and white labour unrest in the first twenty years of the twentieth century, increased the white obsession with survival amidst the Black horde. Correspondingly it became very difficult to gain white support for missionary endeavour. Moreover the Mission Church moved steadily toward African control. Thus the need for extensive white support was rapidly declining. The mission evolved to a point where it graciously accepted aid but came to depend more and more

for its daily activity on Black support. Thus the desire for protection, segregation on the political front together with the programme for an autonomous African Church drove deeper the wedge of isolation between Black and White.

Hence fear, mistrust and ignorance barred the majority from the possibility of any significant Black/white contact. Thus ultimately it was the contribution of individuals who devoted themselves to Christ's service who were important in subjection to His will which bade them serve amongst the Africans. Finally therefore what mattered was work itself ; despite the absence of interest and opposition that was part of the predominant feeling in South Africa. Missionary activity told a different story - one inspired by a love of Christ. This ultimately was its centre and rather than being concerned to anathematize the forces of opposition this study must progress to the record of that work, which is the mission itself.

The urban labyrinth

At every stage, the Transvaal mission was associated with and affected by the changes brought about by industrialization and urbanisation. These changes, signalized in legislation, affected traditional rural life as well as the locations that developed in urban areas. Within Johannesburg itself the church was called to minister to Natives in both the labour compounds and in the locations. At first this meant ministry to an exclusively male, migrant congregation and to squatter communities in locations. In the former, tribal differences, the instability of the community, the difficulty of finding a time and place for service and the nature of ministry possible all demanded particular attention. In the latter a church had to be built or a room hired for services. The laws confined mission to certain times and places, and the community at large battled for identity amid diverse and confused influences. In the rural regions the move to town disrupted traditional life; the men departed, leaving behind the very young, the old and mothers of families. Tremendous strains were put on family life; the land suffered neglect.

Whilst each of the three areas had their peculiarities there was a good deal of interrelation between them. There was continual movement from the city back to the lands and vice versa. Whether in town or on the farm the community was still African, a unity more fundamental than any extraneous influence. Hence though the social, physical and material properties might have differed from one area to another, the common heritage of the people remained unshaken. Wherever they were they remained African and despite certain external differences this remained constant in their interrelation one with another. This was important for besides overcoming difficulties centered on practical considerations, the Missionary was able to rely upon the constant character of the native.



Though differences existed these did not affect the preaching of the Gospel, its relevance to the people and their ability to participate in its service. Such points of contact made the Mission far more of a whole than might have been thought possible. Despite the inherent unity of the Gospel and African culture the next sections follow these divisions : compound mission, location mission and rural mission. Such division remains possible because of the practicalities of mission.

#### Mission of the Compounds

First introduced to South Africa in Kimberley the compound was designed to meet the labour requirements of the mining industry. It was adopted by the Reef mines for much the same purpose at a time when the majority of the African people preferred to live on the land. While mining and industry were in their infancy, the idea of town life had not yet found its way into the African consciousness. Consequently all labour requirements had to be met by importing the workforce from elsewhere. So far from this state of affairs being considered a nuisance it was welcomed by the majority of whites as they had no desire for the African to adopt the city as their home. The system apparently made labour freely available without encroaching upon the liberties enjoyed by the white community. In time, droughts, disease, overpopulation, land legislation and the bright city lights slowly began to attract the African to the prospect of urban settlement. Initially the numbers involved were minimal and many whites found the development acceptable as a migrant workforce was inefficient in those types of employment which required a certain degree of skill or where temporary help was unproductive and inconvenient. Thus from the outset Johannesburg had both types of community, the compound and the location. The presence of congregations in both kinds of community seemed to suggest the possibility of the PCSA combining both kinds of members in one congregation. Unfortunately this was not always

possible as there was often some distance between the compound and the location and moreover the white authority feared that such intercommunion might lead to the demise of the compound system. For both reasons much of the compound work was quite separate from other urban work. Before examining this work in isolation we give some brief attention to points of contact.

The Johannesburg compounds were not closed and hence it was possible for the migrant to make contact with other urban communities in close proximity.<sup>(1)</sup> This practice applied particularly to the peri-urban mining communities where domestic helpers and other small town employees were domiciled, together with the migrant workers in areas adjacent to the town. An instance of this arrangement was the Thabazimbi mine compound. Here the migrant community was at first the only Black body in the vicinity. During that period the mining authorities built a small church for Christian services. This had proved essential as it was the only place where migrants might gather for worship. In time, with the growth of the town, a number of Native people came to settle in the area because of job opportunities. No longer were the migrants isolated from the rest of the African society and the small compound church became, for a time, the meeting place of both mine workers and towns people. This influx soon made the compound church too small. Hence when the local authority began proceedings to house all the town's African workers in one location, rather than allow them to erect squatter dwellings where they chose, it decided concomitantly to make provision for a new church building. It envisaged that the church should serve both the miners and the location. In this instance and in many other outlying mines it was possible to combine the two Native communities for worship. Both the Church and the mine/town authorities were convinced in these cases, that united

1. Oxon Hist of SA Vol II P180

fellowship, was the best and easiest way to meet the Natives' need for religious service and instruction and so encouraged the practice. However this type of arrangement though preferable, was not always possible even in the smaller Reef communities. For instance by 1922 Springs mine officials found that it had become difficult for their miners to attend location services.(1). Shift work meant that not all the miners were above ground at the time of the church service. It was decided therefore to build a church within the compound, to provide for all miners. Those who could, attended service in the location; the rest held services at different times, in the compound. The Springs plan made provision for the African miner to worship either in the compound or in the location. It did not apply in reverse and hence indicates the measure of separation inherent between the migrant mining community and the larger permanent one outside the compound. Within Johannesburg the situation in the early days of its history was not greatly different from those we have described. The African miner did have opportunity to meet and worship with the squatter community. However when the municipality began to make arrangements for African locations these were situated on the city's extremities. Mining and industrial compounds were not re-allocated in the move and consequently became isolated from the rest of the community. The city reasoned that the compounds did not need to be moved because they were on site and therefore did not pose a threat to white suburban development.

The case for separate compound work was further strengthened by the size of the compounds themselves. Many were so large that the church felt they needed particular attention particularly since the migrant worker often did not seek the church amid the attractions and confusions of Johannesburg life. The PCSA like other denominations thus embarked on a mission to the compounds where many migrants had never heard the gospel before. Conditions varied from mine to mine.

1. PC June 1922 p65

In rural mines, migrants found it easy to worship in the location; on other mines, Christians were fortunate enough to have a choice between attending worship in the location or on the mines ; large and isolated compounds were dependent on the church coming to the compound, for otherwise the majority would never hear the gospel.

In any investigation of compound mission, it is important to bear in mind the over-riding consideration that the compound belonged to the mining company and the church entered the property with the permission of the company, which permission could be withdrawn at any time with or without reason. Consequently service was held where and when possible. Furthermore because the work was dependent first and foremost on permission from the mine, the degree of co-operation varied according to the importance the mining company attached to the work. Some mine managers were in favour because (a) they were Christians and (b) others hoped mission activity would temper more worldly influences (eg. drink) within the compound, and (c) others felt morally obliged not to stand in the way and (d) some were merely indifferent. Such differences in opinion had a very real effect on how each denomination was able to conduct its mission. The situation was further complicated because the mine authorities had to deal with not one Church but numerous denominations :

"The mine authorities are averse to granting a church site for the reason that if they make this concession for one denomination they will be obliged to make it to others." (1)

In view of this type of problem and because of varying support many churches asked that a dormitory be placed at their disposal. This system worked well for the dormitories were divided according to tribal groupings, which corresponded with the fact that one denomination was usually stronger among a particular tribe, because it happened to have a mission in the tribal lands.



Hence, for instance, the PCSA spent a great deal of its time amongst the Nyasaland Natives who came from the Free Church mission there.

Dormitories were not the best place for divine service.

"It is just gone seven when we arrive, and a keen cold August morning. Most of the boys are still in bed. Several of the occupants are either having a long lie in this morning or prefer to worship in bed. At any rate they do not stir all through the service, and are far from being disturbed by the singing. A few sit up and display a languid interest in the proceedings." (1)

In these conditions the missionary would gather his congregation together around the stove in the middle of the room, and there conduct the service. The picture then is of ten to twelve men gathered round the missionary, singing and praying together ; around them men sleep on, others gaze blankly about, and the room is untidy with men having only just woken. One might suggest that perhaps it would have been better to have service a little later in the day. This was impossible for the missionary was already committed to services in the locations and any delay would result in the service being conducted for an inebriated gathering of migrants. (2) A further drawback was that the service was held in a particular bungalow ; others, if they were to participate, had to gather there. Gathering those interested did not prove to be a problem, as they were rounded out by the Christians of the bungalow in use. (3) What did pose a problem however was the amount of space available, as understandably, the bungalow was designed for sleeping and not holding a religious service. Under these circumstances it was hard for a Christian not to be a nuisance to his heathen neighbour.

In order to overcome this difficulty and to provide an opportunity to reach the broader mass of migrants, services were often held in the open. The venue itself presented

1. PC Feb 1914 p20.

2. PC Dec. 1908 p144

3. PC March 1913 p38

problems .

"If you are unaccustomed to the Rand dust you will only see your audience at intervals. And if you have a weak voice or a cold you are not much use here".(1)

Despite these difficulties Hamilton found this method was by far the most successful means of evangelisation. He attributed this to the more informal atmosphere the service tended to take on which gained the Africans' attention because it resembled a traditional indaba. All would gather round the missionary, whilst he spoke from his heart. Having spoken, the service ended with those who wished asking questions or making some comment on what he had said. The open air meetings nonetheless had limitations : because they were more informal, an ordered, structured service with hymns, prayers, gospel readings and a prepared sermon was not possible. Evangelism undoubtedly had its place but committed Christians wished for a more ordered service, where they could draw apart and participate in divine service. To cater for this need the PCSA would try wherever possible to obtain the use of some disused building.

"At the Springs mine an old and dilapidated building, minus the roof, was secured and renovated. Roof, doors and windows were repaired and the building made suitable for services."(2)

While the Mission appreciated the use of such premises, the shed was nonetheless just a shelter from the weather and other distractions; it had none of the furnishings usually associated with a church. There were no chairs, no table, no pulpit or any other distinguishing feature. One might attach little importance to absence of such furnishings but for the Native Christian the church was a special building which demanded proper fitting out.

1. PC May 1922 p52

2. PC June 1922 p65

With great care and deep devotion many congregations lavished singular attention on the provision of bells, pulpits, chairs and other furnishings so their church would more closely resemble their image of the House of God. Hence wherever possible the PCSA endeavoured to obtain permission to erect a Church. Even when the mine authorities favoured the idea difficulties arose because the church had to meet the elaborate requirements of the law applying to applications for surface rights on mine lands. (1) This problem affected the more established mines where much of the land had been earmarked for other purposes and where a number of denominations were at work, thereby making it impossible to accede to any single demand. In the case of new mines where the manager wished to ensure some measure of Christian instruction, he would approach a particular denomination to take responsibility for mission work. The Swartkop Chrome Mine was such a case : the manager approached the PCSA and proposed that a church be built as part of the new mine complex.

Within the compounds, worship was offered in four places : (a) the bungalow, restricted to one tribe, (b) open air meetings, evangelistic, informal reaching only those who took time to participate (c) the disused mine building and (d) the Mine church. These four meeting places, because they were so different, affected the type of service held. It is possible, in this study, to group the bungalow and open air services together. They followed much the same pattern except that in the latter the missionary had less opportunity for more intimate fellowship; he was unable to depend on the same hearers each week, so he had to keep his message general, and could not devote himself to the particular needs, either in prayer or reasoned counsel, of any one individual or group of individuals.

In the bungalow the situation was different, for though there were a number of heathen men present, he nonetheless had a core of regular worshippers each week. Thus he was able to make some contact with individuals and address the prayers to their need. He was also able to incorporate the regulars in the service by having them read the lesson, lead the singing or the prayers. Further it made possible a more comprehensively structured service. This freedom affected a basic issue like singing, for he knew whether his bungalow congregation did or did not know Christian hymns ;

"One of the preachers opens the service with prayer, and then a hymn is sung and a portion of scripture read. There followed a sermon delivered in the round, a number of men being allowed to speak on occasion."(1)

This differed from one bungalow to another. Some were less responsive and in such situations Hamilton found himself restricted to :

"A brief prayer, a hymn or two (if you have those who can sing them) and a plain practical talk on some appropriate portion of scripture are all that the circumstances admit. Prolong the meeting and your audience will simply ignore you."(2)

In the latter example conditions approximated those of the open air service. In these the missionary found that his congregation spurned all formality ; a man who preached with notes immediately lost the congregation's interest. These men were not interested in anything which had to be committed to paper. In the clash between a literate and a preliterate society communication had to be according to the traditional patterns of the preliterate. Many Christian men found the open air service objectionable. Where they had some measure of education, coming as they did, from

1. PC Feb 1914 p20

2. ibid



from rural mission communities, they had come to expect service to be conducted according to a more "educated" practice. Having seen the missionary at work in the mission church, and being themselves able to read, they wished to sing from hymn books, to have the word of God read and to receive 'educated' instruction from the Gospel. Further because they were used to service in a consecrated building they objected to excessive informality. Thus within the compound there existed two types of community : one which was educated, Christian and accustomed to a measure of discipline and right order, and another which was heathen, uneducated and unaccustomed to anything except African traditions. In view of these differences the Missionary had to try and meet their differing requirements. This accounted, in part, for the many different types and places for service. Variety was not merely the spice but the elixir of life.

These diverse requirements of the community imposed heavily on the missionary's time. He was not able to content himself with one type of service. As the compound work was not his only concern, and as there was but one missionary he found he had to rely increasingly upon native help. Only so could he meet the demands of the compound and his other duties. This help came from Africans within the compound and from others without. (1) Migrant leaders proved especially useful as they were able to hold Christian meetings on weekday nights and remain in daily contact with their fellow Christians and any who might express interest. Further they identified with the workers, grappling together with the trials, temptations and tribulations of Johannesburg compound life. The value of such shared experience cannot be underrated, more particularly because the men themselves had endeavoured to assist each other within their respective tribes. Those who had made the trip to the mines before took it upon themselves to guide and direct newcomers through the dangerous influences of the city. In this way they could support those desiring to remain faithful and

1. PC July 1910 p222

return home. The church found she was able to use this tribal discipline to advantage, as the preservation of tribal morality could be equated with the gospel ethic. Such an equation tempted the native christian to slip back from one to the other. This guardianship was best filled by those who were part of the mining community. Their service lacked official sanction : they did not officially represent any denomination, were not unable to conduct the Sunday service, and could only admonish or advise the wayward. Official sanction came through native evangelists and ministers. As Blacks they were able to retain greater contact with the ministers than white missionaries. They met parishoners in the location and passed on news of particular individuals through their friends. Amid such a mass of largely illiterate miners this verbal intercommunication was no small advantage.

The development of such contacts was all the more important because the compound was an isolated and unnatural community. By and large the place of the African miner in society was defined solely by the labour he provided ; his work kept him busy during the day, while the compound housed him at night. As a result white society had very little contact with him. Further, as Johannesburg developed the township Blacks were moved away. However, even had they stayed, the miner, confined to the compound, still lived an unnatural life, as his family was many miles distant. Thus for most of the year he lived without the benefit of family life, whilst his children grew up amongst old men and women. The absence of women folk in the compound adversely affected many miners. Finding no natural solace with none of the personal comforts, that come with privacy, many whiled their idle hours in self-indulgent carousing. This could produce situations on a mine where by 10 o'clock on Sundays, the majority of miners were drunk. This lack of African homelife had its

effect on the church. In compounds and sometimes in townships, the mission faced a man's world ; hard, brutal, frustrated and collectively irreligious. The community never escaped into the joys of love, a family and the presence of laughing children.

In his report on native mission in the Transvaal, Sir Clarkson Tredgold addressed himself to this problem. He found that for the most part the miner spent his free time drinking, frequenting prostitutes, idling in the streets and in attending a cinema which had recently opened. The latter Tredgold considered an undesirable influence as he thought the films shown totally unacceptable for native viewing. As no means existed for censoring films the mission decided "... to exhibit films in the various compounds, admission free." (1) The mining houses saw the value of such a scheme and subscribed £1500. With this a projector and plant were acquired and films were obtained from African Consolidated Theatres. In the end shows were provided each week and in the face of this opposition the local operator was forced to close. Tredgold himself reported :

"On Sunday night I went to the compound at Modder B about 25 miles to the east, where a religious service was held by missionaries and the film 'From the Manger to the Cross' exhibited and explained to an audience of 3000 natives. I myself heard repeated requests for exhibitions, and know what all educational agencies realise and value." (2)

Hence the films were significant for mission as they enabled the missionary to present the Gospel in a more appealing manner. Not only was the missionary benefited, but also all societies concerned with the Africans' welfare, as they used this medium to educate and uplift. The mine cinema was part of a growing awareness throughout the mining community that some provision should be made for social and physical welfare of the African. The Joint Conference

1. PC June 1924 p83

2, ibid p84



of European and Bantu in February 1929 conceived of the Bantu Men's Social Centre. This building erected largely by general public subscription, served as a club for miners. Its cinema hall was also used for indoor games and gymnastics ; lectures were given in adjacent rooms ; night classes conducted and piano lessons provided free of charge. Athletic clubs were formed including football, cricket and lawn tennis. In these ways the church and the mine authorities sought to provide for the African some opportunity to use his free time profitably. Thus it was not sufficient to provide church services for the different types of African in the compounds. Though this was undoubtedly valuable the miners had to have other recreational opportunity to exercise their minds and bodies. Therefore, the Christian mission, interested in the whole man, had to embark with the mine officials on a "social" programme. This was all the more important for a society denied normal human relations, as it could so easily become an isolated labour island. Moreover the compound did not have the wherewithal to provide its own recreation; much had to come at the instigation of the mine authority.

Having seen how the role of the church came to extend beyond holding church services we now look at another aspect of this work. Precisely because the community was an all male one, in which men were separated from their homes and family, they were totally dependent on the system for any personal 'ministrations' usually performed by loved ones. For example, mine work was a hazardous business; many miners contracted phthisis, tuberculosis and pneumonia.(1) As these diseases were contracted while victims were still in the employ of the mines, large mine hospitals were built to care for those afflicted. The church could not ignore this situation as in many instances the diseases proved fatal. For men separated from their loved ones, death in a foreign place, amongst strangers, was all the harder to bear. Consequently the

1. PC Jan 1911 p8



PCSA had to give some thought to the care of these men. The white missionary rarely had the time needed for this work but fortunately for the PCSA<sup>1</sup> could rely on native elders, working as hospital orderlies to undertake this work in the course of their hospital duties. One, Ngoyi, proved especially useful as his ministry was not confined to holding a weekly service for the patients. Rather he moved amongst them throughout the day and could thus offer every individual a word in season. Moreover because he was known to the men and was always within reach a man might call on him at any time. Thus should he choose to ask a question or just express his fears, Ngoyi was available for consultation, and was able to give some word of comfort and of hope.<sup>(1)</sup> The effects of this ministry were sometimes striking. Tshingwayo Gijizwayo was a man who in health had displayed an almost diabolical ingenuity in disturbing the services in the compound. Then he was struck down with pneumonia and moved to the hospital where he continued to resist the ministry of Christians. Ngoyi, however, continued with his work and in time began to get some response from Tshingwayo. He began to call Ngoyi aside and speak to him of Christianity, and finally accepted Christ as his saviour. Hamilton reported :

"The change wrought in him by his conversion was most decided.... He could not refrain from telling others what great things God had done for his soul, and many a prayer he offered up on behalf of other patients. I remember how keenly he expressed to me his regret that his repentance had been so late, because he could now do little for his Master. An additional burden on his heart was the thought of his family and relatives at home living in the deepest heathenism, to whom he could not now return with the glad tidings. All he could do was to pray for them ; and when, a few weeks ago, I heard of his death I was not surprised to learn that his spirit had taken flight as he was commending all to the mercy of God."<sup>(2)</sup>

In conclusion the following points can be made : one, the compound mission differed from place to place and in the

1. *ibid*

2. *FC 8-1911 p3*

nature of the worship possible, two, because of the unnatural predominance of one sex and the compound's 'isolation' the Church had to assume responsibility for more than the merely verbal preaching of the Gospel. This extended to some social work amongst both the healthy and unhealthy. Ultimately the compound was a very distinct community which remained a special concern of the Church, for its residents were forever changing. Thus the compound was a constant centre for evangelism that provided a complex infrastructure, catering for varying levels of christian commitment. It was a very real community with a very real need which demanded a particular attention.

#### Mission in the Location.

When speaking of location mission it is important to realise that this term can only be applied to Johannesburg and the locations of mining towns, within a thirty mile radius of the city. The circumstances determining the mission were that Johannesburg quickly attracted a large number of non-migrant workers who built their houses as close to the city as possible; these large communities needed all kinds of special attention in order to develop a stable and peaceful fellowship, numbers and distances generally made it impossible to combine compound with township ministries.

Moreover the smaller rural towns, if they had a mine, usually combined with the mine compound for worship. Their geographical locality thus affected their classification, as they were still in touch with rural traditional life.

The location exhibited all the characteristics of an urban area : it was both cosmopolitan and tribal; a melting pot and a place where people suddenly become conscious of their

separate identities. And while white influence is undeniable in the development of the township, the life of the township remained impenetrable to the white, who was <sup>a</sup>baffled outsider <sup>0</sup> raiding barbarians...

The location was a conglomerate mass in which all manner of people rubbed shoulder to shoulder. Tshongains, Zulus, Pondos, Xhosas, Tswanas and Nyasas all made their way to Johannesburg in search of work. As Christian missions followed their people to town, these changes to the rural pattern of life also altered the conduct of mission.

The Johannesburg situation was in some ways unique. In the rural areas mission practice could often continue in the same vein because movement to these towns was of people of some of the neighbouring tribes. In Johannesburg the situation was vastly different: Johannesburg was an entirely new work as mining and industry had massed many Native peoples together in one place. This movement brought the denominations together. Instead of each church having its own tribe or area of work they all congregated together in the location. Further the situation demanded not the traditional mission centre but the creation of African congregations similar to the pattern of white suburban work. Each denomination could only claim as its property the church buildings and congregations it had established. Moreover the work needed in the Johannesburg township was greater than the combined resources of a united church. C.B. Hamilton wrote :

"Compare with them our six little churches scattered along the reef, our three evangelists and our forty lay preachers ; and it will be seen that we are only touching the fringe of the work."(1)

In view of the overwhelming number of Natives employed in Johannesburg and the community's transition from a pastoral

1. PC Jan 1909 p3.

life to high density city living, the PCSA mission concluded that : "our chief endeavour is to scatter amongst these Native labourers the good seed of the kingdom that it may be carried in due time to the remotest corners of the land"(2). That this was not simply an initial response to the situation is attested by the following statement made twenty years after the first :

"What is the fundamental factor in missionary work? It is not the reformation of society, nor even the building up of a church, valuable as these may be. It is the changing of individual lives, the putting of individuals into direct communion with God. If this be done, the rest will be done, although perhaps not so well as it might be."(3)

These two statements indicate that the PCSA considered the city work beyond its capabilities. This did not mean that no churches were built or that no work was done. On the contrary the opposite is true. What is important is the admission that at best this work could only hope to plant the seed which would need more stable surroundings to germinate.

The need to evangelise never diminished. Always there would be new people in town who had not heard of Christ; always new faces in church to which one could not attach a name. This in itself was not remarkable; many white congregations found the same true of themselves. What was different, especially in the beginning, was the proportion of new faces to familiar. With time and this is the significant feature of town mission, the minister began to enjoy a regular congregation, among those not limited by service contracts. At first these might constitute half his congregation, later three quarters. The location came to represent more and more a community which had come to stay. Hence the minister was able to embark on the business of nurturing his members in the faith. He came to know families in God, to baptise babies, watch them grow, wed and have children in turn. He was able to establish Sunday schools, Women's associations, and young men's fellowships as a vital and integral part of the congregation's life.



