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THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH IN THE TRANSVAAL,

1823 - 1902.

by

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ABBREVIATIONS.

L.M.S. -

London Missionary Society.

Notices -

Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Notices.

Reports -

Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Reports.

D.S.A.B. -

Dictionary of South African Biography.

Minutes of the British Conference -

Minutes of the British Conference of the Wesleyan
Methodist Church.

W.M.M.S. -

Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society.

PREFACE

A preliminary survey of the history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in the Transvaal revealed that the period of the early missions, before the formation of the Transvaal and Swaziland District, required research into the documents of other Districts for the purpose of writing a detailed history. It was therefore decided to confine research to the Documents of the Transvaal and Swaziland District and to write introductory chapters on the period of the early missions.

The detailed research for this dissertation begins, therefore, with the creation of the Transvaal and Swaziland District in 1880. The natural point at which to finish appeared, at first, to be the beginning of the Second Transvaal War of Independence, but further research indicated that it would be more useful to conclude with the end of the war in 1902.

There has been no lack of material for research. An unpublished M.A. thesis by D. P. Dugmore provided a useful introduction to the period and an unpublished PhD. thesis written in Afrikaans by W. A. Venter provided fuller information. ⁽¹⁾

The published works are little more than introductions to the subject. The only writers who cover the whole period under review are J. Whiteside, Findlay and Holdsworth and L. A. Hewson. ⁽²⁾

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- (1) D. P. Dugmore, *The Beginnings of Methodist Missionary Policy in the Transvaal*; W. A. Venter, *Die Geskiedenis en Invloed van die Wesleyaanse Sending in die Transvaal Gedurende die Negentiende Eeu*.
 - (2) J. Whiteside, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa*; G. C. Findlay and W. W. Holdsworth, *The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society*, vol. 4.; L. A. Hewson, *An Introduction to South African Methodists*.

The Notices and the Reports, periodicals published by the W.M.M.S., are extremely useful. The Notices, which were published monthly, contain current reports and letters, while the Reports, which were published annually, sum up the progress of the work year by year.

Two periodicals, published by the South African Conference, the South African Methodist and its successor, the Methodist Churchman provide useful material for the last ten years.

The Minutes of the British Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the Manuscript Minute Books of the Bloemfontein, Natal, and Transvaal District Meetings provide authoritative references for policy decisions and the stationing of ministers.

A source which makes this history come alive is the large collection of letters in which the writers, in both private and official correspondence, have written at length and expressed their minds fully.

The journals of the Reverend Owen Watkins provide a day to day record of his interesting missionary journeys and visits to various parts of the District.

Many local Church records have been consulted and used for the first time in this dissertation.

Newspapers have been consulted only when there has been a reference to an article or the likelihood of a report on an event of public interest.

Anyone who does research in the Methodist Archives owes a great debt of gratitude to the staff of the Cory Library, Rhodes University and, in particular to the Reverend Professor L. A. Hewson, M.A., PhD., who gathered most of the material used for this dissertation. I am grateful to my supervisor, the Reverend Professor P. B. Hinchliff, D.D., for his encouragement and constructive criticism. I am also extremely grateful to many friends who have helped and especially to Mrs. M. Salinger for typing and Mrs. M. Wolfe for duplicating the stencils.

INTRODUCTION

The Methodist Church originated in the evangelical revival in England during the eighteenth century as a result of the preaching of John and Charles Wesley, George Whitfield and others.

The change, which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, was the message they proclaimed to all who would hear and converts were gathered into Classes for instruction, fellowship, prayer and witness. Thus, the "... carpenter could leave his bench, the smith his forge, the tradesman could step from behind his counter" ⁽¹⁾ and each, in his own way, could testify to what John Wesley called the experience of the "warmed heart". Every Methodist was, in a sense, a missionary.

Starting shortly after the conversion of John Wesley on 24 May, 1738, the Methodist revival spread rapidly first in England, then in Scotland and Northern Ireland and, by 1760, there were Methodist preachers in America and the West Indies.