The unstable nature of urban ministry and the rapid growth and resettlement of the community demanded flexibility on the part of the missionary. The situation was made worse because mission in Johannesburg was confined to individual congregations: these communities were centres of mission. Further each congregation was situated in a particular area which meant therefore that it catered for the people in the vicinity. When a new area was opened the original churches were often too distant to serve the new group. Hence the PCSA as did other denominations, had to endeavour to erect a church in this new field. Beside the financial burden this imposed it also demanded an increase in mission staff. A single minister could not cope with six to ten churches. The ideal was to have as many ministers as churches. The PCSA was not able to achieve this ideal because both the compounds and the rural mission demanded a portion of the available resources. The preceding chapter referred to the development of a native ministry, the value of which was first that the native was more in touch with the situation; second he was able to keep a watchful eye on development and often meet the needs of individuals before they themselves realised their plight, and third, he provided the necessary work force with which to meet the need engendered by the growth of Johannesburg and finally, it set the mission on the road of self-support(1) This latter consideration was particularly important as the Assembly did not have the funds to support the growth of Johannesburg work: it was therefore essential that the Africans assume as much responsibility as possible for the work. One way was to use native ministers - but more important was the financial undertaking. Hamilton realised that if the native was to assume responsibility for the mission in this way, it could only be done collectively; congregations already established could not confine themselves to their own needs.

1. PC April 1919 P40 and June 1923 p71.

"... our endeavours are first to evangelise, then to organise, and not to allow a single congregation to become an isolated self-contained unit, satisfied so long as it meets its own requirements and indifferent to the claims of others."(1)

The mission depended on all the finances being grouped together and then allotted according to the most pressing needs. However it was a long time before the concept of a central fund moved from being a voluntary contribution to being a requirement. Assessments began at the level of 2% of congregational income; they are now in some cases nearly 25%. Without the policy there would have been little chance for growth.

Hamilton justified this centralised approach in 1916 as follows:

"During the past thirteen years twenty native churches have been erected and opened free of debt, and in no case has any financial assistance come from European sources. The cost of their erection, and the funds needed for the support of evangelists and for extensionwork, have made an ever increasing demand on the liberality of our members. In order to meet it the central congregation has been content to go on worshipping in a building which is not only too small but so old and rickety as to be almost dangerous."(2)

The central congregation sacrificed its amenities out of concern for fellow Presbyterians who were forced to worship in hired rooms or private homes. Need of others for a building took priority over even the maintenance of existing buildings in a proper condition. It is important to remember that the locations were still 'shanty towns' and most of the early churches 'shanty churches'. Only much later and often after more than one removal, did brick replace wood and iron, or wattle and iron. Further as in the case of the central church the building had become far too small long before any consideration was given to building a new one. Thus as long as a building existed, no matter its size or condition, it was at least more than other congregations could claim and for that

1. PC June 1909 p 68

2. PC March 1916 p27

reason their need had preference.

One consequence of this dependence upon the native to finance the mission was that the work was subject to African economics. In 1928 the Pretoria churches suffered a considerable drop in membership (1) because many of the natives had been railway employees whom the government saw fit to replace with poor whites. Such action was unjust; it caused untold distress to the fellowship which was still responsible for a predetermined contribution to church aid. In order to meet this obligation many had to give more than they were able until they were reassessed or the congregation's numbers picked up. Members' contributions were not only affected by urban conditions: "owing to the long-continued drought and the scarcity of food in the native territories, most of our members remitted what money they could spare to their friends at home." (2)

The PCSA often found that money collected for the building fund had to be used to meet other needs. In 1918 there were severe floods in the rural districts. To meet requirements for food, clothing, and other relief material the church was forced to dip into the building fund. (3). Consequently many building operations were shelved until such time as funds built up again.

These contributions more than affected the building programme. The mission paid the salaries of evangelists, thus any reduction in the total finances available placed their salaries in jeopardy. On more than one occasion retrenchment kept the mission alive: in 1934 the Bushbuck Ridge Mission, comprising two congregations, was handed over to the Swiss Mission for this reason. Yet the church far from suffering a severe setback each time there was an economic downswing, its donations often continued as usual. Only after sustained periods of economic depression coupled with heavy demands, that retrenchment was necessary.

1. PC May 1934 p103  
3. PC May 1913 p 73

2. PC May 1934 p103

"As time went on it became more and more difficult to hold things together. So much of our organised effort depends on the liberality of our native members. As the cost of living steadily increased they nobly denied themselves to maintain the work at its normal level. But the strain could not be indefinitely sustained. During the past year it began to tell very perceptibly. Then when, a few months ago, the severest scourge which has ever visited South Africa - the influenza epidemic - swept with such brutal effect through the country, it brought us for the time being to a standstill."(1)

An unfortunate consequence of this degree of financial self-support was that many natives came to see their financial contribution as the essential feature of the faith. Some believed this action was increasing their credit in heaven. Further it became a matter of honour to give the sum of 10s. which ensured that the contributor's name was recorded on the roll of honour. For instance, the Presbyterian Churchman recorded an instance where an evangelist no longer able to work, rose before the congregation and in giving his 5s. lamented that this was the first year he had been unable to give 10s. or :

"One man after having made his offering rose at a later stage and said he was so ashamed of a brother in the audience having presented nothing that he would give an additional half-crown."

In both these instances was personal honour more important than giving? It would be unfair to judge individuals as to their motive. What is important was the system's susceptibility to misuse because the mission was so dependent on the African for finance. Hence the possibility existed for the African to value Christian commitment not according to the fruits of the spirit but in consideration of the amount donated.

The Mission found that despite the African's emphasis on church donations it still needed additional finances. To  
1. PC April 1919 p40



meet this need it devised a unique system of fund raising. This resembled a traditional church concert except that the audience instead of paying at the door, paid once inside, to have a particular artist perform in preference to another. In other words, if one took exception to the singing or dancing of those on stage one was able to discontinue the act by offering money to see another group perform. Similarly if one had been enjoying an act and it had been discontinued because another party preferred other entertainment, one had only to outbid the last offer to have the act continued. In this way rivalries were set up between different sections of the audience who became quite rapturous in their endeavours to secure their brand of entertainment. This banter between parties resulted in greater profits for the mission. The Rev. Matheson during his time as Superintendent objected to the idea as he found that some members became carried away in the excitement and ended in giving more than they could afford. Nonetheless the practice continued for not only did it provide much needed entertainment but it attracted people not normally associated with the church, thereby providing an introduction which might lead to a deeper interest. Further it provided opportunity for the congregation to meet informally and to share fellowship with neighbouring congregations who participated in the festivities.

In the early years of Johannesburg both the poor white and the Black non-migrant community had lived side by side in the more broken down part of town. With the growth of the city and the increasing protection afforded white interests, the city fathers decided that the African should be separated from the poor whites. Locations were built on the new fringes of the city, to house Africans moved from integrated areas and those whose squatter dwellings stood in the way of white residential development. Thus locations grew on land not wanted for whites and thus

at some distances from areas of white suburban development. One area selected for the natives was situated close to the sewage farm and proved to be very unhealthy and extremely unpleasant. The city council proposed to move the black population to this area as soon as it could build the necessary housing. Meanwhile the PCSA had to continue its work among the African people living in the dilapidated parts of town. The knowledge that the situation was only temporary did little to help the mission since before undertaking any project the superintendent had to consider the effects of resettlement upon such work. The instability of both the town and squatter communities severely affected the basic decision of whether to build a church. The congregation needed a place to meet; that would provide shelter from the weather, quiet and freedom to worship God. This proved difficult in view of the possibility of removal.

What made matters much worse was that dates were seldom fixed for the removals. All that was known was that the African people were to be moved to land adjacent the sewage farm. Even when people received the news that they were next, the delay in implementation was often considerable. The Churchman records an instance where such an order was given to a community served by the mission; the delay was such that the PCSA eventually decided to build a church anyway. In view of the communities' instability and the capriciousness of the removals, the PCSA decided that the only way to overcome the problem and provide some sort of sanctuary was to build it of movable material.(1) At least in this way suitable sanctuaries could be provided in place of unsatisfactory use of hired rooms or people's homes. On one occasion the Rev. Samson reported that the room adjoining that used

1. PC June 1906 p64

for service was a shebeen, (1) the separating walls had cracks large enough for the occupants of one to view the other room freely. Such conditions were hardly conducive for worship ; little wonder therefore that the people sought to erect a church at their earliest convenience, despite the uncertain future of the location. In time, and with the rapid urbanisation of the 1930's and 1940's plans for native locations became more definite, and with the systematic implementation of the scheme removals became more frequent. In view of these changes the churches had to give attention to building a new church in the location. The municipality made provision for church sites, even if the provision produced a street full of churches. An unavoidable situation in view of each church's desire for a site and then for it to be centrally situated. Nonetheless it meant stability. For example the Evaton Church was one of the first to use bricks and the township was one of the first to be modelled on the new scheme.

The implementation of the programme for resettlement was not without its problems. Together with it went the decision to allocate areas to tribes. To meet together under the same roof of relocated church congregations, some members had to travel considerable distances. Such an arrangement was not practical and consequently Sessions, Boards of Management, Women's Associations and other church activities had to be revised. Whilst this was quite simply achieved, the effect on the congregations was not so easily overcome. The change destroyed the particular identity of congregations and of members within those congregations that could not be immediately restored. New congregations had to be forged from ones shattered by the move. Thus a new congregation in one area of the township might have had thirty men who had been elders whilst another only had five. One congregation might consist of fifty percent old members whilst another only twenty. The questions then were how to order the new fellowship? Who were to have positions of authority? Which group of old members would control the new church? The answer to

such questions could only come in time. In the interim the mission, the black church remained underpowered as it sought to solve internal disruptions to the neglect of its evangelical duties. Hence the concentration on regrouping of the tribe rather than on strengthening the church was cause for serious concern. The new situation affected finances : the African was not so keen to give to a fellowship no longer of his choosing. For a moment he lost his sense of belonging and with it the obligation he felt toward his fellow. Any loss of community was serious since the urban African was already separated from his people by his situation. He was alone in the city and needed to be part of an association in order to believe not only in himself but in others. His membership of a church and its dependence upon his support had met such a need. He had been able to see positive results as first the church was built and later furnished. This engendered a feeling of belonging and of having some part to play in the course of things. This unity, this common goal, had been sufficient to bind the people together even in the midst of the most threatening instability. However, when the long awaited move came and the community was dissolved, many men found they had to face it all alone because what had formerly held them together was gone. The significance of these moves for the township mission was therefore not inconsiderable. Building churches and paying evangelists' wages first and foremost depended on a feeling of community. Any upset to that feeling affected finance and so seriously affected the functioning of the church.

From the above two points have been made; first that the mission depended on the African for finances, to such an extent that they determined much of the mission's function ; second, the scale of donations was governed by a feeling of community - a giving together for the benefit of all. We now turn to the effect tribalism had on christian unity.



This is particularly important here because African resettlement came to be according to tribal groupings. Before advancing to that stage in the history of urban development we need some consideration of the earlier situation. The figures for 1905 show that tribal differences were not significant in the composition of congregations. It is reported that amongst the urban converts were: fifteen Cape Colony natives, nine Tshongamas, twenty Zulus, thirty-five Basutos and two Bechuana. (1) Such ratios were common at later dates, an indication that this pattern conformed to the tribal ratio of the Reef. (2)

Thus these tribal representations formed an integral part of the nature of the Reef society from the outset. Moreover one tribe did not prove itself more open to the message of the Gospel than did any other. Hence the mission in the location was confronted from the very beginning with multi-tribal congregations. Hamilton wrote :

"It is fortunate there is a certain affinity between all the dialects spoken by these tribes. Otherwise our work would be rendered more difficult than it is."

He goes further for writing in 1911 he says that despite the number of tribes and the confusion of tongues

"all these tribes fraternise and worship under one roof". (3)

There is no evidence that tribal divisions played any part in the early history of the Mission. Rather the African was more concerned to find some sort of identity in the confusion of Johannesburg. This search for self was a direct consequence of the breakdown of traditional life; tribal unity, customs and values disappeared in the change to urban life and the close interaction of cultures. The native urban dwellers found they shared a common factor in their search for urban identity. Moreover they all

1. PC Feb 1905 p211

2. PC Feb 1905 p163 : Dec. 1908 p144: May 1911 p 30

3. PC April 1911 p50

found themselves legislated against and denied certain rights which by 1919 were forming a rallying point for intertribal opposition.(1) Hence though the urban African still spoke his own tribal dialect much of the culture and custom of the tribe was lost to the developing city culture.

Despite the factors which moulded the urban Africans into some sort of unity, some divisions remained. In the service of Thanksgiving for instance, it was customary for each individual as he rose to give his money, to make a speech of some sort. On one occasion Hamilton tried to speed up the service by requesting that the speeches of thanksgiving not be translated into other tongues. This suggestion was hotly disputed and the missionary was informed that under no circumstances would this be acceptable. (2) Further it is interesting to note that language was important amongst branches of the women's association. When the foundation stone for the new Johannesburg central church was laid, (3) the association had been very active in raising funds for the building and had also collected money for an inscription on the foundation stone. They wished later generations to remember their effort in the building of this church. But as both Zulu and Xhosa women were involved each group argued that the stone should be inscribed in its language. They wished that people of their own tribe should know that Xhosa or Zulu women had contributed to the building of the church. Eventually the stone was inscribed in both languages. With Africans, and with the Afrikaners the processes of urbanization sometimes left little other than their language to those caught up in the changes. There was no reason why one African language should predominate. Rather if any language were to become common for all people it would have to be one of European origin. In this way no tribe would succumb to another but both would find common expression in a language, which with no tribal connections, could become

1. PC May 1917 p33  
3. PC July 1917 p32

2. PC Nov 1919 p135

the lingua franca of the location community. The effect of this on the church was that despite the unity achieved in gathering the tribes for combined service, the service had nonetheless to be interpreted into the various dialects of those present.

This intermingling in the church service required interpreters. Not only did interpretation lengthen the service but it made preaching all the more difficult. For instance it is recorded that the missionary often spoke in English; his sermon was then translated into two other tongues. Missionaries reported that this procedure called for special skills on their part. They had to be concise, their imagery was restricted to those Africans who could understand, and to confine themselves to short, clear sentences. A case is reported of a preacher using an image totally foreign to his interpreter; and only after explaining his meaning was the interpreter able to find a word to convey the idea.(1) The problem with interpretation was that the author could never be sure that his meaning was properly conveyed. Even when the missionary was able to speak the dialect it did not always solve the problem as he might consider a particular word to convey his meaning when in actual fact he had misunderstood the word's meaning. With the introduction of native evangelists the situation was made easier. They were able to follow the missionaries' meaning much better than most interpreters and hence were more likely to convey the right idea. Moreover they were able to preach to people of their particular tongue thereby compensating for the missionary's lack of knowledge. These Black preachers were not rejected by the town community for it was too integrated to allow a man's tribe to affect his ministry. As long as his message was interpreted into their dialect they were perfectly happy. This did not apply to the rural areas where tribal solidarity was much less affected by the urban pressures.(2) Here the people remained within the

1. Father Cloud, Community of Resurrection 1960

2. P. ... , Pietersburg FSCA Congregation 1960

tribe and demanded a minister of their own number, (if he was black). The only tribal consideration was the one of dialect. Beyond that the Africans were happy to worship together and to work on the same projects. The degree of integration achieved by the Africans was a major factor in the decision to move them into tribal locations. The government feared the development of a completely integrated native society whose unity came from shared city life. Such a community would separate itself from tribes in the rural lands and come to regard the urban location as their home. The government believed that by building tribal locations the rural connections would be maintained and the Africans would once again come to view these lands as their rightful home. In this way the urban community would not be permanent as the tribe would long to be with the ancestors. In the event, this idea failed because the urban Africans had been so long in the town that many know no other life.(1) They no longer belonged to the lands but to the town and had no desire to move from their present dwellings. Consequently the tribal locations rather than achieving the goal of their designers placed an arbitrary division on the urban black community, a division which was ignored by the people themselves as they were not party to any ideas of racial purity. The location remained an integrated community where Africans of different tribes mingled freely. Church services, although the building was for instance in the Zulu area, were nonetheless integrated. Therefore the attempts to separate the tribes failed to have any observable or detrimental effect on christian mission.(2)

One final section completes the picture. This deals with the differences in mission between one congregation and another. In the evidence to hand and from the reports of various superintendents of the north-west and central

1. The world of Not Nakasa, The Classic ii (1966) p50
2. Father Claude CR



mission districts it would appear that no single congregation could claim any remarkably unusual feature. Yet there were differences between mission centred on Johannesburg and that in Pretoria. Unlike Johannesburg, Pretoria had no mines or public works of any magnitude to provide work for large numbers of natives.<sup>(1)</sup>

With the exception of Pretoria itself, mainly a residential town, work in the Northern Transvaal was rural. As a result these congregations tended to be the poor relations of Johannesburg because they lacked the same financial opportunities. Further church membership was smaller and less likely to expand as the city was not in need of an increased work force. Moreover the young people preferred the option of work in Johannesburg so Pretoria was staffed by the more mature African. The man who wanted to be with his family was able to enjoy some measure of rural life. The same is not true for those in Johannesburg. Therefore what was significant was that Johannesburg tended to draw the young, those who had given up hope of life on the land, those who were finished with the traditional ways of life. These people were brought together to face similar trials, restrictions and peculiarities of Johannesburg life. As a result the Johannesburg community demonstrated a certain uniformity both because of the nature of the population and the conditions affecting it. In looking for any differences between congregations, these were really only possible when the communities were vastly different; for instance Johannesburg and Pretoria or educated and uneducated. The latter consideration did not much affect congregations within the Presbyterian tradition as the mission church already conformed to the class structure of African society. By this one means that the PCSA membership was comprised of the Black middle class, not all of whom were literate but were nonetheless more disposed toward a conservative standpoint.

1. PC May 1912 p60.

These people tended to be much the same and therefore appreciable differences were only noticeable in comparison with the Ethiopian congregations.

Johannesburg's diverting attractions faced the missionary there with a much more serious question of lapse of membership than his colleague in Pretoria. Almost half of his congregation came to him from rural congregations, and upon arriving in town many handed in their certificates and expressed interest in the activities of the Presbyterian community. Within a month or two many had disappeared without trace.<sup>(1)</sup> The chief reason for their absence was employment at some distance from the church, which made attendance impossible. Others came to the church. Nevertheless the number of lapsed members was remarkably low. At no time did the figure for those disciplined rise above twenty in one year. This was extremely low when the congregation comprised some one thousand people. The fidelity of the majority was even more significant when one remembers that many were migrants and therefore more susceptible to various diversions. The city congregations were in the vanguard of change. They were exposed more openly to the degrading influences of industrialisation and were more removed from traditional influences and structures. While these factors are important considerations in themselves one must also be aware of their positive influence for they made real adaptations and real dependence on what was now in the gospel easier than for the tribesman. Nonetheless the situation of the urban native was far from idyllic and whilst his experience of a new world might lead him to accept the values of Christianity more easily, they could also strip him of what values he had. Pretoria, with its links with the tribe and with the land could depend on these to moderate the life of its native community.

A further difference between the two was the concentration of youth. In the outlying regions they remained subject to traditional bonds of discipline. But in town often both parents worked and were forced to leave the children to roam the streets in their absence. Some of the Women's Associations tried to organize creche schemes but ran into difficulties with staff and finance. Schools were built in earnest from the late 1930's but even then were insufficient to meet the need. In the face of loneliness and with many idle moments the children ganged together. As a consequence they became a threat to the peace of the township as the older children especially, began to look for "kicks". The violent and anti-social nature of the problem was the final stage of a process which the PCSA or any other church was unable to stop. Many youngsters continued to be educated on the streets where they learned to survive on their wits and where every man became a target. In order to combat the loss of these children to crime the church had to provide all the help it could. Unfortunately this was minimal and with both parents and educational facilities not meeting the demands or even requirements of the children it is little wonder the situation became progressively worse.

Johannesburg thus created its own community, vastly different from anything else in South Africa. In the period under review the problems and variety of influences of Pretoria could not compare with those affecting Johannesburg. Johannesburg was an industrial island in the middle of the highveld in which the compelling unifying factor was being a "Johannesburger". The unity afforded was greater than the tribal divisions which the government sought to foster. Yet the diversity of influence and people also prevented them from effective united action. For the church, the mass of people, their problems, trials and temptations proved a work of enormous proportions. The Church had not only to preach the Gospel but had to devote herself to social, economic, and political conditions as they affected the

lives of so many within the townships.

The rise of Johannesburg and its rapid industrialisation brought with it a certain amount of unrest, because the city attracted both Black and White unskilled workers. The latter, used to having the Black man as his servant, was not disposed to have him as an equal or worse still as a job seeker of equal potential willing to work for less. In the new situation both were unskilled and could serve only as drawers of water and hewers of wood. Nonetheless as industry expanded it required more skilled men. In the conflict over jobs and job opportunity, industrial action by white mine workers on the Reef often proved volatile. For instance following the industrial unrest of 1913 - 14 the Presbyterian Churchman reported :

"The attendance at all our churches on the Rand was reduced by about half and contributions fell off to a corresponding extent. In the course of a few months, had things resumed their normal condition, many of those who had gone might have returned. But towards the end of the year (1913) symptoms of industrial unrest again became apparent and pointed to a repetition of the events in July."

It continues a little later :

"Services were regularly maintained by the evangelists unless when it was utterly impossible to do so. In spite of the greatly attenuated congregation's preachers went from station to station, exhorting and admonishing their fellow-Christians, and publishing the Glad Tidings of Peace to the heathen. How far their efforts, and those of similar workers in other missions, helped to steady and control the minds of the natives on the Reef has not been fully appreciated."  
(1)

In 1922 such a situation arose again: with the first signs of trouble, many of the natives returned to their home lands. This proved to be a thorn in the side of the industrialists;



confidence in the status quo was not quickly restored to the native heart, with the result that they did not return to work immediately. As a consequence it was a while before they seemed willing to return in the numbers necessary for mining and industry. Not only did the people leave. Consider the following :

"The lawlessness and rioting which accompanied the upheaval produced an excitement amongst the natives which led the authorities to place restrictions on their movements, and, for the time being, much of our outstation work came to a standstill."(1)

"By the end of February all direct communication between the stations on the Reef was stopped. It became unsafe for natives to travel any distance. No Session or Deacon's Court meeting could be held during March, and with the proclamation of martial law evening services had to be abandoned. No reliable information of what was happening on the East or West Rand could be obtained but disturbing rumours came through and, judging from what occurred in Johannesburg, these rumours..."(2)

Though the two instances recorded are reported for 1914 and 1923 respectively they demonstrate a quality of life found in the locations. Because the natives occupied the position they did these incidents usually ended with the government restricting their movements isolating their communities and thereby preventing the spread of "danger". Such measures affected the ability of the church to carry the Gospel to these people. Thus the problems connected with Johannesburg were not confined to the degrading effect of urbanisation on the Africans. Nor was the Black community safe even when they moulded themselves into some sort of unity among all the diversity. Ultimately they remained dependent on the white man and his decisions affecting their social, economic and political future. As long as white society carried the frontiersmen's suspicion of the missionary and continued to degrade the black the mission remained subject to the threat of restriction and the withdrawal of white support. Despite all that, the mission community remained and continued to serve as a refuge and a source of strength. Perhaps the reason for

it was, ironically, those very restrictions, for they bound the African together striving as one people to build churches ; something which gave them life, individuality, and a reason for being, in a world that often attempted to keep these good things from them.

Finally, we look at location worship. Like the Zionists, the Mission Christians, saw worship of God as the one thing that would always remain untouched and indelible. Yet their means of devoting themselves to the uncorruptible differed from their Zionist brothers. Instead of surrendering themselves to frenzied worship the mission communities preferred to obey the timeless laws of God. Communion became for the adults the law above laws.(1) It was considered essential for one to attend. Missionaries recorded attendance figures of not less than 70% for such services. The lowest attendance figure being in some places as high as 84%. Sunday collection was a further important ritual, when each member proceeded to the front to offer his or her gift. This practice may have other origins but it sometimes engendered a spirit of guilt that one's offering was too small or irregular; it had become an unwritten law of Christian commitment. One must not too hastily judge these externals; much worship was offered sincerely. The fault only arose when worshippers were obsessed with the externals of religion or with desire for proper performance that did not reckon with the Spirit. For all that propriety in African worship still retained a place for spontaneity. An instance is what were known as special evangelistic services. These went on from seven pm. -often right through the night and into the next day. At such services hymns were sung and each person as they felt led, offered testimony. Such exuberance was not limited to these occasions but was often present in regular Sunday services. Singing, much of it bordering on a spontaneous sing-along immersed all in the rhythm of the song, as they took parts in the harmony. The rhythmic sway of the body might move into dance before the Lord. Spontaneous prayer was also an important feature. It did not follow a minister's directed thought

rather it was a communal sharing in which all united, offering prayers for friends and those near and dear. In essence, they spoke of a normal day to day existence, in which the petitions and thanks of the believer found natural expression in the Christian community. The intensity of the African's worship went beyond a Sunday obligation; it was an occasion for celebration.

The worship was not without its restrictions and difficulties. In a society where a man's life was ruled by all manner of laws it was natural these would affect the Christian section of that community. Pass laws restricted attendance:

"Nor can we ignore that members attending church on Sunday afternoon without a special permit from their employers are sometimes arrested and fined £1., and that legal permission for a native marriage to be performed has been withheld until the bridegroom has paid his annual poll tax of £2."(1)

Pass laws also prevented natives from other areas from attending worship in a foreign church. Hence it even became difficult for the migrant workers to secure a pass to travel from their compound into the location for service. Curfew laws prevented evening worship if the minister was unable to provide the necessary documentation. Even when this was provided, with Sunday as the day of rest, the location officials were often indisposed to act promptly. Another side of this township work dealt with domestic workers who constituted a sizeable portion of the congregation. Even today the Black ministry finds itself having to write letters to the "Madam", asking permission for "Florence" to attend service. When permission was given it often carried the proviso that Florence would be back to set the lunch table and wash the dishes. The strain of this time factor led many of these people to be anxious throughout the service, so that in a number of churches those affected clubbed together, bought a clock and had it fixed to the front wall of the church. Now they

1. PC May 1919 P53F



were able to keep good check on the time. Such a situation arose because the Black domestic was unable to worship in the white church of her persuasion. It became a common complaint for these domestic workers to approach the minister with a request to find them employment elsewhere. They insisted that they were unhappy at their present work. Their real complaint was that the house of their employer was too distant from the church : travelling to and from church was too time consuming. The missionary was unable to meet these requests so to answer the need he decided to hold services two or three times a Sunday to give those in domestic service the chance of attending service once during the day. Whilst this might meet every worshipper's need, it caused an excessive burden for the evangelist and lay preachers, most of whom were already overworked. Services depended on well worked out preaching plans, prepared weeks in advance. These plans were not a failsafe method; they also imposed a certain rigidity and only worked as long as every man was able to meet his Sunday commitment. The failure of one or more of these men to meet their Sunday commitment could disrupt the whole carefully constructed plan.

In conclusion we note that one, the location mission was dependent largely upon the African. From the whites it received little of the support one might have expected from neighbours and fellow christians. Two, the Black community was unstable, for ever subject to removals and relocation in the developing system of tribal locations. Three, the urban African was exposed to the most degrading influences which were all the more threatening because of the breakdown in traditional culture. Four, the community was subject to endless laws governing all aspects of their life in the planning of which they had no part. Thus the miracle was that amid so many difficulties the PCSA was able to establish a mission and that the African joyously



entered into its service, in a manner that ensured the Mission's continued existence and growth. Amid all the diversity of the circumstances and contrary to the pressures exerted upon them they managed to create a unity.

### Rural Mission

Rural mission was out of the limelight: its situation shows the cause. White South Africa was uninterested or apathetic toward people they could see; how much more toward those who were distant or invisible.<sup>(1)</sup> The policy of a self-propagating church was wise but one which nevertheless tended to concentrate work largely in centres that could afford it. Locations with their greater concentrations of people and resources were more able to build their own churches and pay evangelists' salaries. Another factor in their favour was the relative proximity of one location to another which allowed one man to manage a number of congregations more easily than in the rural areas where distances were enormous. Numbers alone gave Johannesburg priority. The chronic shortage of staff meant that the church was not always able to replace men taken from the rural districts, where one man might serve at the most two congregations while his city counterpart was able to serve a large number of location churches when and where the situation arose. Hence the PCSA was more disposed to find an urban replacement as he was needed for more congregations. The ability to travel, to be in contact with numerous congregations was really only possible in towns where there were many more congregations, more transport and smaller distances. Thus in view of White apathy and the mission's reliance upon Black support, attention was focused upon the location as it was the largest contributor to mission.

The Transvaal presented a peculiar situation because of the

1. By and large most white Presbyterian settlers settled in cities towns or railway junctions.

absence of large, well established native reserves. Whereas for instance, the Transkeian missionary could be sure of ministering to large rural concentrations of people in one place this was not so in the Transvaal where rural Blacks, by and large, lived on white farms or on unoccupied tracts of land. These settlements were never very large; the population was scattered and resided wherever they could find a place. Mission had therefore to establish congregations in these small communities while the distance between kraals did not allow one church building to serve a number of rural communities. Moreover the mission was not large enough to enable it to minister to all the small communities (1). Consequently the Superintendent ruled that churches would only be established where there was already a sizeable gathering. Further he decided to leave the determination of which communities would be directly served by the church to the native people. He reasoned that they alone knew where to find the more isolated kraals. Moreover many of these men were migrants who were now returning to their kraals and would take the Gospel with them. Thus the missionary was able to discover communities through his migrant contact. On occasion these contacts came to nothing: the mission often found the rural community too small to warrant an evangelist or he lacked the men or the finance to establish it as an official station. Yet the contact enabled him to keep an eye on any development. Sometimes the migrant who returned proved to be a first class evangelist, building a church and a sizeable christian community with it. Where such development occurred the missionary would give the 'evangelist' all the support he could, until he was able to appoint a full time evangelist or offer the position to the originator of the rural congregation.

In the Pretoria district an idyllic situation presented itself. The rural communities were in close propinquity to

1. PC April 1914 p54

to the town, in many instances the wives of men employed in town being domiciled there. The connections between rural and location mission allowed closer co-operation and greater interest in one for the other. Men in these circumstances were made to feel part of two congregations and so sought the welfare of both. But this situation was not typical: more often the rural church depended on the efforts of one man or a few men, the majority being too far distant to lend any real support or be kept informed. The following was a more normal course for rural mission.

In 1901, the Rev. James Gray baptised a native called Jeremiah Mgwena who was attending the mission at Pretoria. On returning to his home Jeremiah began religious services amongst his own people. In time a congregation gathered around him, and he built a small church.(1) In 1911 this work at Bushbuck Ridge was interrupted by the sale of the farm on which it was situated. With regret the people gathered up their belongings and moved to a spot twelve miles east of the Crown Mine. Here Jeremiah worked for nine months erecting a new church. From time to time he sent letters to Johannesburg, telling first that the foundations were laid, then that the walls were finished, and then that the roof had been erected. Occasionally, (usually once a year) C.B. Hamilton would visit this station to confirm new members and celebrate the eucharist. His stay was short and only allowed him the briefest contact with individuals. Its purpose was more to check on the needs or failings of the evangelist, and to offer advice for the further development of the congregation. By 1919 Mgwena had become a respected member of the mission's staff and Hamilton added to his care the work at Pilgrim's Rest. Although this appointment was a feather in Mgwena's cap, both he and Hamilton feared that the addition might prove more than he had time for. Though Hamilton realised he might be making

1. PC June 1911 p80

unjustified demands he was unable to do anything else because he had no-one else to appoint. Thus Mgwena rose from being a self appointed preacher to controlling not only his first "charge" but other congregations in the vicinity.(1)

Often this procedure was the best means of advance. The rural people were far more tied to tribal customs and therefore more averse to the presence of strangers. It was almost essential that the evangelist be of similar tribe. The PCSA found that by allowing migrants to start rural churches it could overcome the difficulties created by introducing a foreigner to closed rural communities. If the migrant persevered in his mission it was then quite simple to make his appointment official. When this was not possible, the church had to appoint an evangelist from its staff. In making these appointments the PCSA was aware of tribal considerations, but with a limited staff it was not always possible to find a man of the same tribe. In such situations the PCSA settled for the next best by ensuring that the evangelist appointed was accustomed to rural work. This consideration was almost as important as the first, for the community the problems and the situation differed so much from location to location that evangelists tended to minister either to a location or to a rural congregation: once a local evangelist, always a local evangelist.

These were not the only considerations. Because of its "traditional" interaction between Black and white - master and servant, the rural community posed a particular problem. Some farmers and mine managers who saw the African as a servant would not recognise a Black evangelist. A Black minister was inconceivable so they insisted that if the natives on their farm or mine were to receive any Christian instruction this should come from a white missionary. In such situations the PCSA could not meet the requirement because it did not have white men to appoint, so it was left to the superintendent to visit these farms and mines when he was in the area. The arrangement was not very effective. On the other



hand many farmers took the opposite view and urged the church to create a mission church on their farm, since they considered it essential for the wellbeing of the natives. The Rev. R.S.M. Maja related how in his days of rural mission the White farming community would often gather to hear him preach. The practice started with the farmer on whose land the church was built. He usually came down at the time of the service to keep an eye on things and ensure all was done properly. Gradually he began to bring his family and then other farmers until Maja had more Whites at his service than did the Dominee. Maja attributed his popularity to the more colloquial Afrikaans he used and to his being much more a man of the land than his Dutch Reformed counterpart.

Farmers or mine managers were not the only ones who called for mission work; such calls often came from chiefs. Even if they themselves were not interested in religion they appreciated the benefits it provided, particularly schooling (1). It became an accepted part of rural mission that a church without a school was not a church at all. In the Pietersburg district for instance, the failure of the Santu Presbyterian Church to provide a Std. VI class, led to the congregation seeking affiliation with the PCSA. They believed that this action would gain white support and thus ensure that the Std. VI class was provided. Such hope was expressed because the rural Africans placed a great deal of importance on the power of white representation.(2) They were of the opinion that all one White man had to do was to represent them to another for their wants to be met. Another reason why chiefs sought to have a mission established was connected with the change Johannesburg brought to Transvaal society. Many of the young people of the chief's tribe were finding their way to Johannesburg. There they were influenced by foreign practices and when they finally returned to the kraal were a source of conflict within the tribe. To combat this tendency, some

1. PC June 1923 p 33                      2. P.Leader Dec 1944 p603.

chiefs believed the church would both enable the young people to overcome the city's temptations, and keep them from importing into tribal society notions that made for conflict. They reasoned that Christianity with its individual decision and corporate responsibility as the family of God would provide some introduction and safeguard to depersonalised urban life. Political considerations also played some part in these decisions. Many of the chiefs' powers had been taken over by the magistrate; one way of reasserting the importance of his kraal was to invite the evangelist to build his church there, to make it once more the centre of community life. Moreover many of the evangelists were able to give some instruction in health services, farming methods and other practical aids to the community. The chief's association with the church meant that its advice and benefit to the community, was a direct result of his efforts. His invitation had been the start of mission activity; the blessings it brought rebounded to his credit.

Our concern is not only with the evangelists but with their congregations. The growth of Johannesburg affected the rural community. Congregations increasingly came to be comprised of old men and women and young mothers and children (1). While many congregations today are similarly formed even in the most natural environment, this situation calls for some attention, primarily because lack of men meant a lack of finance, a breakdown in tradition and neglect of the lands. Finance was important since before the PCSA or any church could contemplate mission it had to ensure that the necessary money was available. These rural congregations had to be able to pay part of the evangelist's salary and to meet expenses incurred in the building and running of the church. But

1. PC June 1924 p63F

the rural community was not yet a money based society, so the cash available was very limited. Men who had jobs on the Reef gave money to the local church. Part of their wages they sent home to their wives but as this was often essential for foodstuffs and other basic provisions little remained for the church collection. Moreover drought, crop failure and insufficient land often made excessive demands on the money available because the goods that could not be produced had to be purchased instead. These considerations made mission finance in the rural areas very precarious. The PCEA had to consider every appointment carefully to be sure that it operated within these exigencies. Secondly, with more and more men finding work as migrants, family life began to break down. Whereas previously the father had been head of the household, native women now had to assume this responsibility. They educated and disciplined the children, attended to domestic duties and undertook the care of the land. Unable to keep pace the rural community sank further and further into poverty. Moreover when the men finally returned many were either ill or past working; they had been retired for one reason or another from their work and sent home to the care of their families. Because the traditional society was so changed, old people became a burden to communities that no longer possessed the ability to care for their aged. Thus these people added further to the economic burden of rural life. Since the men had been the bread winners, their retirement (with a small pension if they were lucky), meant a substantial decrease in the income of the family. Often this was catastrophic; the family now faced the possibility of starvation because they could neither grow nor buy the food they needed. Fortunately though tragically, a son or two sons had by this stage gone to work on the Reef and were able to give some support to their parents - provided they had not married. Thus the

circle was repeated. The effect of this on mission, beside the unhealthy disproportion of male and female, young and old, was that it had to concern itself not only with evangelism but with the provision of goods and clothing in times of crisis. For the PCSA struggling to meet normal running costs, these additional burdens were beyond its ability and it had to depend upon the public for donations.

Thirdly the lands were neglected. The rural communities could ill-afford the neglect; they depended entirely upon growing sufficient food to live on. The exhaustion of the soil and poor, unscientific farming methods made the situation steadily worse. Moreover the land legislation of the Union Government deprived the native of more and more of the land so that even where the ground was available it was too small to allow a substantial crop. The native farmer could not meet his current needs, much less allow his land to lie fallow or recover. And the situation became progressively worse.

These hardships together with the breakdown of authority in tribe and family gave the church considerable importance in the rural community. It was able to provide a community and an authority outside the tribe or family. Further it gave the rural community new direction as it united them around the cross and regulated their lives with a rule of faith. By restoring their dignity through belief in themselves and in God the Christian church performed a great work by renewing hope. This was far more important than meeting the physical needs of more land and better food. These were undoubtedly important but the extent to which the church might meet these needs was limited. By restoring self-esteem and sharing the Christian faith and hope for life the PCSA was able to achieve far more : because it fired the confidence of people in themselves it motivated them to seek to combat life's shortcomings. Moreover the rural congregation provided opportunity to meet life not as



individuals but as a corporate body. This was particularly important in view of the type of people found in the rural areas. Old men, women and children were far more susceptible to personal hardship and crisis and therefore it was essential that they have a group on whom they could rely in times of trouble.

The value of Christian community can never be underrated. The PCSA found that when it held services in the rural areas it attracted not only the Christians but all the people of the area. They all gathered together to partake of the fellowship even if some had little understanding of the Christian faith. Thus the church meeting provided an opportunity for the community to gather together and share with each other. It became an integral part of the week and by its consistency was able to advise, guide and regulate the life of the community. This consistency enabled the community to believe in itself, to think of itself as having a peculiar identity and to give it a certain stability in the knowledge that Sunday after Sunday it would gather to worship. Sadly though the church became part of the rural community and was accepted into its tradition as a part of rural culture, many believed it to belong to the evolving culture. Though Christianity had not been part of the old tradition it was important now in view of the changes which Johannesburg had wrought on the rural community. Hence though the chiefs, elders and people welcomed the church many felt themselves unable to participate. Hamilton wrote in the Presbyterian Churchman of August 1912:

"He (Chief Magwagwaza) expressed great pleasure at my visit and at the work being carried on amongst the young. But when I explained that the gospel was as much for the old as for the young, he shook his head ... It is remarkable that of our three hundred members in the low country not one can claim Christian parents. Yet the old people are far from being hostile to Christianity, only they have regarded it as something exclusively for the next generation." (1)

Nonetheless the rural church was a vibrant community. The people took their religion seriously. The annual visit of the white missionary was a great highlight in their lives. News of his coming would precede him by a good few weeks enabling the congregation to make necessary provision. On arrival in one area people from all around would gather at the particular station to which he had come. In some cases they had to travel ten or twenty miles to participate in the worship and receive the sacrament. On the appointed day they would set out and because of the great distances the missionary held two or three services during the day to accommodate those arriving later because of time spent on the road. Thus the early services tended to be poorly attended, attracting mainly the locals. By midday the numbers would have increased considerably making it impossible to meet within the church. By evening the whole community would have gathered numbering as many as four hundred people.

"From the time of my arrival until late last night, I have been busily engaged. On Saturday evening we had our preparatory Communion Services, first with the women, and then with the men. Afterwards cases of discipline were dealt with, and it was midnight before I retired to rest. A dozen camp fires close by, each with its little circle of men round it, burned brightly all night, while the women and the girls took shelter in the Church. But there was little quietness. I repeatedly awoke to hear half-a-dozen favourite hymns being sung over and over again. At 11 o'clock on Sunday the Church was packed with an eager throng of cleanly dressed, intelligent looking young men and women. As large a number stood outside, unable to gain admission, but within hearing. I baptized one hundred catechumens, who had been under instruction for two years..."(1)

These services were not governed by time as was the case in town. There were some who had to return to farms or mines before morning but many were able to devote the whole of Sunday and Sunday evening to worship.

1. *ibid.*

The missionary's visit could not be confined to these services where only the young and those close by could make the journey to receive communion. Many of the older people were unable to get about so the missionary himself had to visit them to offer them communion. As his time was limited he could only reach those close to the station; those farther afield he had to leave unministered. Further demands were made on him, which in view of the annual nature of his visit, he was often obliged to meet. Thus he received requests from those present to return with them to their kraal because some there were ill, or because others had been prevented from making the journey. One such case involved a whole kraal which because of severe drought was unable to afford the food necessary for the journey to the mission station. Consequently the whole community had to remain at home but sent word of their plight through others. They requested the missionary to visit them as they were unable to visit him.

Further the rural mission presented problems which were quite peculiar. For example in areas where the cult of the witch doctor was still strong people tended to associate it with demon possession.(1) On numerous occasions Hamilton found himself confronted by people who felt that they were demon possessed and asked him to exorcise them. In order to overcome this problem and others related to polygamy and heathen custom he advocated a resident white missionary. This was impossible and thus the only other solution was to ensure that each rural community had a mature native Christian evangelist in charge. Only so could the people be educated in the way of Christ and guided sensibly in the world of the spirit.

Questions of discipline were similarly handled. Discipline

1. PC August 1912 p 131

had to be left in the hands of the evangelists which meant the missionary had to have confidence in the evangelist. He could never appoint a man to this position without first being satisfied that he met the requirements. With the great distance between the superintendent and his evangelist and with visits being restricted to one a year in some regions, the evangelist had almost complete authority. The superintendent's visits to these congregations involved therefore a good deal of paper work and administration as he investigated the activities of the congregation over the past year. In order to help him maintain control and because few evangelists were ordained men, the Superintendent disciplined, baptised and married all those requiring such ordinances. Thus he was able to keep some sort of control over the activities of the congregation, but ultimately the rural mission and its success depended upon the native evangelist. Though the missionary's coming was a cause for great celebration, Christian service and Sunday worship continued the other fifty-one weeks of the year in the evangelist's hands. Thus like his counterpart in town, though more isolated, the Black rural evangelist was the backbone of the PCSA mission.

The missionary superintendent tried valiantly to maintain contact with evangelists but because of the distances involved and the growth of the work within Johannesburg itself, he found himself unable to achieve more than he was already doing. Even when the Northern District of the mission was placed under the care of a white superintendent he found the work exhausting. (1) The vast distances still remained while land legislation pushed the people further and further away from white areas. The Rev. William Samson records many trips of six hundred to a thousand miles in length, which took as long as three weeks to complete. Much of this was done on roads that were hardly more than tracks (2).

1. PC March 1945 p638

2. PC August 1912



Many of the 'roads' were hardly more than field tracks. Outside of towns, tarred roads were to be wondered at until after World War 2. Thus the situation was little different from that encountered by Hamilton 30 years earlier; the motor car did not meet the expectation it created.

Thus Samson found the motor car more of a hindrance than a help as time and again it became embedded in the mud. Great delays were often experienced before oxen could be found to pull it out. Thus not even the introduction of the motor car proved a boon to rural mission. In Hamilton's day the railroad served as the best means of arriving close to his destination. Thereafter he was dependent on a donkey or his feet. Even contacting rural people was difficult. Before setting out from Johannesburg or later Pretoria the missionary had to arrange his itinerary. As there were no telephones he had to rely on the postal service. He was not always able to verify his instructions with the evangelists and his message was often misunderstood, or the people would be expecting him to be holding the service elsewhere, so that while they were gathered at Church A he would arrive at Church B. Weather conditions could also disrupt rural mission: often the superintendent set out believing the weather to have been fine, only to find that the region to which he was travelling had had heavy rains which made the roads impossible and the rivers impassable. Thus even the simplest of contacts between the rural areas and the white missionary were beset by difficulties. Often these problems prevented the missionary from making his yearly contact; sometimes two years might pass between visits.

In conclusion it is clear that the rural mission presented its own peculiar problems. We have highlighted some of these and we have attempted to show how the church handled them. The following three chapters on education, Ethiopianism and politics will examine how the compound, location and rural mission dealt with these topics.

### Education

Mission in Africa was not simply the preaching of Christ to non-believers but also the interaction of a white, Western, literate society with one which was Black, African and preliterate. Consequently the African was confronted with both Christ and European culture. That he should often have confused the two is hardly surprising since those who brought the gospel to him were not always clear in their own minds how they were to be distinguished. The result was that many church and school Africans began to dress and imitate the customs of White society. Part of the reason for westernisation lay in the educational opportunities which the mission schools provided. Knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic had for a preliterate society a revolutionary value all its own ; it produced much more than the mere imitation of the externals of westernisation. Initially this influence was confined to Mission natives, as by and large, they alone enjoyed any measure of cultural interchange. The discovery of gold and diamonds changed that as both Black and white swarmed to the diggings. There they learned that to be white was not necessarily to be either civilised or Christian; there too they learned that to be Christian was to be different. The Christian church responded to the challenge by following the men from the land into town.

The town situation however was different from the mission experience to date. The community was more violent, varied and with greater tensions and contradictions. In this conflagration of cultures and customs it was essential the church provide an extraneous faith. Religious belief could not be tied to customs or cultures but had to meet a need and to offer a means of salvation which was tied to the human condition with which people could easily identify.

It had to answer what Dr Kenneth Kaunda called Africa's greatest question : 'Who am I?' Conversion in these surroundings could never be enough, for though the first movement of belief undoubtedly filled the believer's heart with overwhelming joy, it was not sufficient in itself to keep him on the straight and narrow ; it was essential that opportunity be provided to grow and <sup>be</sup> nurtured in the faith.

The task of the church was to nurture each seed carefully by ensuring that the convert gained all the sustenance he required. Amongst the rigours, trials and temptations of urban life membership of Christ's Church was not easily or lightly entered into. Rather the brethren had first to bear witness to the faith in thought, word and deed. The Presbyterian church instructed all catechumens for a period of nine months, in the hope that such instruction would meet every new need in the member's life. One part of this resource it emphasised was the Christian brotherhood; the other was the ability to read and understand God's word as contained in the Bible. We now consider this second part, the need to provide practical instruction in the daily business of Christian living, part of which was the ability to read God's word for oneself, derive spiritual comfort and strength and direction from prayerful meditation on its contents. The need of such tools lay not only in the wisdom of common literacy but was furthermore necessitated by the dearth of Christian teachers and the confusion of the sectorians. Thus the initial work of the Transvaal mission aimed to provide not only the opportunity for belief in Christ but also a firm basis for commitment. This activity was perhaps the greatest educational work the church could have undertaken. It did so facing the following conditions: (1) most of the migrants were mature men long past sitting in classrooms learning their ABC's; (2) they were employed fulltime during the day which

made any day school impossible (3) the church had neither the men nor the finances to start numerous schools (4) the vast majority of children lived in the rural regions and (5) the potential growth of Johannesburg and the number of men who served her called for a more practical religious training.