In 1784, after the American War of Independence, John Wesley ordained Dr. Coke ⁽²⁾ to take charge of the work in America because most of the Anglican ministers, from whom the Methodists had received the Sacraments, had left and the Bishop in charge would not ordain the Methodist preachers.

As a result of the strenuous efforts of Dr. Coke, to promote missionary work, the W.M.M.S. came into being in 1813. ⁽³⁾ Unlike the L.M.S., which was an independent missionary society, the W.M.M.S. was a department of the Methodist Church.

(1) J. Whiteside, op.cit., p. 23.

(2) Ibid., p. 27.

(3) The Methodist Churchman, 19 May, 1898, p. 250.

A General Committee of Management was appointed at the Annual Meeting of the W.M.M.S. and this committee controlled missionary policy in consultation with the District Meetings of the various missionary Districts. (1)

Missionary Districts were identical in organization to the Districts of the British Conference in England, each with a Chairman and an annual District Meeting.

A District was made up of a number of Circuits each with a Superintendent minister and a number of assistants. The Circuit consisted of a number of Societies (congregations) each sub-divided into Classes and controlled by a meeting of all the Class leaders or the Leaders' Meeting. The leaders of all the Societies met together in the Circuit Quarterly Meeting.

A number of Districts could combine to break away from the British Conference and form a Conference of their own, as in the case of the South African Conference, formed in 1883. (2)

Local Preachers were appointed to preach in each Circuit by the Circuit Local Preachers' Meeting, after a period of being "on Trial".

To enter the ministry, it was necessary first to become a Local Preacher and then to serve in full-time Church work on probation for a period of four to six years before ordination. Examinations were conducted during each year of probation by the District Meeting, except when a probationer was at the theological college at Richmond, Surrey, in England. African Candidates for the ministry did not attend Richmond College and were not received into the full ministry but into a Native Assistant Ministry.

(1) J. Whiteside, op.cit., p. 406.

(2) Minutes of the Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa, 1883.

Although in England, a missionary was regarded as someone who served overseas and a minister as someone who served in England, there was, in effect no difference of office. Men might be moved from African work to European work and vice versa in the missionary Districts, where there were English-speaking people, as in the case of the Transvaal.

A Lay Agent was a Local Preacher in the full-time employment of the Church and, in the early days, he acted as both preacher and teacher. Later, as these two offices became separated, a Local Preacher in the full-time service of the Church was called an Evangelist.

The Methodist Church split into the Wesleyan, the Primitive and the United but, happily, these divisions were healed in 1932. This dissertation deals only with the Wesleyan Methodist Church. If this fact is kept in mind, there will be no difficulty in simply referring to it as the Methodist Church.

Several attempts were made to establish the Methodist Church at the Cape, from the time of the British occupation in 1806, but the Reverend Barnabas Shaw founded the first really successful mission in South Africa at Lily Fountain in 1816.

In 1820, with the arrival of the British Settlers in the Eastern Cape, Methodism was considerably strengthened. Three years later, the Reverend William Shaw, who arrived with the Settlers, started a remarkably well-planned "chain of stations" up the east coast of Africa ⁽¹⁾ and, in 1821, the W.M.M.S. planned an advance to the north from Lily Fountain.

(1) L. A. Hewson, op.cit.

PART ONE

EARLY MISSIONS

CHAPTER 1
MAKWASSIE, 1823

In 1823, twelve years before the wagons of the Great Trek crossed the Orange, two Methodist missionaries, Samuel Broadbent and Thomas Laidman Hodgson, founded a mission among the Seleka-Rolong of Sefunelo at Makwassie near modern Wolmaransstad.

The events which led to the founding of this mission started two years after the Reverend Barnabas Shaw had established the first Methodist mission in South Africa at Lily Fountain in Namaqualand in 1816. A number of his Namaqua converts went to Griqualand in the north and came back twelve months later accompanied by "several persons", who remained at Lily Fountain for about six months. One of these persons, who was converted and baptised, told Shaw about opportunities for missionary work among the tribes of Bechuanaland and "earnestly requested that a missionary might accompany him home-wards". (1)

Barnabas Shaw passed this request on to the W.M.M.S. asking that he be allowed to follow it up immediately because it opened the way to "the distant tribes beyond the Orange". (2) On 3 February, 1821, the Reverend S. Kay was sent to investigate. He travelled from Cape Town with Mr. Melville of the L.M.S. and stayed with him at Griquatown. His first reports were so encouraging (3) that the W.M.M.S. instructed the Reverend Samuel Broadbent, who was stationed at Rietfontein in the Khamiesberg, to join Kay and attempt the formation of a mission among the "Bechuana" (Tswana). (4)

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- (1) Notices, January, 1822, p. 214: letter from Barnabas Shaw, dd. Cape Town, 29 September, 1821; Barnabas Shaw, Memorials of South Africa, p. 295.
(2) Notices, January, 1820, p. 218: letter from Barnabas Shaw dd. Lily Fountain, 22 September, 1819.
(3) Barnabas Shaw, op. cit., p. 297.
(4) S. Broadbent, A narrative of the first introduction of Christianity amongst the Barolong tribe of Bechuanas, p. 1; D.S.A.B. vol. 1, p. 122.

Broadbent, who was twenty-seven years of age and married, had gained five years experience as a missionary in Ceylon before he was appointed to Rietfontein. He set out on his new mission in December, 1821 "amid the regrets and tears of the people". On the third day of the journey, he fell against his wagon, while holding it on a steep ridge, and sustained severe internal injuries, ⁽¹⁾ but went on to Griquatown, where the Reverend H. Helm of the L.M.S. received him.

Meanwhile, news of the Difaqane had reached Griquatown and Kay had decided that, in a time of continuous tribal wars, it would be impossible to start the proposed mission. He was going to Grahamstown and Broadbent accompanied him as far as Graaff-Reinet, where he received medical attention in the home of the Reverend Abraham Faure of the Dutch Reformed Church. Faure refused any remuneration although Broadbent lodged with him for six months. ⁽²⁾ They became firm friends. ⁽³⁾

Before proceeding to Broadbent's second attempt to reach the Tswana, it is necessary to describe the Difaqane because it is only against this background that the mission can be rightly understood and appreciated.

The word Difaqane means "forced migration" and the origins of this disturbance are to be found in Natal. Here the Hlubi, who occupied the country below the highest part of the Drakensberg escarpment, were attacked and defeated by the Ngwane. They split and some, under Mpangazita, crossed the Drakensberg to the south-eastern high veld. For a while the Ngwane occupied the territory vacated by the Hlubi; but, in 1822, they too were displaced when Shaka invaded upper Natal and drove them across the mountains in the wake of the Hlubi.

The Sotho community which bore the first impact of these invasions was the comparatively large Tlokwa chiefdom,

(1) Broadbent, op. cit., p. 2.

(2) Notices, February, 1823, p. 17: letter from Broadbent, dd. Graaff-Reinet, 20 August, 1822.

(3) MS. 15,406: A. Faure to Broadbent, dd. Cape Town, 12 August, 1824.

ruled by MaNthatisi the widow of the deceased Chief, pending the accession of her youngest son, Sekonyela. The Hlubi drove them away from their homes, seizing their grain and cattle. For the next two years the Tlokwa led by MaNthatisi, the Hlubi under Mpangazita and the Ngwane under Matiwane devastated the southern highveld. ⁽¹⁾ The Methodist missionaries did not distinguish the different tribes involved in the Difaqane, but referred to them all as the "Mantatee" hordes. ⁽²⁾