Finally, and perhaps most important of all, instruction in the three R's was held to be the business of teachers and not of missionaries, who with the task of preaching in 1904, to a hundred thousand or more migrant workers, were already hard pressed for time.

Some might point to the unexplored possibilities of rural mission, drawing attention to such institutions as Lovedale, which were centres of both great missionary endeavour and African education. Such a comparison is unfair for the situation in the Cape was vastly different from that in the Transvaal in relation to government legislation, the nature of the community and the date of starting. Moreover many white farmers in the Transvaal were strongly opposed to the idea of Native schooling as African children were required to work on the lands and once educated, might not be content with farm life and farm wages.

Furthermore, the unsettled white politics of the two decades before Union cast a shadow of instability over all church work. The outbreak of war disrupted Presbyterian work entirely by forcing the majority of ministers into exile in Natal. In like manner the Native peoples disappeared into the bush, away from the white man and the prospect of war. The peace of 1902 did not restore the situation immediately; the mines had to wait two or three years before natives regained sufficient confidence to seek employment there. These apprehensive and gradual steps towards normalisation were not absent from rural life. Thus though the rural areas had the necessary children neither the circumstances nor the Presbytery's standing were sufficient



to undertake any educational project. Moreover, Johannesburg, the mission's centre was the heart of the awakening Transvaal, and demanded all the attention and resources of any immediate plan for the Transvaal Mission. As Hamilton was quick to realise, Johannesburg was the centre from which work should radiate out; by concentrating on the city, the church was able to leave the rural work to its migrant worker members, one advantage of which procedure was the time saved in locating isolated Native communities.

Native education in South Africa was largely the prerogative of the various denominations.<sup>(1)</sup> For that reason one is entitled to expect a certain degree of activity from each denomination in that regard. Presbyterian missions had always linked education and evangelisation. Aware of the limits imposed by its slender resources and the need to impose priorities, the Transvaal Mission gave paramount place to evangelisation without losing sight of its responsibilities in the field of education.

With peace in 1902 some support was forthcoming from the Transvaal local authority. As in the Cape, both the Transvaal and Free State set aside funds for native education which were granted mission schools, on certain conditions. As these grants were only given to established schools it was difficult to start new schools without the initial impetus of a government subsidy. Consequently once again the PCSA relied on African self-help for much of the initial work in education. Some public minded Africans concerned with the welfare of the children would begin classes; the church then sanctioned such a development

1. In the Cape black education had been subsidized to a meagre extent a provision which was absent in pre-war Transvaal. At the time of the Bantu Education Act, approximately 90% of Black education was still in the hands of missions, a percentage made possible by government subsidies.

making its church building available. Beyond this limited support the school was entirely dependent upon the Native people ; the teacher was drawn from their ranks and paid a salary by the parents whose children he taught. In time, when the school proved successful the PCSA would endeavour to provide better facilities and seek some type of government grant to help meet expenses. Such efforts might well appear abysmal, were it not for the demanding and time consuming nature of the evangelistic work itself. Under these circumstances, it was the only option open to the PCSA, and more particularly to Hamilton, and the spirit of African self-help both in education and evangelism, necessity fostered is to their credit. Further, the need for schools was not immediately apparent as the white authorities encouraged the concept of an African work force consisting almost entirely of migrants. The idea of urban areas and the programme for separation was only in its infancy so a number of Africans found residence outside of the compounds and non-migrant work. The number involved was limited, as many Africans like the Afrikaner, still preferred life on the land. Consequently they were loath to move to town lock, stock and barrel and preferred to retain some links with their ancestral lands. Some children were nonetheless born in urban surroundings and others whose parents had lost all hope of life sustained from the land, began to make their presence felt. The missionary realised that these children were as much part of Johannesburg as the migrants and other workers. Moreover, unlike their rural playfellows, they had few of the traditional restraints and occupations to keep them busy. Thus they demanded a particular attention. Many felt the best means of ensuring their welfare was to provide schools where they might gain valuable knowledge as well as being protected from all manner of idle <sup>loitering.</sup> Johannesburg soon demanded that PCSA along with other denominations provide the schools needed for a basic African education.

Such ideas brought considerable opposition. In the cities the whites held a common belief that education caused the Native to become a man of ease.(1) Instead of using his body to gain a living wage, he used his head. The most profitable way of doing that, they argued, was to turn to crime. This notion gained additional plausibility as an explanation of the increase of crime throughout Johannesburg.

In fact more educated Africans did not turn to crime. Because they were able to read and write, and had also gained more worldly wisdom, they managed to secure for themselves better employment. An American Zulu missionary goaded by the accusation investigated the situation in 1906 and found that of nearly two thousand criminals in the Durban goal in 1904 and 1905 only five could read and write; that of 265 natives sent to the same goal in April 1906 only two could read and write. Of the 800 students from his own seminary whose lives could be traced, 10 percent were reported as worthless, 20 per cent as good workers but not leading Christian lives, while 70 per cent were reliable men, a credit to school and church. These figures tended to contradict the popular notion. Africans who were left to fend for themselves in the urban situation were most quickly degraded and forced into crime, to make any sort of living. Unless a whole Black generation was to be educated in the streets, it was essential to provide academic schooling for township children. Sadly the majority of whites rejected any such idea because it placed Africans in competition with themselves for unskilled and semi-skilled jobs and gave Africans certain dignity and awareness of their own rights contrary to those afforded by white prejudice. In the face of such opposition and restraints the PCCA had but one officially recognised school by 1909 (2). This was situated in the Roo-de-poort location and catered for thirty children educating them as far as standard III. The Transvaal Government, in recognition of its work, gave a grant of £4 a quarter for the teacher's support; the parents made up the remaining £6 a quarter necessary to keep the school going.

Union in 1910 might have altered the position radically but beyond ensuring a more widespread provision of grants for schooling, education remained much as it had been before. The Church remained firmly in control with the Union government preferring to remain largely outside of African education.

Aware of the vital importance of education for the African people, the Rev. C.B. Hamilton began, after Union, to cast his eyes toward the rural people. He foresaw that the growth of Johannesburg would bring more and more of these people into town. In order, therefore, to secure the best possible future for these people he wished to begin schooling the vast numbers of African children in town and country. Education allowed them better job opportunities and some introduction into the system and values of western, industrial life; they would not need to arrive in Johannesburg completely unprepared and unskilled for the work and life they would have to lead. Yet he found the rural situation more unpropitious than ever.

"In the Lydenburg district the conditions are different. Here there is ample scope for the education of the young. But as there are no native reserves and as the people, including their chiefs, do not possess any land and are therefore liable to be removed at any moment, it is difficult to secure permanent sites for schools." (1)

This situation made a good deal worse with the Land Act of 1913 although the Act did allow the possibility of what became known as farm schools. These required the approval of the white farmer who more often than not saw the influence of schools and churches as a threat to his stability.

At the same time as these developments were taking place the advice of the World Missionary Conference of 1910 was beginning to filter through Mission organisations. (2)

1. PC April 1911 p53

2. PC Jan. 1911 p23.



One of the conference committees devoted itself to the question of African education, and warned against the tendency, Mission so often had, of anglicising the gospel and denationalising converts. It urged missionary societies to present the gospel within an indigenous setting. Charles Hamilton, working on the Reef, found himself adopting to such a practice, not only through his close identification with the people but also because of his dependence on native help. The Transvaal Mission was largely unassisted or dominated by white influence which meant that all staff appointments and mission developments were largely the responsibility of Africans, although the syllabi and the philosophy of education was white dominated. Against such a background, the desire to improve African education resulted in 1910 in discussion for the establishment of a native Teachers' Training College(1). The idea first originated amongst the people of the north Lydenburg district, who as rural people, were supplied by teachers who were little more than socially conscious adults. By 1917 the matter had not been resolved. (2) The Assembly of that year decided that in view of the difficulty experienced in securing suitably trained teachers to appoint a committee to inquire into the situation. Their report published in 1918(3) concluded that having weighed the arguments for establishing a Training Institute, it did not consider that the needs of the time warranted such action. Rather what was more important was that each man should have the chance to accept or reject Christ. In other words evangelism was still considered of paramount importance, which work left little time and money for other schemes.

All the church could do was to teach catechumens to read; the committee consoled itself that this was sufficient since the Bible had on unlifting quality all its own. The very limited resources of the church had to be divided

1. ibid
2. SB report on Native Missions No.9
3. SB 1918 Native Teachers' Training Institute.

between preaching the way of Christ to mature men and the provision of schools to keep children off township streets. It was unevenly divided; the former took most of the time, money and energy available; little was left for African schooling.

The schooling provided by the PCSA was not without other problems. It had become common practice for the church building to be used for the purposes of education. The PCSA received many applications asking it to make its churches available Monday to Friday as classrooms. Initially it acceded to these requests as the best solution to the schooling problem. But as early as 1918 the Deacons' Court minutes record dissatisfaction with the scheme. In this instance the Comet Church was left untidy after school. In 1919 a reference appears to the effect that 'the Wesleyan Church members were to be asked to help with repairs because their children also had use of the church.' (1) These complaints did not herald the demise of the practice as the practicalities of the situation forebode the PCSA from ruling that church premises were not to be used for schooling. It nonetheless highlighted the friction which was a fundamental difference between mission as evangelism and mission as education. Each was a separate department of Christian mission with its own requirements of staff, buildings and intentions. But the provision of separate facilities was quite impossible at this stage especially as many congregations were without a church building.

Another common expedient was to make use of schools previously established by other missions. This took care of the children whilst the mission devoted itself to evangelism. The few schools run by the PCSA Transvaal Mission grew at a steady rate and came to demand more attention. Not only were they an additional responsibility in themselves but

1. Deacons' Court Minutes : January 1919

their administration and relation to the Transvaal authorities involved the Missionary in a good deal of red tape and related paper work. A good example is found in the Deacons' Court Minutes between April 1917 and April 1918, dealing with the provision of a second teacher for the Roodepoort school. The parents insisted they could not afford to meet the salary of a second teacher and in desperation sought aid from the Deacons' Court. The Court looked into the matter and found that the government would not grant any money for this purpose. Unable to assist themselves they suggested the parents form an association to keep a tighter rein on finances and thereby provide a second teacher. This suggestion failed to solve the problem; meanwhile the number of pupils increased steadily. The situation became so bad that the single teacher, overwhelmed by his responsibilities, ceased to have any real educational value. At this point the Transvaal Education Department reached the same conclusion and made £4 a quarter available for a second teacher, leaving only £2 extra to be found.

From the above three points can be made (1) that negotiations and paper work of this nature imposed heavily on the missionary's time table, already stretched to the limit by the vastness of his mission ; (2) schooling was itself limited to the amount parents were able to pay in fees. Without money all the children and goodwill in the world were of little practical value. This consideration limited existing schools, let alone ones that might be considered, and (3) the degree of success a school enjoyed was directly related to the extent of government aid. The Government's centralisation of the fund for African education in 1912 might have been cause for optimism in this regard. Control was still to be in the hands of local authorities but some

hoped the money would be evenly and justly distributed. There might have been some value in this change if from 1925 the money available for allocation had not been tied so heavily to poll-tax contributions. By 1943, 4/5ths of this tax was allocated to African education. Nevertheless African education in the intervening twenty years had been restricted by its dependence on finances supplied largely by the African.

This is clearly attested in the tremendous problems which began to confront the Transvaal Education Department in 1929. Its officials found that the numbers of registered and unregistered African schools were so enormous that it could only hope to control the situation by preventing the creation of new schools.(1) The funds available were over-subscribed so the Department could not consider other cases however worthy. Therefore in order to deal with this backlog and to contain the problem the Education Department called for a limit to new development. Had the funds and resources available to the Department been greater this situation might have been avoided. Sadly these limitations only served to restrict African education, for the five hundred schools in the Transvaal were only serving a fraction of the Native community. The Superintendent of the Transvaal Mission, the Rev. Dugald Matheson joined forces with the Methodists to overcome this difficulty. In the past the PCSA had sometimes used Methodist schools where it was unable to establish its own; the significance of this official decision lay in its indication of the demand for education. Neither church could cope on its own. Matheson realised the difficulties of the Education Department but at the same time was aware of the urgency for more places in schools. The demands from within his own mission were such that he sat on two independent Mission School boards, in order that Presbyterian children denied education

1. Sir Clarkson Tredgold's Report 1929



in the denomination's schools might find it elsewhere.(1) Even by 1929 the PCSA had no day school in the city of Johannesburg. Here, as Sir Clarkson Tredgold's report of 1929 so clearly indicated, the Church's real interest was evangelism amongst the city's huge Black workforce. The six PCSA schools were located in the periurban areas around Pretoria at Schoemansville, Roodepoort, Gomet, Evaton, Klipspruit and Pretoria itself. The Mission catered for a limited section of its membership ; the built in limitations for future development were understandably alarming.

With this in mind it is interesting to note the developments which took place between 1934 and 1937. The first indication of activity is recorded in the Assembly African Missions Committee Minutes of those four years. The PCSA began consistently to deny requests by other denominations for the use of its churches as schools. An even more interesting development was that the church became adamant that Presbyterians should be educated within Presbyterian schools. In part this attitude was at the instigation of the black community. People began to ask : "Why should my child, a Presbyterian, be educated in Methodist or Anglican schools? Rather we must have our own schools." They reasoned that children educated by Methodists would become Methodists and as denominational affiliations were as important as those of the tribe, the potential loss of their children was a serious matter. The Rev. W.C. Mailey extends this idea in a letter written in 1937 :

"The great majority receive their first Christian lessons in Mission Day Schools, therefore a missionary can have a field under his care that promises much fruit and success. We are on the eve of great changes ; the Africans are seeking for education. It is our duty to see that they receive the best education under definitely Christian influences."(1)

In line with this thinking the Assembly Mission Committee

1. PC May 1937 P103 (Letter to the Editor)

authorised in 1936 the building of schools at Germiston, Orlando, and Randfontein with the proviso that others were to be built where and when the situation permitted. Consequently the next few years saw the opening of schools at Vereeniging, Boksburg, Alexandra, Sharpville and Ballon. Significantly two of this number, Alexandra and Orlando, were 'city' schools.

These developments cannot simply be attributed to a desire on the part of Africans for Presbyterian schools or to the possibilities of evangelising the African youth. Even more fundamental than these factors was the rapid urbanisation of the African people from the mid-1930's onward. Scores of African men and women came to appreciate that their only chance of survival and their best possible future lay in the work opportunities of urban South Africa. Driven from their meagre strips of land by the drought of 1933 many resigned the hope of life lived according to tradition. The influx was so great that the Johannesburg municipality was unable to assist African education because all available resources were given to the housing project. The vast increase in family units meant a substantial rise in the number of children in Johannesburg. Consequently the PCSA built schools at Orlando and Alexandra. Now, for the first time, the demand for schools within Johannesburg was such that it could compare with the ever expanding work of evangelisation. These children, with both mother and father away at work, could not be left to their own devices. Realising this need the Assembly Mission Committee embarked on the building programme already mentioned. They foresaw the reality described later by Father Trevor Huddleston :

"But today, in Alexandra, Sophiatown, Pimville and Moroko, it is not the clothes, it is the number, the gang, the weapons which are terrifyingly evident. The tsotsi is youth rotting away, and rotting with fear the society around him. He is problem number one in urban Africa'(1)

Despite its concern and goodwill the church faced a task beyond its united forces. By 1943 of all school going children, fifty per cent were in sub-standards with only 3.48 per cent reaching a standard VI class. By 1954 not more than one third of African children were at school and in some regions the figure was as low as one in five. Individual denominations had neither the men nor resources to meet a need of this magnitude. Even stretched to the limit and with government aid they only catered for one third of the children.

The appalling state of African education was not limited to the meagre numbers of pupils but included the school facilities themselves, which varied considerably between schools. For instance the new school at Orlando had four classrooms, six teachers, sports facilities and offered extra-mural activities such as Pathfinders. Others were like the one at Rietfontein No. 6 about 15 miles north-east of Benoni (1). Here a native married woman started a day school in an old building lent by the owner of a farm. She received no pay except the fee of sixpence per month. In such circumstances the facilities provided did not go beyond the barest essentials. Her main priority was simply to ensure that her thirty pupils gained some sort of education. Hers was not the only instance of this type of school. The Rev. W. Samson wrote :

"Late in the afternoon the men took me to see the New Oakley School. It was built entirely by the teacher, Ezra, and his pupils, and entirely without any expense to the church. It was Frank Mashaba who started the school, teaching without pay just to help his fellows .... There is now a fine big school building with nearly fifty scholars ..."(2).

Hence one may discern considerable differences between the various schools and the quality and range of their

1. PC May 1939 P111

2. PC Dec 1944 p30

instruction. The city schools though more recent were often far better equipped than their rural counterparts. This is not altogether unexpected as the PCSA from 1936 was concerned to provide proper and good schools for the many children of Johannesburg. Inequity attended this development : the new schools, because they had better facilities, were awarded government grants almost immediately, while large numbers of schools like Rietfontein and Oakley went year after year without any sort of government assistance. Ultimately the funds provided for African education were insufficient to make any inroads into the broader mass of African schools. All available funds were spent on the "cream" of mission schools, catering for a small minority of pupils when even the most trivial amounts would have been a boon to many of the rural schools.

The funding available from the Education Department was earmarked for a few essential items : in most instances, this meant only the teacher's salary. Consequently even with a grant, conditions within the schools themselves were far from satisfactory. In 1939 4 per cent of all pupils had no chair to sit on ; only 42 per cent had desks, the rest made do with their knees.(1) The Rev. W. Samson reported on visiting the Germiston school in 1942 (when it was five years old) that the fittings comprised three desks for four pupils, sixteen forms, one table, one cupboard, two chairs, three small blackboards and maps of the Transvaal and Africa.(2) Such statistics are often misleading as for instance, the Troyeville boys' school had thirty-five of its desks condemned as unfit for any purpose.(3) A study by P.A.W. Cook of the National Bureau of Educational and Social Research into Native teachers in 1939, found that though most of the government grant was used to meet their salary, that the pay itself was far less than could be earned in commercial employment. Further the gap between government-paid teachers and those of unaffiliated mission schools differed by as much as £4 a month. Hence

1. PC Sept 1939 p221      2. Samsons Log Book April 1942  
3. ibid



the latter group, in terms of money available elsewhere were extremely poorly paid earning on average £1.2s a month. The effect on the teaching situation was quite considerable for it meant not only that few applied for the position but that those who did were often without formal qualifications. In 1939 for instance 90 per cent of privately paid teachers had no qualifications at all. Thus it was not only the condition of the classroom which was appalling, but also in many cases, the standard of teaching.

In response to the need and in keeping with interest in education the PCSA began from 1936 to encourage white congregational support in the field of education. The Rev. W. Samson realised that support depended on information. Consequently in 1939 he visited White congregations with exhibits showing the conditions in mission schools. The response was immediate : donations included a school bell, flagpost and flag, maps, charts, three thousand exercise books, pens and pencils, education books, football jerseys and pants and even a basket ball. But maintaining the mission required interest and regular donations, not just a once-for-all response. So despite this effort mission education was still very much alone and dependent upon its own devices. The already overworked missionary superintendent could not devote all his time and energy to this problem ; as a missionary he was concerned first and foremost with the spiritual well-being of his charge. Admittedly it is hard to draw so distinct a line in human relations but in the 1930's Samson found that he was unable to keep a close check on religious education in the schools, let alone the standard of secular learning. Recognising the problem the PCSA began to seek for some means whereby tighter control might be exercised over African education. The Assembly called for the registered schools of Alexandra, Benoni, Boksburg, Eveton

Germiston and Schoemansville to be placed under closer supervision, through a local minister. The following list was compiled :

Alexandra	Rev. P. Gordon
Benoni	Rev. G.P. Thomas
Boksburg	Rev. M. Hartsliet
Evaton	Rev. A. Read
Germiston	Rev. M. Hartsliet (pro tempore)
Schoemansville	Rev. K. Craig.

An alternative suggestion was that the Rev. Searle take charge of all the schools. Ultimately neither became the custodians of Native education. Instead the PCSA decided to appoint Mr W. Stewart to the post to take charge of all PCSA mission education. The church hoped that Stewart, with this single portfolio, might in time, shape its educational work into a more effective and better equipped force.

Stewart immediately set to work to eliminate from the Presbyterian mission all unregistered schools. This did not mean he closed them but rather he insisted that all schools should be brought to the same level. It was important, first and foremost, to ensure that the sixteen schools had the necessary facilities to ensure proper education. To this purpose the PCSA allocated an ambitious budget of £6750 for the upgrading of existing schools. By 1953 the number of registered schools had risen to thirteen. With regard to the curriculum adopted in the schools, Stewart was anxious to develop more practical subjects, both as a means of character building and to counteract the false kudos associated with theoretical learning. Further he argued that if the school was to serve its purpose something beyond the three R's must be taught. He had in

mind some form of religious instruction that would prepare the children for the larger world. Essentially he wished to get away from book-learning divorced from life. Wayfarers, Pathfinders and other organisations were encouraged in the more established schools to fit the children for mature, responsible citizenship. Mr Stewart's emphasis on the more practical aspect of education was a boon. Needlework classes were started for the girls, thanks to the efforts of various Women's Associations; an education in carpentry was received by the boys during the sewing period. Stewart died in June 1953 leaving behind a memorial in his organised and well co-ordinated schools. The PCSA pleased with the changes he had wrought in a short three years was convinced of the value and importance of a Mission Education Superintendent. This was also at the height of the Bantu Education Act agitation; the church showed in the new appointment its determination to shoulder its own responsibility at a time when the state had begun to accept its duty to educate all its citizens. Consequently it appointed Mrs H. Maclean to the vacant post. The Transvaal Presbytery at the same time supplied Miss Maclean with a motor car to visit her widely scattered schools. In order therefore to maintain tight control she needed to visit as many schools as possible each week.

The South African government, like the church, was not unaware of the need for better and more co-ordinated African education. Following the advice of the Eiselen Commission on Native Education of 1949, the government passed the Bantu Education Act in 1953. Its explicit policy was to provide Africans with education for a subordinate position in South Africa : a training in accordance with their opportunities in life. The new syllabus was bitterly opposed by most Africans on the grounds (1) that it required mother-tongue instruction up to standard six and most teachers considered

it more efficient to use English as the sole medium of instruction, particularly in subjects like arithmetic (2) that it neglected mathematics which was essential for university entrance (3) that teachers were required to be (or become) proficient in three languages : viz. two 'official' and their own. Many teachers were hardly capable of teaching in one of the official languages, let alone both. (4) That the emphasis was excessively parochial. Ethnic grouping in the schools was strongly opposed as it was designed to foster 'tribalism'. This sort of segregation amongst the Black community was foreign to the idea of Christian mission and was in itself a retrogressive step. Moreover under the new system African teachers were required to work two shifts a day, teaching two sets of pupils, each for four hours. This, it was argued, immediately reduced the quality of education.

The reactions of the churches were mixed. Some, like those of the CPSA decided to close rather than to accept the new conditions, others like the Roman Catholic schools decided to press on without government aid, but those who took this line had their permits withdrawn in 1956. The effect of the Act on the native community was to arouse widespread dissatisfaction. More significant still was its effect on the native teachers : many resigned ; others known to oppose the policy were dropped ; the morale of teaching staffs slumped and with it the proportion of children passing public examination.

Despite these detrimental effects the Act could in some ways claim to have benefited the African. In 1954 there were 5700 schools of which 94,000 African children were taught by 21,500 teachers. Through government control by 1967 the number of schools had risen to 9000 with over 2 million pupils and 35000 teachers. This development was far beyond the potential of the Christian churches, the Presbyterian arm of which had but sixteen registered



schools in 1953 offering nothing beyond a primary education.

In response to the Act the PCSA admitted that the Government was in a far better position to foster education on a significant scale. Indeed it had a duty to do so. The Presbyterian Leader of 1954 stressed that the PCSA did not oppose in principle the idea of state education, but added that "education is the development of the whole man and never merely the training for a vocation. Man must be allowed the endless possibilities of development as a child of God and must never be educated to fit a preconceived place in society." Such sentiment was foreign to the nature of the Bantu Education Act and in consequence the Church stated: "Because we believe the above to be in accordance with the will of God in this situation, we deeply regret that we are unable to support the Government in the theory underlying the Bantu Education Act and its present application to African education." (1)

Beyond lodging its disapproval at the theory of Bantu education the PCSA was in no position to offer a viable alternative. Not only were the number of its schools limited but they were heavily dependent upon government subsidy. The church ruled that it would be irresponsible to try and continue without that aid as neither the Whites nor the Blacks could provide the necessary finance. Consequently it had little option but to surrender its sixteen schools to the Union Government. In doing so it lost a valuable contact with the Black youth of South Africa. Further it left its African children in a school system designed to foster the subordination of the Black in a separated South African society. Admittedly PCSA interests had been small, even with the rapid urbanisation of the 1930's and 40's, however the gain of the principle of state responsibility was more than matched by the loss of the way in which the state conceived and carried out its responsibilities. In place of national education, the state chose tribal, and called it 'national'.

There was a link between the development of education, and the rise of Ethiopionism and independent church movements. The Mission Churches attracted Africans who had a measure of education whilst Zionist congregations were comprised of the lower class. The mission congregations because they were socially elevated were very keen that their children should receive a measure of education. Quite simply then education was an important element in the relation between the mission and Zionist Separatist Churches. One might go so far as to suggest that had education been more widespread, African sectarianism might not have become a self-destructive force.

### Ethiopianism

The emergence of Ethiopianism in the latter half of the nineteenth century is one of the milestones of South African Church history. For the majority of mainline churches it was an unwelcome development as it represented a desire on the part of the African to be free of white control. The Transvaal Mission faced both political and religious forces since racial polarisation found itself in the forefront of the conflict ; not only did the mission incorporate Blacks and Whites but it was endeavouring to work against forces of white boasmanskap and African nationalism. To date the study has been concerned merely to record the development, direction and extent of the Mission work. This however is not in itself enough ; fundamental to the development and history of South Africa and hence to the Christian Church are the political and religious causes of segregation. The following two chapters are thus devoted to the effect of Ethiopianism and politics upon the Transvaal mission.

Ethiopianism first manifested itself in 1872 when the Mount Hermon congregation in Basutoland seceded from the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society.(1) The first permanent secession was however the Tembu National Church founded in 1884 by Nehemiah Tile.(2) This church, together with the Native Independent Congregational Church of 1885, represents most clearly the first stage of Ethiopianism. Both churches were "national" in the sense that they were tribal, confined to a particular people in a particular area. As such their influence was felt only amongst those scattered tribes who for one reason or another chose to secede from the Mission. National or

1. P. Hinchliff : The Church in South Africa 1891
2. Cf Ngongelizwe. Chief of the Tembu recognised as head of Tembu Church and Kgantlame of the African Independent Congregational Church appointing whomever he chose to its ministry.

tribal religious organisations, particularly those where the chief was enthroned as visible head, were prevented as a consequence from assuming universal importance. Their problem, like Henry VIII's was how to make Catholic, a community comprised of a tribe or nation. The cause of this particular rather than universal concentration arose because African society was still tied to the land. In any case the mission practice of comity had tended to foster particularism. Under these circumstances the largest social unit was the tribe or nation. With the growth of Johannesburg more and more Africans found their way out of the parochial world of rural life and into the cosmopolitan cities. Here they could no longer depend upon tribal unity, values and customs and as a result came to form unities outside of the more traditional tribal divisions. Racial and African national interests superseded particular tribal interests. The importance of these developments for Ethiopianism lay in the universal, inter-tribal direction it was forced to take. Hence Mangena Mokoni's Ethiopian Church formed in 1892 represented a significant change.

"It is important to notice the differences between Mokoni's movement and the earlier secessions. These had been 'national' in the sense that they were tribal, confined to a particular people in a particular area. The Ethiopian Church was 'national' in a racial sense. It was an African Church aimed at being the religious organisation for all Africans on the sub-continent. Mokoni's appeal was to a racial nationalism wider than any of the little states of contemporary Southern Africa."(1)

Mokoni gained adherents quickly and true to his ideal of an African Church tried to make the movement comprehensive rather than fissiparous. He approached both Tile's Tembu Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the hope that some kind of union could be negotiated. Union came with the American Church in 1896.

1. P. Hinchliff, The Church in South Africa, P 91.



Significantly the years between 1872 and 1896 had seen a number of major changes within Ethiopianism. The urbanisation of the African had no small part in the accelerated growth of sectarianism. In the thirty years to 1904 only three separatist bodies with a total membership of about 25,000 followers had managed to establish themselves amidst rural tribal people. By 1925 however there appeared to be about 130 "sects" which by the 1946 census had risen to about 1,300 with some 100,000 adherents. (1) Such rapid growth is attributable to a number of factors most of which are allied to the process of urbanisation. For instance the breakdown of traditional life in the detribalised, dehumanised city situation opened the way for religious sects who offered an ecstatic escape from reality or who excluded the white man as ritually unclean or who tended to follow charismatic personalities, in a leaderless society. Either way urbanisation brought a great many more people devoid now of traditional values into contact with a variety of sectarian viewpoints. For the sect leader, the city, unlike the tribal lands, did not demand that he gain the support of the chief and his tribe. Here he could draw his adherents out of the multitude of gathered tribes according to each person's particular religious "fancy".

For the PCSA Mission in the Transvaal this situation was cause for concern. The Presbytery had itself only just resumed responsibility for the work and consequently was concerned to ensure its success. The mass exodus of Natives upon Hamilton's arrival, because of the white Presbytery's arbitrary decision over their leadership, heightened fears that the native would be drawn into the ranks of the Ethiopian churches. The fear was not without foundation as when the Rev. E. Tsewu was removed from the Transvaal charge in 1897 he had started his own independent congregation. Moreover when Bishop Turner visited the Reef in 1898, Tsewu and an elder of his Niekerek, were ordained

1. *ibid* p93

to the AME ministry. Tsewu however did not remain long within the AME church but chose instead to return to a more independent position, a move he was able to make because he had sufficient personal support to allow him to dispense with denominational organisation. The existence of this independent congregation never allowed the Presbytery the chance to exclude the danger of mission losses to that quarter even though Tsewu had failed in 1897 to take his Free Church congregation with him. Meanwhile even more catastrophically, Mzimba had defected from the Lovedale charge and taken 2/3 of his congregation with him to found the Presbyterian Church of Africa. Hamilton's work in the first months of 1903 was precarious for whereas Tsewu had failed to take the congregation with him because he had also embezzled its finances, Hamilton's appointment suffered from its arbitrary nature. Consequently the situation in 1903 was somewhat different from that of 1897. Few people were inclined to follow an embezzler into Ethiopianism but many might if their church became subject to despotic white control, which is what the oscillation between the United Free Church and the PCSA must have seemed to the Native. Hamilton's foremost concern therefore was to convince his Native congregation of his concern simply as a man of God. Being the remarkable man he was, Hamilton succeeded by the end of the year in gaining the support of many who had left upon his arrival. So great a man was he that the Native came to regard him as having a 'black' heart, an accolade given only because of his total identification with the people. Thus much of the Ethiopian danger to the Transvaal Mission was averted because Hamilton's sincere concern was recognised and valued by the native people. Hamilton's success lay in not keeping aloof or divorced from the native but acting, deciding and planning together with them the Mission's future. This policy made the Mission a Christian endeavour undertaken not out of patronage, a bad social conscience or for exploitation but from a united concern for mankind. The Native's love and

respect of C.B. Hamilton shielded the PCSA from much of African sectarian's disruptive and destructive influence for in him the Native found none of the crimes Black Christians usually attributed to the white man. Hamilton's influence was restricted to the PCSA for about the Separatist Churches he could do very little. His success within the PCSA depended upon the Native's personal acquaintance and loyalty to himself but beyond that the forces of separation remained attractive to those whose acquaintance with missionaries was difficult.

Ethiopianism's continued presence forced the church to appoint a special commissioner to investigate the situation and report to the 1904 General Assembly. His report concluded :

"In this invasion of mission fields, successfully worked for nearly a century, we cannot rejoice. From many quarters come bitter complaint that the African Methodist Episcopal Church, like the Ethiopians, is building upon the foundation laid by others. It is stated that their houses of worship are often established in close proximity to churches long established. Their so-called converts are too often drawn from those disciplined and from disappointed applicants for admission to other churches or else from those who for selfish reasons are ready to forsake their first love."(1)

Furthermore the commissioner discovered that in Johannesburg there were only two congregations of any note ; one under the direction of Niekerk, catered for Coloured, and the Rev. S. Ntsike's for the Blacks. They were not the only Ethiopian congregations but were the two most successful thanks to the organisation and discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church of which both were part. Pretoria followed much the same pattern with the AME congregations of the Revs. Mangena and Brander assuming prominence. These figures are nonetheless misleading for the real threat was not how successful Ethiopianism

1. PC Feb 1904 p199.

had been to date but its potential for progressive secession, especially amongst the Zionist and Separatist groups. Perhaps the real issue was that the movement which began as Ethiopianism and broadened into Zionism and independency was the African's logical reply to the policy of segregation which became increasingly explicitly the basis of white social policy.

The church had to address itself accordingly to the problem which at any time might result in the secession of Native Presbyterians from the parent body. Moreover the problem was not simply to demonstrate concern and genuine good faith, for the independent sects were all the while active within the community. This was not so great a threat for those already brought into the Mission fold but it did constitute a problem amongst converts from heathenism. The unredeemed African no longer only heard from the missionary but from the sectarians who often had a church in close proximity to the mission. The PCSA found that the sectarian presence severely interfered with this aspect of its work. The problem arose because the PCSA obliged its catchments to go through a period of instruction in which the candidate devoted himself to the serious business of professing faith in Christ. Usually this presented no problem but the majority of sects allowed admission on a very informal basis. Hence the PCSA had to ensure that its candidates were aware of the importance of proper instruction and regarded it as essential. It was inevitable that many would find the less stringent terms of particular sects more to their liking and desist from further interest in the PCSA. Concern with the right order and discipline separated the mission and separatist churches right down the line; more especially as to the separatist churches always offered the opportunity of a new spiritual home, to those dissatisfied with Mission.

Ethiopianism as a challenge to the Mission churches showed its cards most clearly from the time of Mokoni's influence



in 1892. In essence it was a racial church arising out of the frustrated desire for leadership amongst the Black community.(1) This challenge was to remain unchanged from 1903 - 1960. Concern therefore is now directed to establishing the reasons for the PCSA Mission's success in view of the mounting number of sects and the strengthened political polarisation of Blacks and Whites throughout this period.

Perhaps the solution does not extend much beyond an opinion expressed by J.T. Jabavu to the Native Affairs Commission of 1903 - 1905. In reference to political tendencies of Ethiopianism, he said : "I think it would be thoroughly bad for the native."(2). He elaborated further describing the separatists as succumbing to a madness as great and destructive as that which had resulted in the great Cattle Killing of the 1850's. The same scepticism caused the Rev. EL. Mkhize in 1919 to convene a conference for union among the African churches. The African National Congress realised too that the multiplicity of the sects was destroying not only their religious value but their ability to be an effective voice for the black cause. Consequently the congress assumed charge of the union conference and so raised hopes for a realistic settlement. The discussions however were fraught with difficulties and came to naught. The ANC tried again in 1931 but without success. In 1939 an ambitious programme was launched by a group of African intellectuals, but this as well as an attempt by the Rev. Dimbato start an association of Independent Churches, floundered. Significantly concern regarding the value of the Separatist tradition was limited to intellectuals and intellectually based organisations. For the majority of simple, uneducated people the independent churches were places where they might worship freely as acknowledged individuals.

1. B. Sundkler, Bantu Prophets in S.A. p.66
2. P. Hinchliff *op cit* p93

Thus the movement tended to expand and diversify rather than unify. In 1932 there were some 320 independent churches which by 1948 had risen to 820 ; 1955 to 1,286 and by 1960 to 2,200. From this one may conclude that the independent church movement was very largely a popular movement which fired religious devotion in all manner of people. Its popular support and uncontrolled religious fervour ensured the continued life of the independent church in spite of the misgivings and criticisms of intellectuals. Hence though the opposition of African intellectuals did not contain the movement, their alienation from it and the movement's diversity prevented it from becoming the forum of African opinion and political action.

At one level of African society the independent church movement was very important, at another it was regarded as senseless and self-defeating. Such divergent views within African society meant that the PCSA Mission was not faced at every quarter by the independent "threat". Moreover this two part division of African religion must itself be subject to scrutiny to assess its influence upon the Mission / independent church division. Did the Mission / independent church comply with a natural separation within African society itself? One is led to favour this thesis in view of the census returns from 1946 to 1960 in which the PCSA mission claimed a constant 2 per cent of the African population. (I) 'A degree' of "stagnation" within the other mainline churches compared with the explosion of independent church membership lends further support to the theory. That the percentage of those who following the main line churches never increased or decreased in fourteen years is a sure pointer that those who come to confession within these traditions were confined to a particular section of the community. In the case of the PCSA the 2% whose backgrounds, inclinations and tribal associations (presence of a mission in the area) led them to membership of that church.

An appraisal of the truth of this thesis constitutes the next section of this study.

In support of the thesis we quote Monica Wilson :

"In South Africa there was an early cleavage between 'school people' who accepted mission and pagans who rejected it... Those who accepted Christianity and education became the new elite ; a handful became professional men and women, many got slightly better paid jobs in industry and commerce than did the illiterate and the process was cumulative for those who first secured education made great efforts to educate their children. Inevitably Christians became leaders in the new african communities ; the 'school people' pursued middle class ideals".(1)

The division extended into the independent tradition itself. This is no more poignantly illustrated than in the ostracism of the Zionists by African society. Admittedly this separation was part of their concept of holiness and identity but Sundkler makes the point that the rest of African society considered them outcasts.(2). He carries the argument further suggesting that their ostracism together with their curious method of evangelism through the women adherents alone resulted in the absence of second generation Zionists. (3). One might wonder at the persistence of such sects but zeal and fanaticism have an attraction of their own precisely because they stand out from moderation and mediocrity. Their leader was a John the Baptist priest-type ; pious, mystical, ascetic, a witch-doctor in clerical garb. Their worship centred on the spectacular and mystical; healing, speaking with tongues and numerous taboos with a strong nativistic or syncretistic flavour formed the main expressions of their faith.

The intensity of Zionism's emotionalism limited its appeal

1. M. Wilson Religion and the Transformation of Society 111

2. S. Sundkler. Op cit p47

3. In the second century, Celsus makes a similar charge against Christians: they sneak around making converts of women and children and scuttles whenever the master comes home. (See Sundkler 111).

to the more uneducated. The frenzy engendered provided an escape for the African overwhelmed by the pace and barrenness of modern life. In these worshipping communities he was able to lose himself ecstatically and even catch glimpses of paradise. He was transported into a world where he and God communed and from which he might return to the congregation to share his revelations. Such possibilities were common to all the brethren irrespective of their education or the length of their membership. He was offered immediate communion with God. The importance of this for our study rests in its escapism. Traditional Christianity of which the Mission was a representative, has a tendency to be intellectual, reasoned, staid and to expressing in itself less spectacular and spontaneous rituals. Whilst this sometimes can be lamentable, it places a healthy onus on the individual's honest searching for truth. Tragically the more emotive sects placed too much emphasis on experience and forfeited as a result much of the order, discipline and intelligibility of reasoned worship. Zionism's lack of an educated leadership, the ecstatic and undisciplined nature of its worship and concern with ritual purity restricted its membership to the lower stratum of African society. The middle class pursuits of mission and 'school people' separated them from the lower classes which in consequence limited the appeal of the mission church. With the development of African urban society class divisions became more accentuated as the educated, go-ahead and pro-western element sought values in opposition to the uneducated, primitive state of the more traditional African. For the Transvaal Mission therefore Zionism although claiming a large percentage of the population did not constitute a serious threat as its appeal was to a class of society not usually found in Mission churches. The syncretistic, nativistic element of Zionism was not shared by all the independent churches but the racialism of the Ethiopians in itself placed a limit on its appeal. Many Africans saw that this church was not much



better than the Zionists or Messianic type and being themselves educated and party to the Mission church felt disinclined to leave. Decisions of this nature are rarely based on a single factor, and to ascribe it simply to a middle class preference is short sighted. Some attempt must be made to document more extensively the reasons for this preference.

Firstly, there was a significant degree of congregational participation within the PCSA. The Presbyterian system of elders, deacons, boards of management and lay representation at the meeting of the local Presbytery ensured that the laity were intimately involved in the workings of the church. The PCSA congregations were faced with the business of running their own church. Hamilton made it clear they could not expect sufficient aid from the Whites to carry the mission. Rather they themselves had to see that there was sufficient to pay the salaries and to build their much needed churches. For the African clergy the situation was much the same as the Deacons' Court enabled them to take an active part in discussions on the future of the mission. No important decision was made without the prior consent of this body. They sanctioned new buildings, disciplined wayward brethren and controlled the purse strings. The independent churches and their desire for leadership therefore held no special attraction as the Presbyterian already had the opportunity to exercise any such qualities. Moreover most of the congregations of the mission owed their origin not to the church's decision to work in a particular area but more often were the result of native effort. Since they had been in at the start of their particular congregation most felt they belonged. Their endeavours to build a church, to pay a part of the evangelist's wage and to start a school engendered within the community a conviction that they and the church were one.

The above is in itself not enough for people like Mzimba had already made the short step from their relatively independent position to that of total separation. Having

already come so far why did they not become entirely independent of the white authority? One reason why they chose to remain within the PCSA lay in the church's emphasis on education. This not only provided a service lacking in the community at large but drew the school people further away from the majority of Blacks. In other words the church became associated in the popular mind as being one to which the educated should belong. For instance from the start C.B. Hamilton insisted that all candidates for membership should be able to read before being received into fellowship. Such a stipulation became common knowledge : the community at large knew that any member of the Presbyterian church could read. The ardent desire on the part of many Africans to gain some education in order to advance materially and to be done with the old way therefore kept alive the need for "educated" churches. Moreover the syncretistic practices of the Zionists became socially unacceptable for this class. Yet it must be stressed that church membership was not simply tied to these sorts of issues. Many of the people were devoted Christians for whom service of the Master was their prime concern : it caused them to give so much in the development of their local congregation. Their schooling was simply an ancilliary which assumed importance because of their desire to see their children properly educated and for the breadth of view their decision to remain within an established tradition gave them.

From the above certain pointers in the mission strategy of the PCSA have become evident. Firstly, that the membership tended to consist of those who had some sort of education, who held positions of relative responsibility in society and who in the developing urbanisation would increasingly become associated with middle class ideals. Secondly that the church itself was subject to strict

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control which prevented the occurrence of practices detrimental to the mission effort. Thirdly that the people were given a certain amount of autonomy which enabled them to be associated intimately with the mission.

The above position was not always mirrored throughout the church. The rural regions of the work often told another story. The PCSA found itself troubled on numerous occasions by Ethiopianism and Zionism in these regions. One of the major reasons for this was the lack of communication between the missionary and the outlying regions. Its effect was two fold : one, the rural people were often in the dark about arrangements within the mission (1) and two, individual ministers and church leaders assumed far greater importance because of their isolation. A third consideration was the closer ties of these people with the traditional culture. A number of instances of these types of difficulties are listed below. In one instance an independent minister used the difficulties of communication to advantage. He approached one of the rural congregations and claimed to be sent by the missionary as their new minister (2). The people, unable to verify the appointment, were only too pleased to have him and welcomed him into their fellowship. Later when the missionary made his annual visit to the region he found a strange man in charge. There is only one record of an instance like this but nevertheless it does illumine the possibility of an intruder assuming charge of rural PCSA congregations. A similar type of incident occurred at the Scherensville school where one of the teachers used his situation to advantage by allowing independent ministers to use his classroom for services. With regard to the third issue the Rev. S.C. Dornan reported in 1931 a growing tendency to revive initiation schools within the rural area around Pretoria. The local session had two cases of Christian girls who were forced by their parents to go to such schools. The court expressed uncertainty as to the reason for the resurgence suggesting that it was either the work of nationalists or a preference for tribalisation on the part

1. Samson's Log Book : June 1943 and July

2. Samson's Log Book : August 1944

of parents. Yet despite the increased possibility for Ethiopian influence in the rural setting it is significant that it never gained a secure footing in the church. In the instances recorded above for example both the independent minister and the teacher at the Schoemansville school were, once discovered, removed at the insistence of the PCSA congregation. In the case of the initiation schools it is important to note the revival was at the insistence of heathen parents and not a desire expressed by the Christian children or the Christian community. Finally we must note that the loyalty and devotion of the rural Presbyterian congregations was no less than that of their urban counterparts, despite the increased possibilities of sectarian influences.

Having recounted in some measure the influence and effect of Ethiopianism and independent churches upon the Transvaal mission one important consideration remains. The Bantu Presbyterian Church, first constituted an autonomous body in 1923 by the United Free Church of Scotland, was in effect an internal Ethiopian church. The issue facing the PCSA here was not whether to recognise this church or whether it constituted a problem but the nature of its relation to the BPC. The 1934 General Assembly recognised the essential identity of the BPC with the PCSA and resolved to "seek arrangements for the fullest coöperation with that church in the work of ministering to the native people of this land". The difficulty facing the PCSA was the PCSA's multi-racial character at least in so far as ministry extended to both Blacks and Whites. The problem lay in the apparent division of the two races. Union only existed at General Assembly and Presbytery level whilst the individual congregations were subject to the customary racial divisions of the country. Friction with the BPC arose therefore over the issue of the PCSA urban mission. As far as the BPC was concerned, in view of the divisions within the land, this work was their responsibility. The PCSA pleaded on the other hand that the BPC should desist from starting new congregations where a PCSA one



already existed. This problem arose through the BPC's desire to maintain contact with those members who had moved to town. In order to try and resolve the issue a joint committee to negotiate toward union was appointed in 1935. The report submitted to the 1937 Assembly offered the following solution:

"The crux of the matter seems to be this: that the Presbyterian church feels that, as a church of Christ, it has a duty of service to the Bantu peoples and must answer this call for help that comes home to the heart of every Christian, while the BPC regards the whole work among the Bantu peoples as its own province, an obligation which should be met by it alone."

Hence the only possibility of a settlement was through Union. During the years 1938 - 1958 the Joint Committee continued its deliberations all the time proposing union as the only possible solution. The factors militating against this move hinged on what were called the practicalities of union, such as the language to be used in General Assembly. Fundamentally it was the racial issue again; each side wished to retain or gain agreement on issues which had negative connotations for the other. Ultimately the PCSA was loath to surrender its operations amongst the Black population in the belief that the work was both essential and legitimate in spite of its racial division. Convinced of its place in this field the church favoured union as the only alternative.

In conclusion the following points can be made : (1) The PCSA Transvaal Mission attracted an educated class of African which in consequence separated the mission from much of the African influence (2) The degree of native participation was considerable thereby neutralising any frustrated desire for leadership, and (3) The church believed in essence that it had a responsibility in Christ toward the African which forbade it from ever handing over the work to another church, under circumstances that would have only increased the separation between White

and Block. In response to the Ethiopian<sup>3rd</sup> independent challenge the PCEA had continued with its work amongst the Block people of South Africa confident of its decision. In response to political changes, the second part to this section, forms the basis of the next chapter.

### Politics

The conflict between church and state, missionary and settler, protestant and catholic, 'English' and Dutch Reformed Churches has been endemic in South Africa.