These were the conditions prevailing on the central highveld when Broadbent set out from Graaff-Reinet on 1 November, 1822, on his second attempt to found a mission among the Tswana. He was accompanied by the Reverend Thomas Laidman Hodgson who had come from Cape Town via Algoa Bay. ⁽³⁾ They set out in three wagons. One was occupied by Hodgson and his wife, their little daughter and a nurse; one was occupied by Broadbent and his wife, their little son and a servant and the third by the wives of the drivers. ⁽⁴⁾

They travelled via Philippolis and crossed the Vaal near the present town of Douglas. They constructed a raft, dismantled the wagons and ferried them across the river. The crossing took two days even with the help of several Griquas sent from Campbell by the Reverend Mr. Sass. ⁽⁵⁾

After consulting Sass at Campbell and Helm and Melville at Griquatown, Broadbent and Hodgson decided to take an easterly course on the north side of the Vaal so as not to interfere with the work of the L.M.S. and to go "where no missionary had been". They were quite unperturbed by warnings about the Difaqane. "Such remarks," wrote Broadbent, "had no effect on our minds, except to strengthen our purpose." ⁽⁶⁾

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- (1) Journal of African History, vol. 8, no. 1, 1967, pp. 107 - 131: W. F. Lye, The Difaqane: the Mfecane in the Southern Sotho Area, 1822 - 1824; The Oxford History of South Africa, vol. 1, pp. 391 - 394.
 (2) S. M. Molema, Chief Moroka, p. 9.
 (3) Barnabas Shaw, op.cit., pp. 297 - 298.
 (4) Broadbent, op. cit., p.12.
 (5) Ibid., p. 16; MS. 15,513: L. A. Hewson, Who was the first white man to cross the Vaal?
 (6) Broadbent, op. cit., p.17.

They travelled north on the road towards Kuruman until they reached the confluence of the Vaal and the Harts. Here they left "the missionary road to the north", crossed the Harts and became pioneers. There were no wagon-tracks in which to follow; the territory was uncharted and there were frequent reports of the Difaqane. After some difficulty in persuading their wagon-drivers to stay with them, they continued their journey.

On 9 January, 1823, they met a large group of Kora under their chief Chudeep, who begged them to establish a mission among his people, but they decided to move on to the Tswana. ⁽¹⁾

Four days later, a huge cloud of dust appeared on the horizon to the north and out of it could be heard the disturbed lowing of cattle. The dust was caused by a section of the Seleka-Rolong under Tshabadire in full flight. They had been attacked and dislodged from their homes at Thabeng (near modern Buisfontein) by the Phuthing. Sefunelo, the Rolong Chief and his brother Tshabadire, had each led a section of their people away in different directions. ⁽²⁾ That night Tshabadire encamped at Bamboo spruit to the south-west of modern Wolmaransstad and here Broadbent and Hodgson met him. ⁽³⁾

Eventually, on 9 February, 1823, the mission party met up with Sefunelo. They established a bond of friendship by means of the exchange of gifts and travelled with the tribe ⁽⁴⁾ until they decided to settle at a place called Makwassie towards the end of March, 1823.

On 1 July, 1823, Broadbent and Hodgson reported:
"The Lord has enabled us to form a mission station,

(1) Broadbent, op. cit., p. 25.

(2) S. M. Molema, op. cit., p. 10; The Oxford History of South Africa, vol. 1., p. 396.

(3) Ibid., p. 47; Notices, April, 1824, p. 244.

(4) Broadbent, p. cit., p. 59.

which, after three months experience, promises to be a permanent one." ⁽¹⁾ On that same day, 1 July, 1823, Mrs. Broadbent gave birth to a son Lewis, the first white child born in the Transvaal who later became a medical missionary in India. ⁽²⁾

At the Makwassie Mission a number of children who had been orphaned in the Difaqane, were given a home. One of them, John Eratsagae (Liratsagae) later became a printer at Thaba Nchu. These children were taught how to dig wells and, while they worked, the missionaries learnt the Tswana language from them. "It was my study," wrote Broadbent. ⁽³⁾ Using a small printing apparatus, Broadbent printed words of two or three letters to start with. ⁽⁴⁾