The early missionaries were first regarded as the agents of the British government by the white settlers : today they are regarded by many as agents of British imperialism, the exploiters of the native people. Popular white opinion has continuously accused the missionary of making the native cheeky, unfit for work and of destroying him by undermining his traditional culture. Such valuation and interpretation of the missionary's work often portrays him as the instrument of Satan rather than as the bearer of good news. Much of the criticism results from retrospective reflection upon his life and work and much from the day to day confrontation between his ideals and those of the rest of white South Africa. This criticism cannot be ignored even when it is unfair. The missionary and his activity must be judged not from a particular national viewpoint, but as the servant of God. The direction of this service has often been misconstrued as being moved not by God but by an all too human dislike of particular ideologies, governments or people. There were elements of truth in such accusations; the real difficulty lay in the multiplicity of factions and interests ; who was not a partisan? For instance the Afrikaner represented a threat to both the English-speaker and the African whilst they each in turn constituted a threat to the other two. Within the church are fundamental theological divisions which affect each denomination's view of God and of man ; these differences must be considered because they alter the denomination's response to the conflicting interests of South African society. Hence essential to the study is an examination of the theological differences between the various churches for these will help establish the reasons behind their respective social interpretations. Theological difference is basic, for each church's ministry is actively devoted to service of its particular doctrine, in the understanding that it is the

will of God. This gives to its action a fervour and a sanction which compels its ministers to believe the church's particular racial and social teachings are the will of God for South Africa. Each denomination is therefore devoted to its ideal of the Kingdom of God, striving to bring it more fully into being. Having said that it is important to note that the Church is the community in Christ and is itself not the State. Therefore though the Church has a certain relation to the State she might follow different laws within her own denominations.

In the examination of theological differences and their effect on the racial and social teachings of the respective denominations I propose to follow R. Buis. Attention will be directed to the DRC, PCSA and Roman Catholic Churches. Roman Catholicism represents a position in opposition to the one held by the DRC whilst the PCSA follows the DRC in everything but the social interpretation of its shared doctrine. The DRC believes according to Buis,

"Ethnic diversity is in agreement with God's will. God has deliberately encouraged the formation and development of different races, peoples, languages and nations. Every people have their own particular 'distinctiveness' and 'character' which it is the duty of the Church to maintain and preserve. This 'distinctiveness' and 'character' is threatened by the mixing of the races and peoples which is therefore sinful. This policy of no racial mixing is maintained in places of public worship where separate churches have been built for Africans, Coloureds and Whites." (1)

The Roman Catholic Church does not consider skin colour as significant for membership, and the concept of race is also given very little prominence. 'It is the practice to speak of different races, but there is truly only one race, the human race. The Church claims that all people should communicate and mix freely with one another regardless of skin colour. That this would be to the benefit of all



concerned. In Roman Catholic Churches Blacks and Whites worship together and no deliberate attempt has been made to build separate Churches for them. The Church does not oppose mixed marriages between Blacks and Whites, and the policy of the church is the gradual integration of all men into a Christian community regardless of skin colour. The church feels that a common society where all persons have equal rights and obligations would be in the best interests of all South Africans. (1)

The official teachings of the Presbyterian Church state that Christians have a moral responsibility to examine and if necessary to criticise the social order. The Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa is officially a multi-racial church and in the eyes of God all men are sinners regardless of such factors as race, skin colour, language etc. All Christians and among them Presbyterians, are under an obligation to love their neighbour regardless of culture or race. In practice however, such factors as language differences, cultural differences as well as political and social considerations, have resulted in congregations being formed on racial lines. (2)

"If these three denominations are compared on their attitudes towards blacks we find that the DRC is opposed to racial mixing, mixed marriages and any form of integration between blacks and whites. The DRC claims that her teachings are in accordance with the will of God as revealed in the Old and New Testaments. The PCSA, with similar doctrinal standards to those of the DRC but a different interpretation of them, manifests a very different attitude towards blacks. The Roman Catholic Church with its policy of integration and comparative indifference to the concept of race, also reveals an attitude towards blacks which is very different to that of the DRC." (3)

Hence it is quite obvious that each denomination had its own particular response to the racial issues confronting the country. Moreover it was not an issue which could be

1. ibid p17

2. ibid p20

3. ibid p21

ignored for on the one hand the Church was ministering to Blacks who were socially and politically less than equal and on the other was faced by a political ideology based on racial discrimination supported by the largest white church in the country.(1) Politics and religion, Blacks and Whites, were inseparable in the daily interaction of church and state, so it took a bold theory to separate them. The DRC went so far as to state that:

"The Christian state under given circumstances would be justified in taking legislative action and prohibiting racial mixing and mixed marriages. So drastic a step would be motivated especially by a substantial danger of levelling down and intentional obliteration of lines of division if the level of civilisation and the spiritual and moral values and distinctive character of the people were endangered by the weight of numbers of 'strangers', or if the distinctive existence and the maintenance of the peculiar identity of the people is threatened."(2)

Both the Roman Catholics and the Presbyterians disagreed fundamentally with this view, believing instead that Christ had come to break down barriers between man and man, and man and God. Therefore in the eyes of God no rightful claim can be made to divide mankind on criteria such as culture, language, race, etc.

These divergent views affected relations between the various denominations, the Church and the State and each church's programme for mission. The DRC wished to create separate and independent Black church ; the 'one true Church' of the RC could only support a united, integrated fellowship and the PCSA whilst favouring integration, was aware that the practicalities of the situation often demanded separate black churches. Moreover for the PCSA the situation was not as clear cut as for the most part it failed to follow a set policy toward the South African situation. 'Unlike the DRC and the RC the PCSA was not committed to any particular

1. 52% of the total white christian population are members of the three Dutch Reformed Churches.

2. *ibid* p14

'extreme' view for human relations in South Africa. The PCSA had no official statement with regard to socio-racial issues and much of the initiative fell upon individual ministers. Thus it is hardly surprising that Buis found a wide variety of opinion with regard to South Africa's racial problems within the ranks of the Presbyterian clergy. This failure to provide a rule of law or allow themselves to become subject to the prevailing ideology of the country thereby cancelling any effect the call to Christian living may have had. Consequently the degree of integration within the PCSA was minimal precisely because unity was simply recommended; this in effect limited multi-racial endeavour to the convictions of the individuals, clergy and laity. Too often separation was excused by an overemphasised stress on the practical difficulties of meeting for united worship.

Thus in examining the Transvaal Mission and South African politics a number of issues are fundamental to the relationship between the two. It is not enough simply to concentrate upon the missionary but one must consider the theology of his particular church, its statements and actions on social and racial issues, the degree of white support and the effect of government legislation on the lives of Black Presbyterians and their society as a whole. Much of the day to day response i.e. that of the laity and missionary has already been documented in chapters specifically devoted to the daily business of mission. This chapter is devoted to church council decisions on political issues in consequence of government legislation and its effect on both Black and white Presbyterians and their relation to each other. The three issues to be examined are laws relating to land, labour and identity.

Before dealing with any particular legislation and its effect on the Native and the PCSA's response to it some background information is essential. The nineteenth

century had seen the creation within South Africa of ethnic areas set aside respectively for Black and White populations. As long as the society remained predominantly rural, this programme might have provided a reasonable solution to many interracial problems. In essence it provided each population group with land and the opportunity to work and enjoy the benefits of their labour.

"However with the changed times and circumstances - that is, when the discovery of diamonds and gold shattered the subsistence economy of South Africa by setting her firmly on the path of industrialisation - the policy of territorial segregation began to lose much of its original validity." (1)

So far from wanting Africans to stay in their Reserves, European governments in South Africa urged them to come into White areas to work, where agriculture, mines and industries all clamoured for African labour. Elaborate machinery was introduced for recruiting it, and farmers complained that their labour was 'stolen' either by more attractive terms offered by industry or by other farmers. With all these demands for African labour, more and more of the African population only had a most tenuous connection with Reserves. They became permanently alienated from their old tribal lands, to which they were unable to return because of their overpopulation. Therefore the conditions which had made the system of territorial separation workable had altered: no longer was there a comparatively small agricultural population with plenty of grazing lands and a subsistence economy. The population of man and beast had increased out of proportion to the available grazing; industrialisation and a money economy had supervened. The effect of industrialisation upon human relations in South Africa was that the towns became the main arena for racial conflict. The whites were unable

1. L. Marquard : The Peoples and Policies of South Africa. 222



to do without the Africans' labour whilst at the same time had no wish for them to become permanent residents in town. Moreover their move to town was paralleled with that of the poor whites who consequently found they had to compete with Africans for unskilled jobs. Such competition was thought unacceptable, so steps were taken to safeguard white privilege. Nonetheless the Africans found themselves more and more dependent upon mining and industrial job opportunities. Their dependence on the city extended beyond work opportunities for many found their ties with the lands had long ceased to have any real value ; their home was no longer the reserve but the location. The influx of Africans to Johannesburg away from the impossibilities of rural life and towards the better job opportunities and the more exciting nature of city life, led the authorities to introduce legislation to safeguard the interests of the whites; to prevent the cities from becoming Black Reserves and to ensure that a sufficient number of Africans remained on the land to meet the labour requirements of white farmers. These conflicts and considerations brought about by the process of urbanisation and industrialisation have been the cause for much of the legislation on land, labour and identity. For the Transvaal Mission with interests in the rural regions and in the city, the revolution of South African life and the accompanying legislation had direct relevance, for it affected the lives and prospects of the African people and hence also the mission congregations. The effect of this legislation upon the day to day life of the African brought the PCSA in relation with the effect, nature and purpose of these laws as they affected mission.

Chronologically the Land Act takes precedence and hence it is fitting that it should form the starting point of this discussion. As early as 1914 the harmful effects of this

type of legislation was making itself felt. C.B. Hamilton recorded the following :

"The Native Land Act is affecting, to a greater extent than we anticipated, our mission work in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. Our stations at Grootvlei in the Heidelberg district have ceased to exist ... The owners (of land), following the example of so many other white landlords throughout the Union, notified the natives that they must leave. The first word of this that reached me was a letter from our esteemed elder at Grootvlei, Petros Mahalanyane, announcing that their time had expired and that they were about to depart without the remotest idea where they would find a resting place." (1)

Such legislation added to the burden of mission and required practical decisions besides, not merely because of the nuisance of these moves but also because of the unfair purpose to which it was put. It became common practice for those who wished to clear their land of Natives to issue them with eviction orders now possible in terms of the law. The absence of a place to go did not matter ; the government passed the act without making the necessary provision for those removed. It seemed to believe the African could be pushed endlessly further and further out, and occupy territories at the extremities of white interest and influence. Prior warning that this irresponsible attitude was without justification was given by men as highly placed as the Chairman of the Native Lands Commission who informed the Minister of Native Affairs :

"if the defined Native areas are examined it will be found that most of them are already largely occupied by natives, and that there is not much room for more, whilst in some cases the lands are so poor and so malarial or so distant that the natives would not go to them." (2)

The issue facing the church was not simply to find new

1. PC Nov 1914 p158
2. PC May 1917 p59

postures for their disturbed congregations, but also the large questions involved. For the PCSA, in contact with the native peoples, the practicalities of politics were obvious. The church saw for instance <sup>not only</sup> that there was insufficient land <sup>but much of what was offered</sup> was of poor quality. These observations were strictly practical and not politically motivated or designed to criticise the governing power. The dilemma was to find some way of highlighting these problem areas without appearing politically partizan or being accused of assuming a political role.

The Report on Social Service for 1918 expressed the viewpoint of the church quite clearly. It was recognised that the church had no business being associated with any political party but that "it was the duty of Christians to help in the rebuilding of society on the basis of right and Christian principles." Yet precisely because the church is not associated with a particular political ideology its actions are often governed by a broad overview - one which in an age of nationalism is already a potential criticism. In relation to the land question the PCSA's position was to remain unchanged. The church could not be party to the idea they represented - at least in the form in which it was applied. From the start it had expressed disapproval, any retraction of which, would deny not only the Lord but the people, Black and White, whom it sought to serve. The PCSA was not after all concerned simply with political theory or correct theology. The life of the church is in the people. Thus the Presbyterian Churchman of 1918 commented on the Native Affairs Bill :

"It has, in the first place, unified the Native peoples as nothing has ever done before. In the second, the Bill has already created a spirit of unrest and suspicion, not to say of antagonism, to the white races. The policy of segregation means that a vast number of natives, a million or more, must either leave the land on which they dwell or

become servants of the white farmer."<sup>(1)</sup>

The church could never hope to function in a society in which interpersonal relations were strained without making some effort to correct this prejudice.

The Act of 1913 proposed to separate Natives and Europeans by demarcating areas within which all land would eventually come to be held solely by one race. The goal was a chess-board based on the ownership of interests in land. The schedule of the Act set out certain areas in each province which were destined to become Native areas. But the Act recognised that these areas were quite inadequate for native needs and provision was made for the delimitation of additional native areas. The proposed Natives' Land Act Amendment Bill of 1927 was hailed as the fulfilment of the promise inherent in the 1913 Act, that further land would be provided. In response to these proposals the Johannesburg Joint Council of Europeans and Africans stated : "Nothing seems to be more certain, if carried into effect, to usher in a period of misfortune for the native peoples unparalleled in our history."<sup>(2)</sup> The council listed their reasons as follows :

1. The natives were not wealthy enough to buy the necessary land.
2. The released areas were restricted to tribal groupings which prevented others who might have money from buying in that area. Consequently some areas were overpopulated and others devoid of human life.
3. No provision was made for the urban African outside of these tribal reserves. By restricting them the council feared that disenchanted urban people would be the cause of unrest in these rural areas if forced to live there.
4. The land set aside was sufficient for 1916 but not for 1927.
5. There would at once be brought into existence a vast

1. PC Feb 1913 p13

2. PC Oct 1913 p153 and PC Nov 1914 p157



body of natives faced with the grim alternative of seeking land at impossible prices in inadequate areas or becoming whole-time servants of European masters.

The intention of the act was to eliminate native squatters ie. natives who commonly were allowed to reside on land owned by Europeans without any contract for service but on a more or less give and take basis between themselves and the owner. If the native elected to retain his status of 'labour tenant' he would have no guarantee of fixed residence on any farm for more than one year. Indeed the labour tenant's plight might be worse than a slave's because the slave had the chance of spending his life with a single master. There was no free land to which the squatter could move, so he would be driven, once the list of labour tenants was full, to realise his stock, and, if he could find an employer he would become a fulltime servant. Should he fail to find an employer he would probably be prevented from residing in any town, and even if he was allowed to settle in a native township, the Colour Bar Act might be invoked to limit his chances of employment.

The above was the type of problem confronting the church. The issue was essentially practical. It had to do with people and the way in which they were allowed to live their lives. Obviously certain laws are necessary for this end and many serve to enhance the quality of life. Law per se was not the bone of contention; rather, those laws that served not to enhance life, to protect the young, the weak and the old but which actively and unfairly placed restraints upon one group for the benefit of others. The Presbyterian Churchman came out strongly against such laws and the reason for their introduction. It argued that a

" civilization that can only preserve itself by closing the doors of progress in the face of people who are struggling upwards cannot be made safe

at all, and is not worth preserving."

While this was indeed the purpose of much of the legislation, the policy of separation with the Reserves as the recognised homes of the Africans, was a programme already made obsolete by the industrialisation of South Africa. Consequently instead of being to the african's benefit the law was more often a hindrance preventing him from ever achieving a dignified, secure and stable way of life. Basic to the land legislation of the respective governments was the system of white preserves from which the african could only be excluded if one could point to Reserves set aside for his exclusive use. It did not seem to matter how inadequate, how overpopulated and exhausted the land might be. Concern on the part of the church with regard to land legislation was expressed from the Transvaal Mission's interception. The land question was basic to the policy of separation and has consequently been strengthened by numerous Acts of Parliament. It has prescribed where the african must live willy nilly, and in so doing, caused bitter hatred. It has been cause for unnecessary removals and upheavals, and has demanded still more laws to limit the conditions of residence in towns. In the face of these laws the PCSA could not remain silent because the legislation directly affected the Mission and its proper function. Removals, upheavals, poverty, disproportionate concentrations of male and female, young and old, workers and those "retired", restriction of movement and the temporary nature of migrant residence all bore on the manner in which the mission functioned. Most of the restraints were unnecessary save to bolster the policy of separation which was itself contrary to the teaching of the church.

"The land laws were also labour laws. Africans lost free access to land, but were permitted to draw sustenance from it as labourers and herdsmen.

Land laws largely ratified the conquests of the nineteenth century, dislocated many africans from their traditional societies, and transformed them inter alia into a landless and exploitable proletariat. Labour laws and regulations followed a consistent pattern of discrimination between whites and africans in opportunities for employment, conditions of work, and recognition as workers."(1)

After Union, regulations under the Mines and Works Act of 1911, and later the Mines and Works Amendment Act of 1926 and the provisions and administration of the Apprenticeship Act of 1922, effectively excluded Africans from many skilled occupations. The civilized labour policy of the Post Government discriminated in favour of the impoverished whites who had been moving into the towns since the beginning of the twentieth century, and such discrimination remained a persistent feature of the wage structure.

It was chiefly in urban areas that the non-whites became acutely aware of social colour discrimination. Here they were in closest contact with white society and made up by far the greatest proportion of the industrial work force. Initially their restriction to unskilled work and the lower rate of pay did not constitute a problem but with increasing westernisation many became ambitious for themselves and their children. Desire to improve was frustrated at every turn, for the urban african found himself confined to the most menial types of employment. His residence, so close to the heart of white South Africa was in it self an anomaly in the policy of segregation allowed only because practicalities forbade the possibility of having all South African mining, industrial and commercial interests served by migrant labour. The stifling of initiative, the impossibility of all Africans living well off the land, and the legislation to restrict the number allowed to find work in town were causes for bitter resentment. The african had first been driven off the land to work and serve where the white man organised and

now job reservation, the pass laws and the Urban Areas Acts made him a necessary but unwelcome participant in South Africa's mineral wealth. He found himself in the curious position of being wanted for his labour yet unwanted because of the threat he posed to white racial purity. For the church and Christian mission the anomaly of the African's position meant the mission was continually within the same state of flux, caught in the uncertainty and restriction of Black South Africa. Moreover the mounting tensions across the colour line - the entrenchment of white prejudice and growing Black resentment contained the possibilities of increasing or more violent conflict between the races. Consequently the Christian Church found it <sup>self</sup> grappling more and more with the nature of the law, its purpose and its probable effect on mission and Black/white relations. The uncertainty and subjection of African life to White domination placed the mission churches in the unique position of being party to both groups. Hence with the Blacks the mission felt the sting of the law whilst at the same time being associated with those who passed the Act. In answer to this dilemma the PCSA formed a number of Assembly Committees whose purpose would be to discuss the relation, effect and the church's response to mission, the African and the legislation of separation.

The PCSA believed that Christianity was applicable to every department of social life; that ministers and laity should devote themselves to the study of those things which made for peace. In this regard both the Society Service and Life and Work Committees of the General Assembly gave time to discussion of social problems caused through restrictive legislation, the effects of industrialisation and urbanisation and working conditions. A report was published in 1920 on the Church and the Social Question which stated that :



"The Assembly instructs Presbyteries to arrange wherever possible, Conferences with Labour and Social organisations for the sympathetic discussion of social, economic, and other similar questions which affect the well-being of the people, in the light of the Kingdom of God." (1)

In 1928/9 the Native Missions Report followed a similar track strongly urging the Government to appoint a special economic commission to study and report on the conditions of the life of the Native people of the Union of South Africa. A view which began to gain more and more prominence in the 1930's claimed that the individualistic gospel of the early missionaries was inadequate for modern conditions. It had little to say about a fair wage for those who were grossly underpaid, or about the filthy slums described by a Genevan visitor in 1930 as worse than the 'hell hole' of Bombay. The PCSA had to assume a responsible and compassionate attitude toward social issues as they were interwoven with the very fabric of urban life : failure to do so, it was argued, would give the African just cause to discard Christianity as a narcotic; and missionaries as those who came to pull the wool over the eyes of unsuspecting natives, while other whites stole their possessions. In keeping with the need not simply to preach Christ verbally but to take a stand on issues affecting the day to day life of the African the PCSA sought union with the other denominations in the formation of a National Advisory Council:

"representative of the Ministry and laymen of the churches, which would direct, unify and express the mind of the churches on all questions regarding the spiritual welfare of the nations." (2)

The Christian church had come to realise the importance of taking a vital interest in the lives of the African people to the point of becoming their champions in the 'cause of

(1) B.B. 1920 The church and Social Question

(2) PC March 1935 p 49 National Advisory Council

social justice. Moreover denominations realised that it was not sufficient for them to make separate pronouncements but that they should follow a uniform policy toward these issues and let this be known. Hence in 1936 the Church of South Africa in Council was constituted. The Committee on Native Welfare (later Social Welfare) saw its task as :

"a concern for the disintegration of Bantu communal life in towns and the establishing of a new morality; pass laws and the possibility of their abolition ; the policies of various municipalities concerning urban africans, and the wages of africans in towns ... the Committee was non-party-political, but was to be the means of expressing united thinking on Christian lines as far as the welfare of africans was concerned." (1)

Tragically the CCSEA was never to represent the full range of South African churches. From the earliest it became divided by the language and cultural divisions of the whites to which were added divergent views on the country's "traditional" attitude to race, and so gave rise to these reported words uttered in 1951 by the then Prime Minister, Dr. D.F. Malan : "there are Churches in South Africa which have much to say about their interests in non-Europeans, particularly their political rights, but as far as spiritual work is concerned, stood far behind the 'Afrikaans Churches'. The dilemma of the church was obvious ; should it be party to socio-political action or not? If the answer were no, then africans would discard christianity as the tool of the white government, and if yes, some would accuse those denominations of failing to concern themselves simply with preaching the Gospel.

The complexity of Church and Mission in South Africa was obvious for both whites and blacks expected church support for their particular standpoint. Moreover there was not only a conflict of interest, but the Church, being in essence the body of Christ, could not be party to any one people or one political party. Further, denominations were theologically disunited so they followed differing attitudes toward mission. Thus the church neither had the power nor

the jurisdiction to become the liberator or champion of one class of people. Rather Christ called His members to preach salvation to all men that they might be brought into the family of God. The upshot was that some denominations became unpopular with the government whilst at the same time "failing" the African because of their inability to pursue the matter of injustice as forcefully as some desired. This did not mean the church ceased to play an active part - but it was now one of support rather than holding the banner.

Before concluding this section attention must be focused on the view that "apartheid" protected the African, and thus was to the benefit of Black and white. This view maintains that the white government has honestly legislated for the benefit of the African. The government claims to represent and serve their best interests in a way that cannot be improved upon. Neither the African nor the English churches agreed with this view. If they had there would be no point in this chapter. Therefore the concluding section is devoted to African representation and the rise of "anti-government" bodies committed to change.

Prior to Union in 1910 the Transvaal Africans had no political rights. Union brought no relief as the South African Act (1909) left the question of the non-European franchise with the respective provincial governments. The Africans political muscle was significantly boosted with SA industrial advance, which brought together a previously disunited and scattered people and afforded the possibility of some united action for African rights. A self-conscious movement of African nationalism began to rear its head in 1912 with the formation of the South African Native National Congress. The Congress failed to become a movement for African political rights and became instead an agent of militant trade unionism. On a broader front the majority of Africans looked to the British Government for

the period prior to and immediately after union to secure their political rights. With the advent of war Africans accepted a moratorium in the pursuit of justice for all. But peace brought little change and the Bantu Union of the Cape Province, newly inaugurated in 1912, strongly attacked the developing doctrine in which the Black was forced to accept inferior employment. The Union declared that Britain sold the African down stream as their principles of government were rapidly being superseded by the old, crude, savage ideas and methods of the defunct republics of the Transvaal and Free State.

Black resistance remained low key for a number of reasons. 1. Tribal divisions still prevented African society from uniting with one voice. 2. Hope was still entertained that cooperation between Black and white within the mission churches, the Joint Councils of Africans and Europeans (1921) the Institute of Race Relations, welfare organisations and the Community Party (1921) would form a powerful forum for change. 3. The track record and disunity amongst the Ethiopian movement and other nationalist movements did not yet inspire confidence in their chances of success. 4. African opinion varied regarding the nature of the threat and the response of Black nationalism to it. The ANC began to gain ascendancy as it followed Cetshwayo's doctrine of racial solidarity : salvation for the African lay in first creating a Black united front. It argued that tribal divisions and jealousies were the cause of ineffective opposition and the gross ignorance and backwardness of the people. The activities of Congress took the form of petitions and deputations to the South African Government overseas, passive resistance, and participation in the developing labour movements and in the preliminary stages of organization for non-European unity. Pressures from the African people were ineffective against governments which persistently rejected deputations, forcibly checked demonstrations, suppressed militant leaders,



transformed chiefs into government servants and systematically extended domination.

South Africa in the 1930's and early 1940's entered a period of markedly increased industrialisation. This economic growth, particularly in the private sector, was greatly stimulated by the war which increased African participation in the modern exchange economy. By 1946 there were two and a half million Africans economically active in the modern sector of the economy. The increase in urban, industrial Africans heightened their chances of achieving political change, but disunity amongst the tribes continued to prevent effective organisation of the gathered resources. Nonetheless an important foothold had been secured: the urban reservoirs, indispensable for industry were in themselves contrary to the pure doctrine of separation. Industrialisation increased the contradictions between rigid political separation and the changing social and economic patterns of association, and hence provided quite varied and conflicting patterns of race relations. Africans had the choice between being racially exclusive or associating politically with other groups. The dominant policy within the ANC remained one of interracial political action, although there developed an exclusive form of nationalism amongst the Youth League. By and large the political attitudes of Africans were still determined by those of the whites: Africans responded in varying degrees according to the line adopted by the white authorities; white nationalism would be met by an equally fanatical Black one. In this regard the second World War served to stimulate contradictory trends in white politics; one toward interracial cooperation and liberalism and the other toward extreme racism.

The Representation of the Natives' Act (1936) provided some means for relating the Africans to Parliament. 'It brought

together both Black and White in common political action, although the Whites only represented the liberal minority. Like the African Advisory Boards in local government, and the 'Native Conferences' of African chiefs and leaders under the Native Affairs Act of 1920, the Council was essentially an 'intercalary' structure, inserted between the dominant white group and the subordinate African masses for their better government. A sizeable number of Africans hoped that change might still be gained through participation in the government's schemes. They felt that increased economic interdependence seemed to promise that the totalitarian régime might be overcome. Some indication of increased voluntary co-operation between Africans and Whites is given by the growth of African membership in the mission churches. Membership rose from less than two and a quarter million in 1936 to over three and a quarter in 1946.

But government policy remained unchanged. Hopes that with peace the Atlantic Charter would be applied to South Africa soon dwindled as the government and the ANC disputed over interpretation of its principles. The ANC with the increase in hostilities furthered its international connections by participating in 1945 and 1947 in the Pan-African Congress. Important too, at this time, was the attack upon South Africa at the United Nations. Not only did this herald world interest in the African's plight but it afforded them an international platform from which they could freely attack South Africa. Black protest could no longer be kept silent and the possibility existed that it might gain international support. Such developments made the African increasingly independent of home grown white support. The National Party's victory in 1948 clearly indicated that South Africa was in no mood to move toward an integrated society. This was enforced by the repressive legislation of the 1950's which effectively silenced much of the Black protest and with it the

resolute boldness of its white support. Organisations like the ANC banned in South Africa, reconstituted themselves in exile and deprived of voice at home gave vent to their feelings in international forums.

The tragedy for South Africa and for the Christian Church was the force with which "apartheid" had been implemented. In the process it had angered, wronged and antagonised many people who despite their present hardships had hoped that together with sympathetic whites they might bring some change. But at no time did the policy of separation look in danger and from 1950 it was ruthlessly and mercilessly implemented. The government by banning numerous organisations effectively destroyed much of the network for interracial discussion and cooperation for a free South Africa. The legislation also had the effect of dividing the peoples of South Africa into either Black or white ; a division which made it increasingly difficult for men to communicate and express solidarity with one another. While repression diminished the forces of opposition within the country, it also furthered the cause of separation by drastically reducing opportunities for communication and knowledge.

In conclusion, political, economic and national considerations gradually increased the gap between the Christian Gospel and the mind of the populace. For the mission church matters were made difficult because it was unable to devote itself to a political end. Ultimately, therefore the Church became more and more excluded from the lives of many Africans. It emerged later, revolutionised, and as much a state (national) church as some of the white denominations. Sadly this development was the result of laws which antagonised the Black race and prevented the Christian Church from doing its duty - for duty was conceived differently by Black and white South Africans.

division of South African society forced its way into the Christian Church -preventing it from uniting both population groups in the brotherhood of believers. Instead Christian national brotherhoods flaunted themselves as Christ's Church.



### Conclusion

Any study of the Transvaal Mission in the period 1903 to 1950 has to consider the social, economic and political history of the day. It was a period in which the country began to emerge from a land based society into a modern industrial economy. Further the national state was first constituted in 1910 and consequently many changes were made in government because of the battle for power. There was also a revolution in the customs and culture of the country as a result of cosmopolitan, high-density city living. Thus social, economic and political factors affected society at all levels. For the study of mission, which has to do with that society, these influences were no less important. Yet the Christian Church whilst concerned with such issues as they affected the lives of individuals, was, in itself, a community quite separate. It constituted the people of God and as such claimed a certain distinction from secular society. Thus though one has to pay attention to the world in any study of the Church, one has to be aware that the Church has its own laws, beliefs, and customs which require particular assessment. The essence of this study is to determine just how closely the mission was the community in Christ.

The question of community takes on special importance since coupled with the advance of South Africa was a rising nationalism. This is significant because nationalism did not compass the whole of South African society but only the Afrikaners community. The movement was limited to one ethnic group which sought to maintain its identity. Such sentiment would not warrant careful consideration had it not affected the development and life of the broader community. The Afrikaners' control of government saw their exclusive racial nationalism legislated into the very framework of South African society as law which

hindered interracial contact, and fostered division according to national and tribal limits. Such division was impossible in industry, mining and agriculture where both Black and white were dependent upon one another. Further, the city of Johannesburg brought Black and white together not only in their work but in a shared experience of its attractions, temptations, hardships and the rural life left behind. Moreover the Native was all this time becoming more civilised. Education became an important goal for a good many and with it the desire for an equal opportunity. However their efforts were frustrated; rather than gaining any rights these were progressively denied them; including finally all Parliamentary representation. This process was by no means rapid but was one nonetheless which concerned the forty-seven years of mission under review. What is important therefore was that the denial of rights in opposition to the westernisation of the African led finally to a state of conflict. Up to 1960 this had not taken the form of armed resistance but the incident at Sharpsville was indicative of the prevailing mood amongst the people. Numerous organisations for resistance were in existence by this date but they preferred to follow a more moderate line believing dialogue with the government would bring a solution. For the church the development of various Black consciousness movements proved to be a factor militating against mission for many Africans began to rely on these "political" arms to achieve just ends. The church began to lose its position as the champion of native rights. Whether this was justified is not a question relevant to this study. What is, was the development of just such feeling amongst the Black community. It would be wrong to see Black nationalism as a prevailing influence amongst the totality of Black society but importantly it was prevalent amongst the educated people, those who by and large filled the mission congregations or held positions of "leadership" in the community. Theirs was a rallying cry as nationalistic as that of the white authority. Therefore the significance of this development for South Africa was that it divided the people according to national

but for the Church of Christ, various nationalisms within the Southern African state proved contrary to the gospel and the interests of the faith.

Thus at one level South African society was moving further apart and creating a situation where the two racial groups increasingly faced each other in confrontation. The society was being split into Black and white - a polarisation of interests. Now whilst this was the outcome of the social, economic and political considerations arising out of the industrialisation of South Africa, attention has also to be paid to the segregation of the Christian community. Obviously the division of the community played some part in that history but in the final analysis attention has to be directed to determining the nature of the Christian fellowship in the light of a universal Gospel.

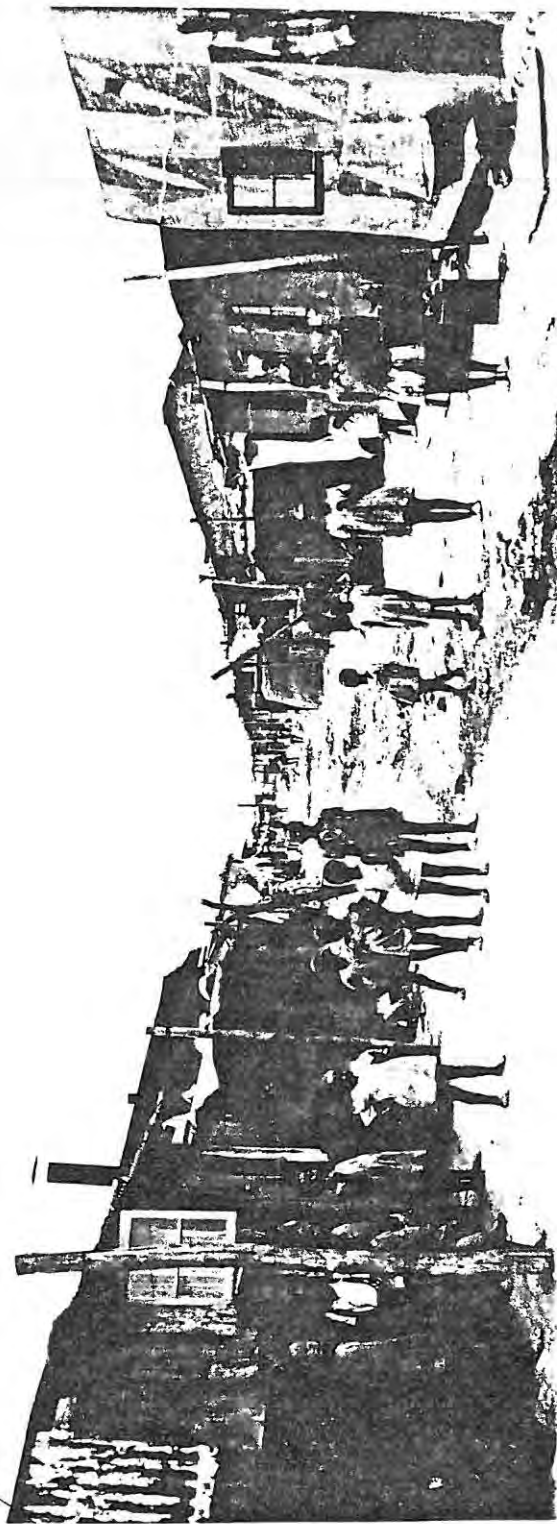
Relations between the mission and white congregations were not as good as they might have been. In part this arose out of the difficulty experienced in maintaining contact across the racial barrier. Such considerations prevented integration with the local congregations but this did not affect the possibility of fellowship with domestic Africans. Unfortunately the master/servant relationship prevented this from developing as neither the master nor his servant felt free enough to unite on Sunday as brothers in Christ. Despite these drawbacks some white congregations were involved in the business of mission and helped to maintain some degree of universal fellowship. Other organisations such as the WA, the Laymen's Missionary League, and Young People's Association also worked amongst their respective counterparts in the Black community. Thus it would be fair to say that the mission church was not totally isolated. But having said that it is important to note that this aid, though valuable, was dependent first and foremost upon the existence of a

native Christian fellowship. By this is meant that the native was largely responsible for funding their church; for undertaking its ministry and for maintaining its vitality: white help was generally only given to sister organisations within the Black church; white congregations being unwilling, unable or against any course of action where they were called to play any significant part in the development of Black mission. In view of the separateness of the two communities this was not in itself a bad plan since it ensured that the Black church grew from strength to strength. But also it led to a situation where many whites could neglect Africans in the belief that they were cared for by their own people. While this was true it had had repercussions for the Church for it served to heighten the division the implementation of "apartheid" laws created. Thus whilst there was a degree of interaction between Black and white this was never entirely divorced from ideas associated with master/servant, educated and uneducated, and the 'have' and 'have-not' relationships of South Africa: men were rarely seen for what they were but for what they represented. This preoccupation prevented the church from ever attaining full integration.

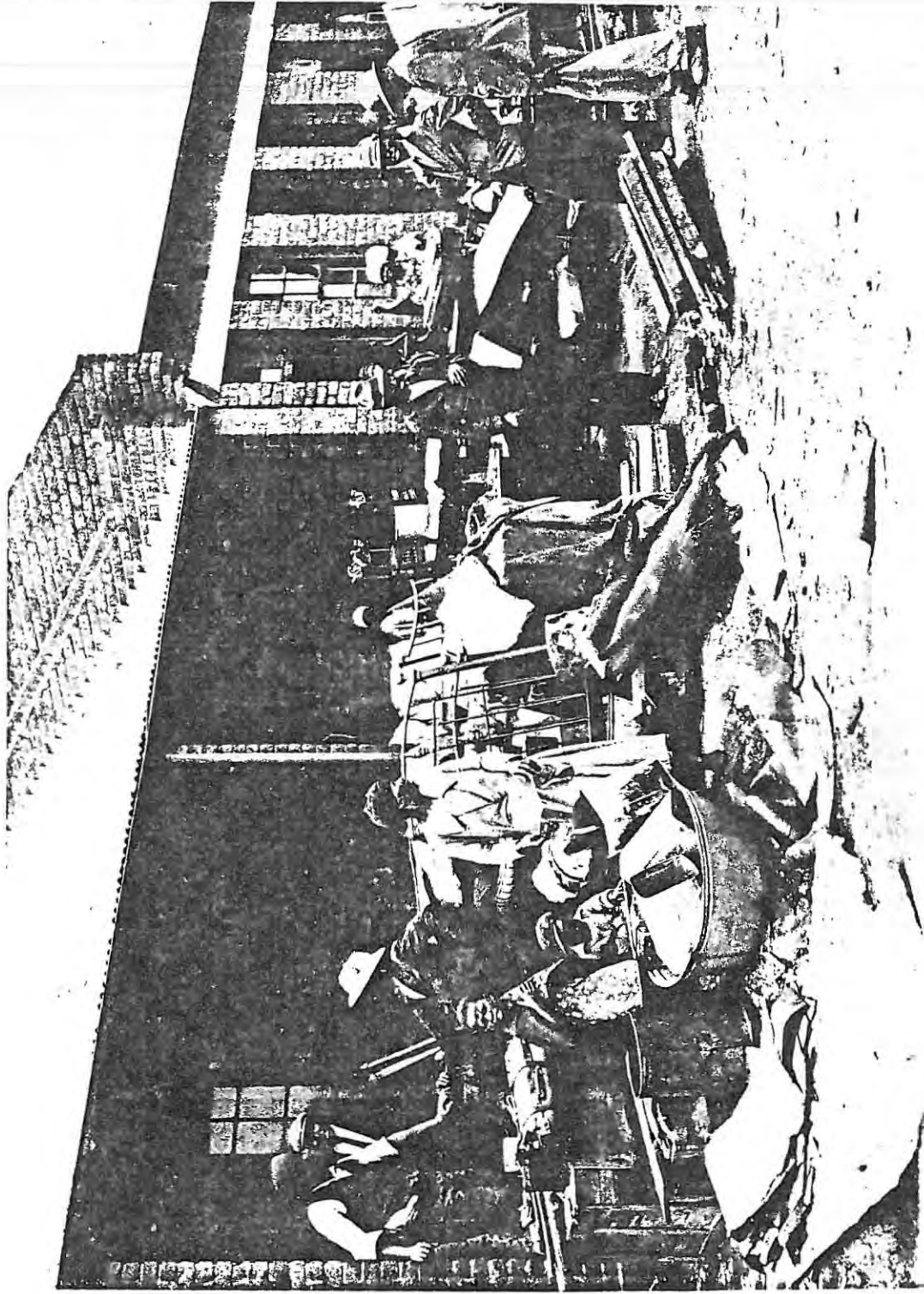
Whilst this situation pertained to contact between Black and white, the mission church itself enjoyed a healthy relationship. Precisely because it was so dependent upon the African it engendered a feeling of belonging. It created a unity and fellowship out of the diverse tribes who came to the Reef. Men, women and children devoted their all to the church giving more than they could afford to erect a sanctuary; proclaiming far and wide the Christ whom they had come to know and seeking ever new ways in which to serve their Master. The spirit of Christian fellowship within the Black church can never be underestimated and it is this community.



which ultimately, is the importance of the Transvaal Mission. In the final analysis all else falls away for the Church is, in essence, the body of Christ and as such is not concerned to be the champion of political rights or a social organisation but the fellowship of believers. Thus the existence of redeemed humanity is by far the greatest concern for the Christian historian for it is indicative of a Gospel proclaimed out of belief and in such a way as to make Christ intrinsically relevant to life. Ultimately this is the only real consideration for human laws, powers and principalities all fade with time. What remains eternally is God's action in Christ and man's response to it.

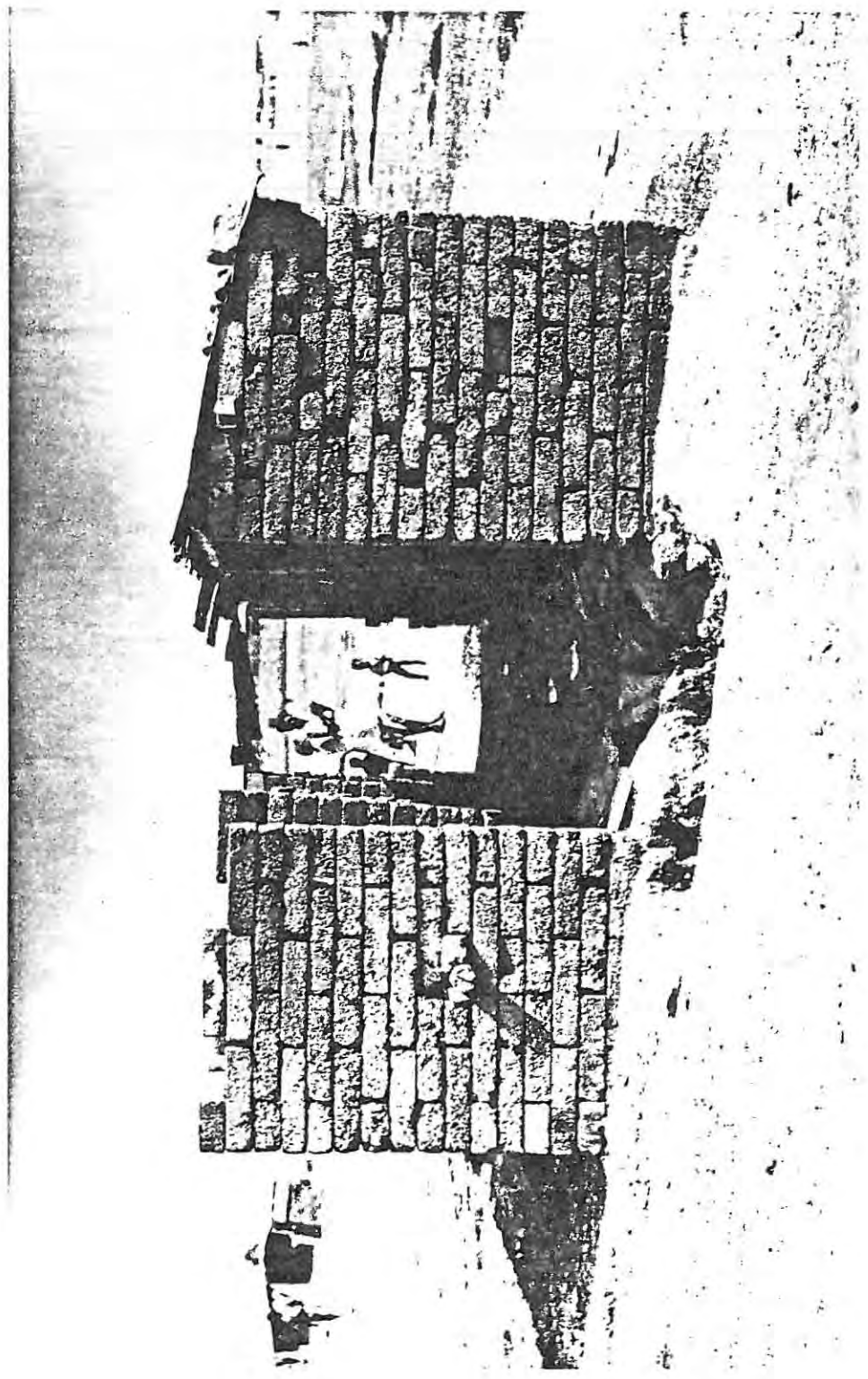


MOROKA: A STREET WITH ITS ALL PURPOSE DRAIN IN WHICH DOMESTIC SOIL WATER AND STORM  
WATER FLOW TOGETHER.