Agricultural experiments were made at Makwassie and their success may be judged from the fact that, twenty years later, the Voortrekkers bought wheat from the Rolong. ⁽⁵⁾

In response to repeated requests from the Kora Chief, Chudeep, a mission was established among his people at Moos, a few days journey down the Vaal river. ⁽⁶⁾ About a month later, on 3 February, 1824, the Reverend Edwards arrived from the Khamiesberg Mission to take over this new station. ⁽⁷⁾

He brought with him instructions from the W.M.M.S. for Hodgson to return to Cape Town. There appears to have been no urgent reason for this transfer; it was made without prior consultation with the missionaries

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- (1) Notices, January, 1824, p. 199: letter from Broadbent and Hodgson, dd. Maquassi, 1 July, 1823; Reports, 1823, p. 37.
 - (2) C. van Riet Lowe and B. D. Malan, op. cit., p.123; photograph of Dr. Lewis Broadbent in the Methodist Manse, Klerksdorp.
 - (3) Broadbent, op. cit., p.99.
 - (4) J. Whiteside, op. cit., pp. 329 - 330.
 - (5) Notices, September, 1844, p. 617: letter from the Reverend John Ayliff, dd. Haslope Hills, 1 April, 1844.
 - (6) Broadbent, op. cit., p. 92.
 - (7) Notices, October, 1824, p. 347: extract from Hodgson's journal.

and was certainly not in the best interests of the work at Makwassie. Hodgson was just beginning to learn the language and gain the confidence of the people. ⁽¹⁾

Three months later, Broadbent left Makwassie due to ill-health and went to Griquatown to recuperate, arriving there on 15 May, 1824. A few days later, he received news that the Makwassie Mission had been plundered and destroyed by the Taung. ⁽²⁾

Broadbent did not return to Makwassie. He went to Grahamstown, where William Shaw offered him an appointment ⁽³⁾ but ill-health prevented him from accepting it and he returned to England, where he served the Church until 1863 and died at Lytham on 3 June, 1867. ⁽⁴⁾

An attempt to re-establish the Makwassie Mission was made on 6 August, 1825 by Hodgson and the Reverend James Archbell, but, after seven weeks of toil at rebuilding the houses, the Rolong decided to move. The missionaries followed them, living in their wagons. Hodgson attempted to make peace between the Rolong and the Taung and was partially successful, but the Rolong declined to return to Makwassie. ⁽⁵⁾

Ten months later, on 22 July, 1826, the Rolong and their missionaries settled at Platberg, south of the Vaal river. ⁽⁶⁾ Two years later another mission was founded at Buchuaap (Boetsap) west of the Harts river among the Griquas of Barend Barends. ⁽⁷⁾ Hodgson was placed in charge of Boetsap while Archbell remained at Platberg where he spent a great deal of his time printing books for the schools on the two stations. ⁽⁸⁾ The first little school book used at Platberg had been printed in the time that the missionaries followed the

(1) Ibid.

(2) Broadbent, op. cit., p. 128; S.M. Molema, op. cit., p. 18.

(3) MS. 15,406, William Shaw to Broadbent, dd. Wesleyville, 20 April, 1825.

(4) MS. 15,406, William Shaw to Broadbent, dd. Wesleyville, 11 November, 1825; D.S.A.B. vol. 1., p.122.

(5) Broadbent, op. cit., pp. 171 - 173.

(6) Ibid., p. 174.

(7) Reports, 1828, p.55; Reports, 1829, p. 27.

(8) Reports, 1830, p.48; Reports, 1831, p. 57.