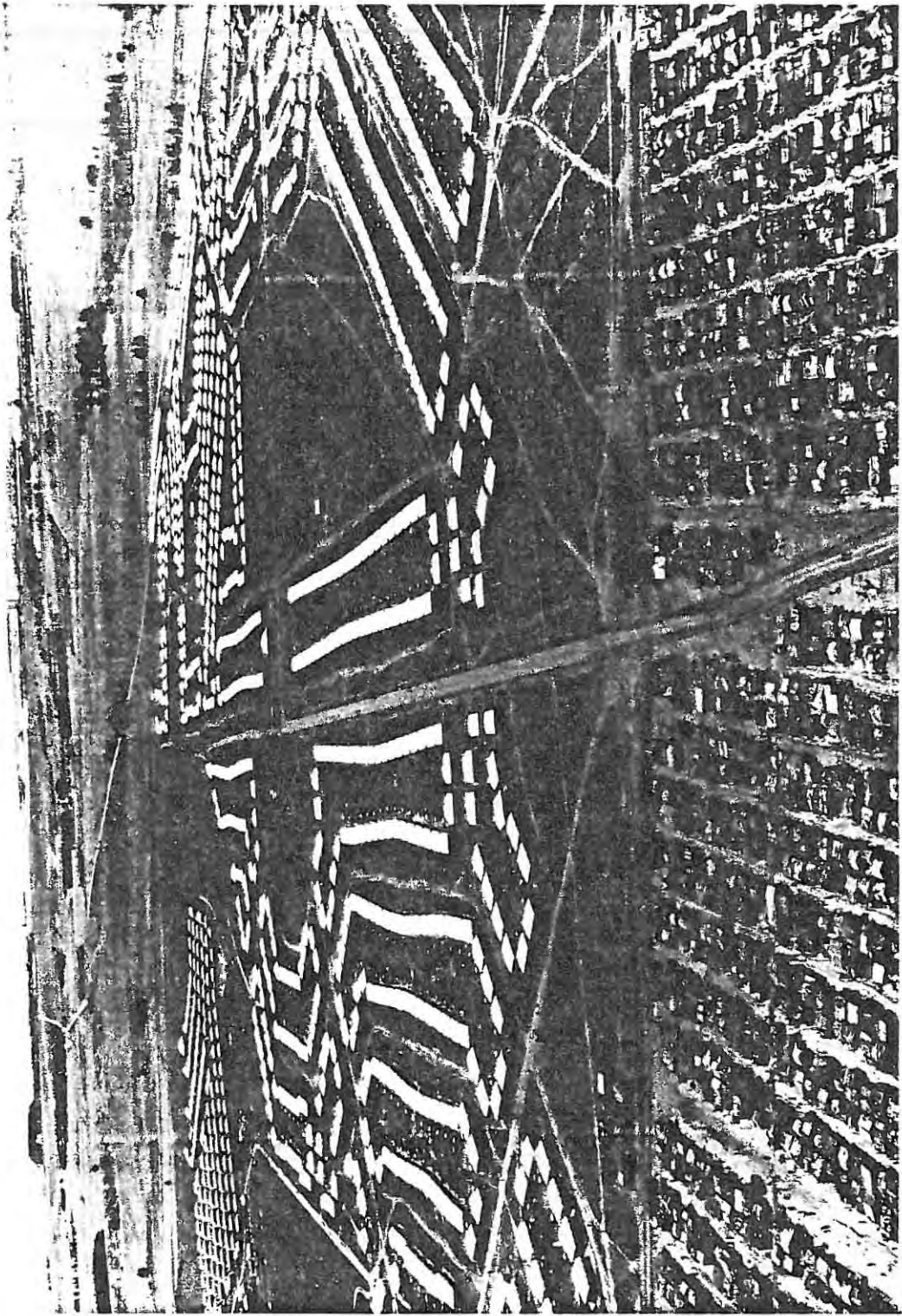
40/418

PROSPECT TOWNSHIP: FINAL SLUM CLEARANCE BEFORE REMOVAL TO ORLANDO 31.1.1938

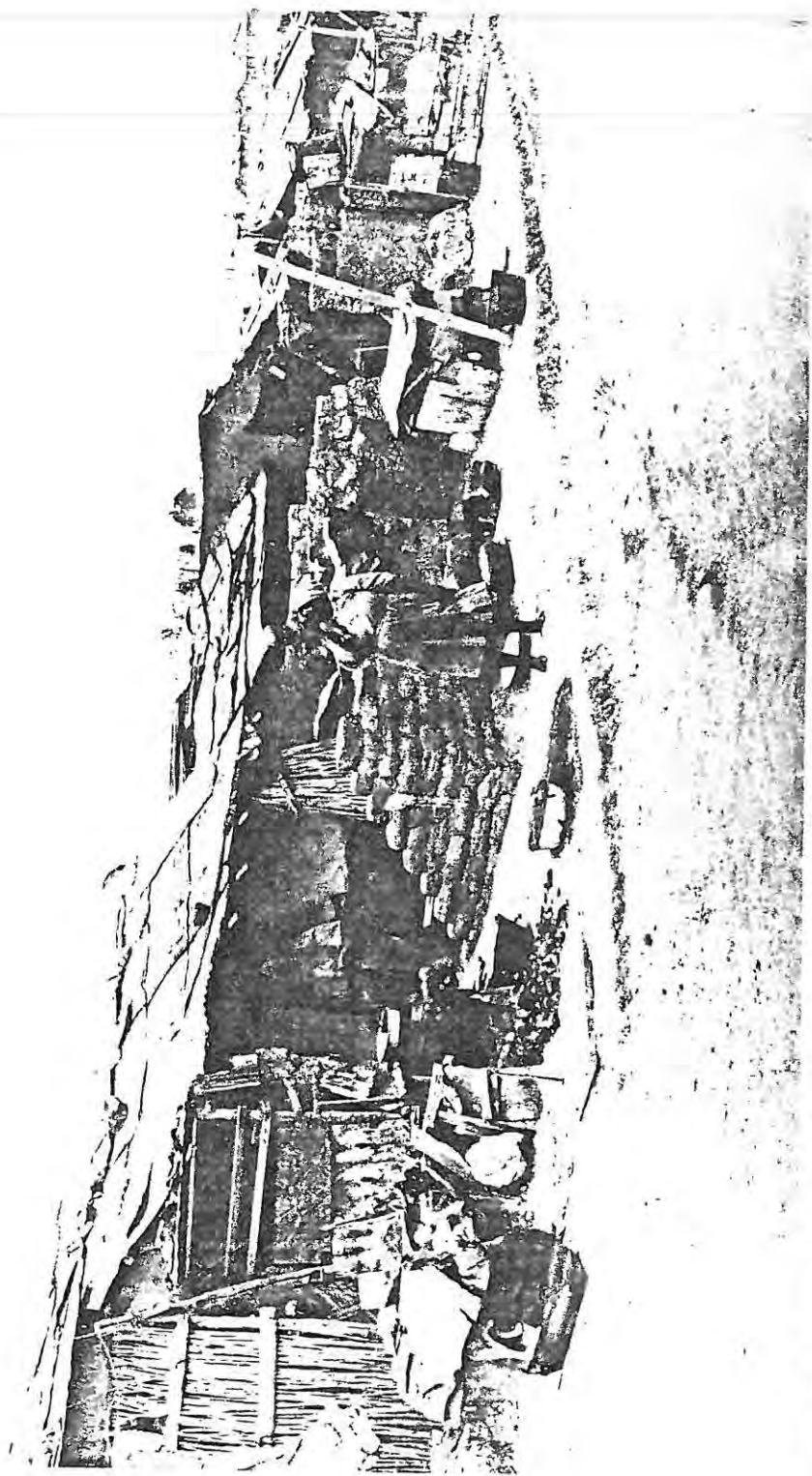


ORLANDO: BREEZE SHELTER

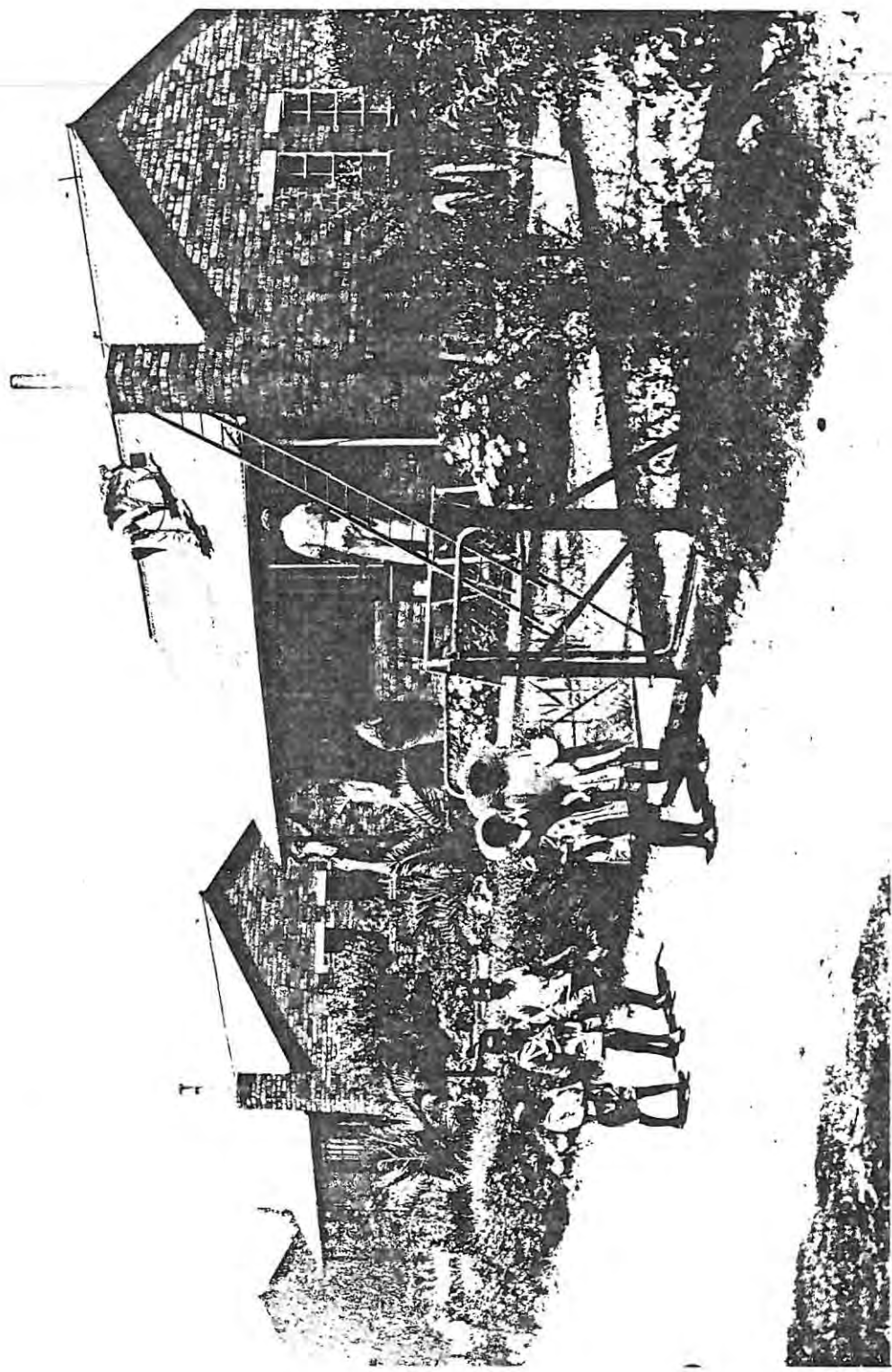




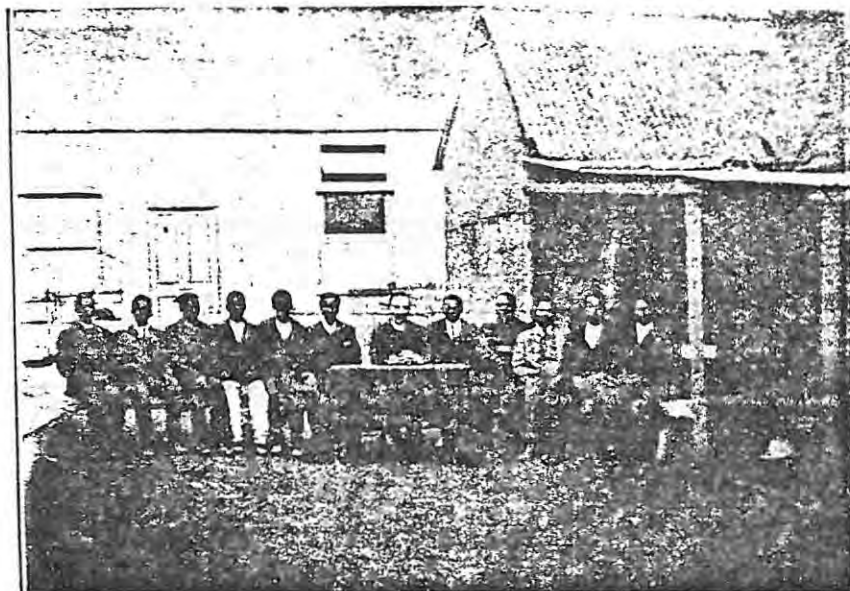
JABAVU TOWNSHIP



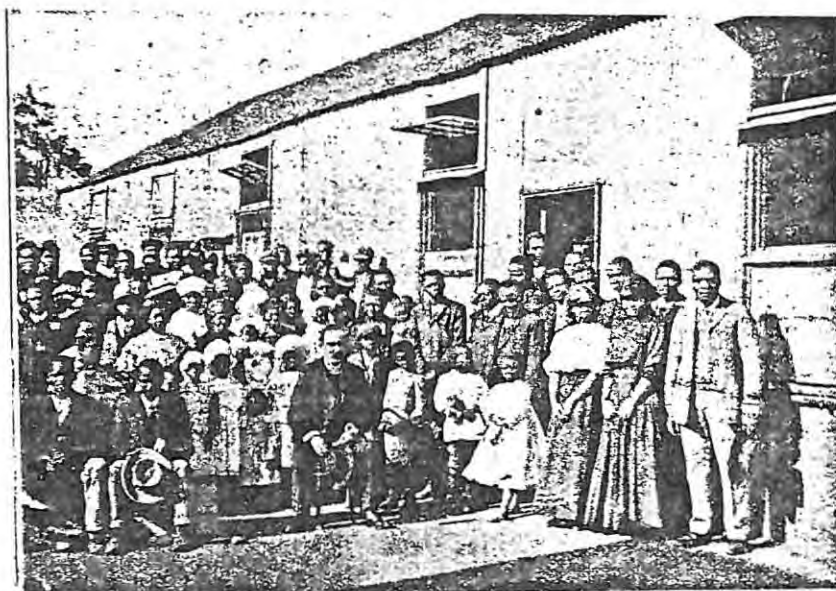
MOROKA TOWNSHIP



ORLANDO.



C.B. HAMILTON WITH JOHANNESBURG KIRK SESSION



C.B. HAMILTON WITH JOHANNESBURG CONGREGATION

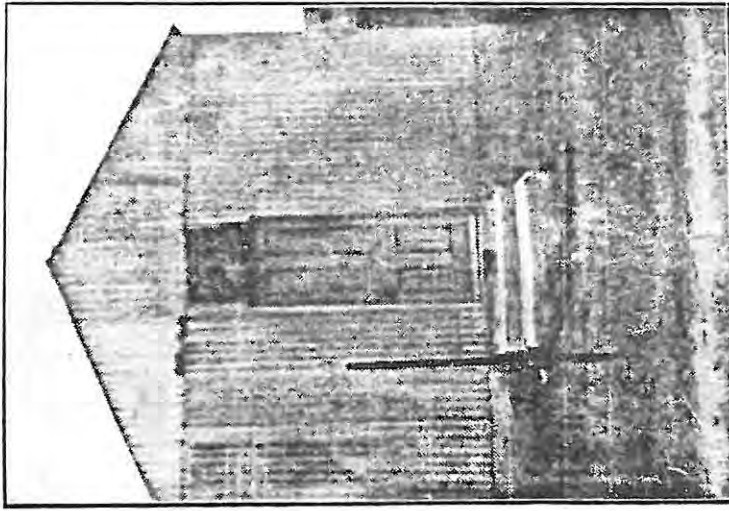


C.B. HAMILTON

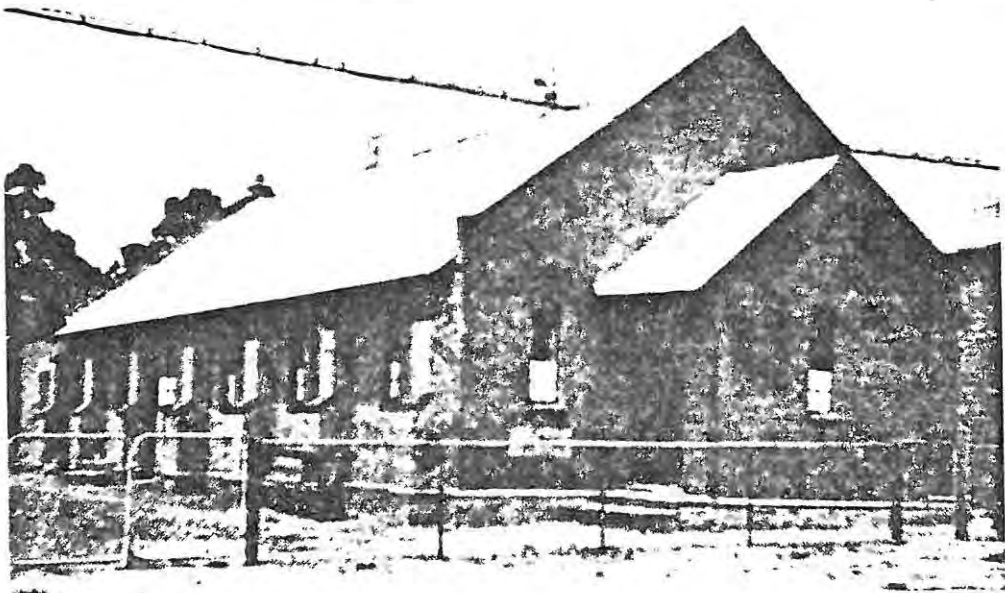


OPENING OF NEW NIGEL CHURCH, 28th MAY 1939

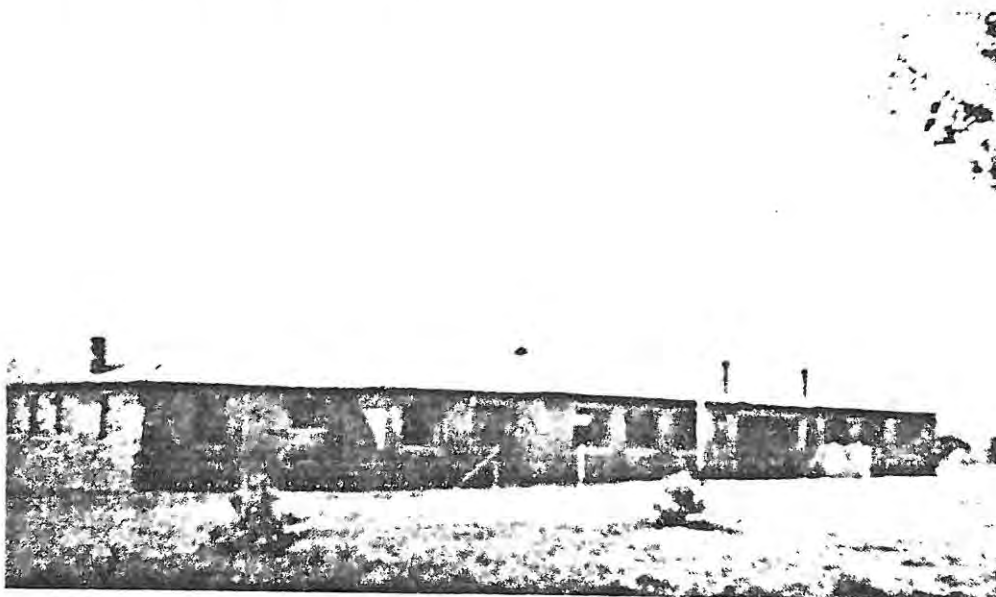




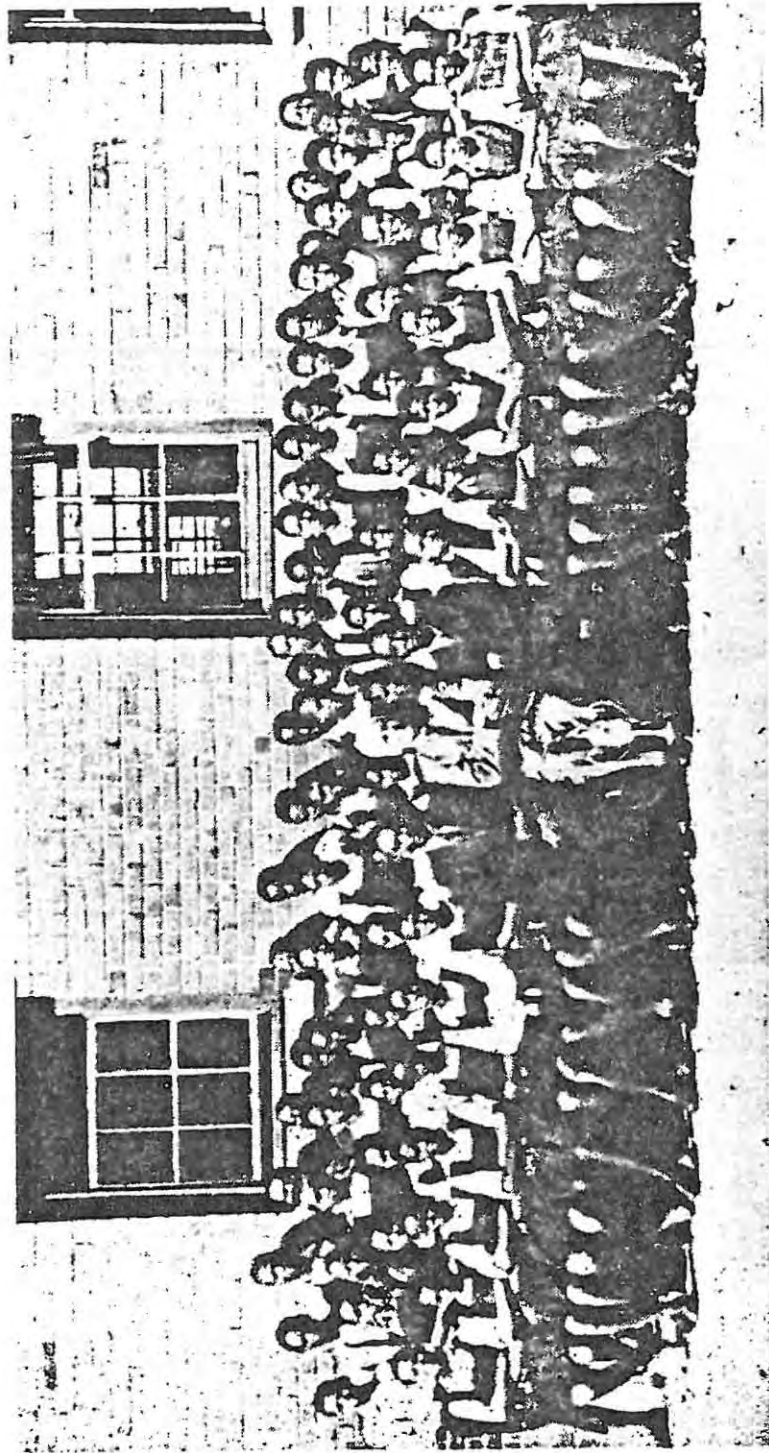
ALEXANDRA CHURCH



MEIKLE STREET CHURCH (1943)



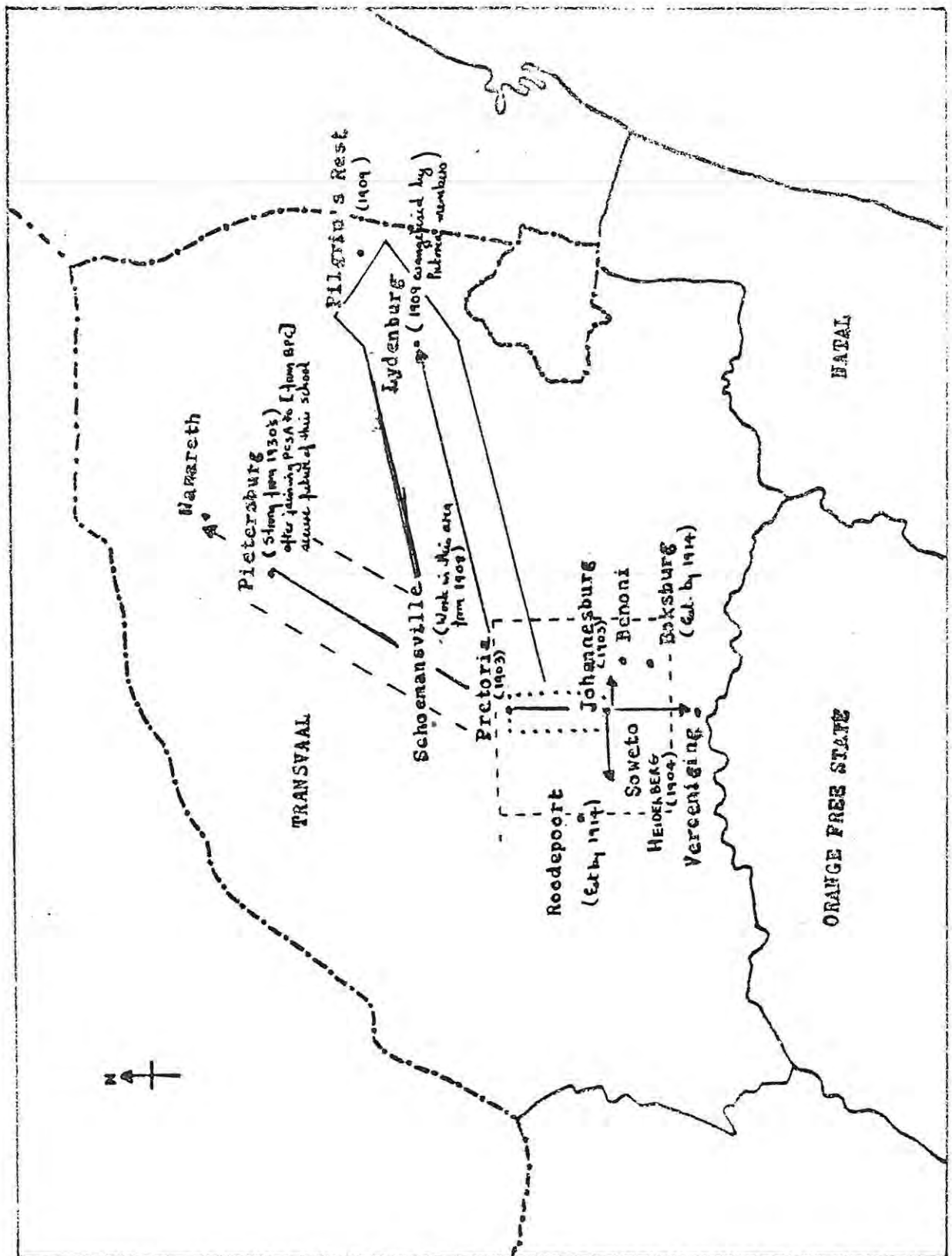
ORLANDO SCHOOL (1943)



ORLANDO SCHOOL CHOIR: WINNERS OF SINGING CUP  
Rev. Searle in front, with Mr. D. Jolobe, Principal, on the right of Rev. Searle.



# MAP SHOWING THE DIRECTION OF MISSION EXPANSION



- ... FIRST STAGE 1903-1909
- SECOND STAGE 1909-1914
- THIRD STAGE 1909-1940
- FOURTH STAGE +/- 1930s

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