Rolong by wagon and was dated "Maquassi, 1826". (1)

Sefunelo died at Platberg in December, 1829 and was succeeded by his son Moroka. (2)

At about this time, it was found that the water-supply at Platberg and Boetsap was inadequate to support the increasing population and land was obtained near the Caledon river from Moshweshwe, the Sotho Chief. In 1833, there was a great migration to this territory in which some 12,000 people took part. The Rolong under Moroka settled at Thaba Nchu; the Bastards under Carolus Baatjie settled at the new Platberg (near modern Ladybrand); the Kora of Gert Taaibosch settled at Umpukani (near modern Clocolan) and at Merumetsu; the Griquas under Pieter Davids settled at Lishuani (near modern Groenkloof) and a mission was started among the Ndwandwe of Sikhunyana at Imperani (near modern Ficksburg). (3)

Although the history of these stations falls outside the study of Methodism in the Transvaal, they provided Christian training for the Rolong, who returned to the western Transvaal in the second half of the nineteenth century. After their return, they were cared for by the Bechuana District and were referred to as "Tawane's Tribe" (4) and, later, the "Molopo Mission". (5)

The Makwassie Mission was the pioneer of a large missionary undertaking, which, when it shifted to the Caledon fell directly under the supervision of William Shaw. Later these stations were formed into the Bechuana District with Thaba Nchu as Headquarters. Here the Voortrekkers received Word and Sacrament from the Reverend James Archbell who baptised a large number of their children in the laager of Petrus Lavras Uys on 7 October, 1837. (6)

(1) Reports, 1826, p. 43.

(2) S. M. Molema, op. cit., p. 27.

(3) I.S.J. Venter, Die Sendingstasie Thaba 'Nchu, 1833-1900;

(4) Minutes of the British Conference, 1850 - 1861.

(5) Ibid, 1879.

(6) Register van doopen van kinderen in den laager van den heer Petrus Lavras Uys gedoopt door den eerwaarder heer J. Aardsbell, 7 Okt., 1837.

All that remains of the Makwassie mission station itself are a few stone walls which have been proclaimed a Historical Monument. The site of the mission is on the farm Leeuwfontein, three miles west of Witpoort⁽¹⁾ and about nine miles north-east of Wolmaransstad.

(1) C. van Riet Lowe and B. D. Malan, op. cit., p. 123.

CHAPTER 2

DELAGOA BAY, 1823

Delagoa Bay was one of three places where the W.M.M.S opened new missions in 1823. The other two were the mission to the Rolong and William Shaw's "chain of stations" in the eastern Cape. The W.M.M.S. regarded these as important centres from which to penetrate "the depths of ... Africa" and also hoped, from Delagoa Bay, to reach Madagascar. ⁽¹⁾

The opportunity to establish a mission at Delagoa Bay came when the British secured, by treaty with local Chiefs, the southern shore of the bay. ⁽²⁾

One of the provisions of this treaty was that the British had to provide teachers. Captain Owen, in charge of the project, met the Reverend Barnabas Shaw in Cape Town and asked him for assistance. The Reverend William Threlfall, who was in Cape Town at the time, volunteered to go and Shaw, for lack of time to consult with the Missionary Committee, decided to seize the opportunity. Barnabas Shaw was well aware of the danger of malaria, but received some assurance from Owen that the territory he had taken possession of was on high ground. ⁽³⁾

On 21 June, 1823, Threlfall sailed with Captain Owen, entertaining great hopes for the new mission. "Delagoa Bay," he wrote, "is considered, by thinking persons, the door to the whole of Eastern Africa." ⁽⁴⁾

(1) Notices, November, 1823, p. 164, ed. comment.

(2) N. Allen Birtwhistle, William Threlfall, p. 103 and 161.; Cambridge History of the British Empire, vol. 2., pp. 576 and 586.; Notices, November, 1823, p. 164, ed. comment.

(3) Notices, November, 1823, p. 164, letter from Barnabas Shaw dd. Cape Town, 23 June, 1823.

(4) Notices, November, 1823, p. 165, letter from Threlfall, dd. Cape Town, 20 June, 1823.

The Missionary Committee approved the action taken by Shaw and sent the Reverend James Whitworth, an experienced missionary from the West Indies, with the Reverend Robert Snowdall to take charge of the mission.⁽¹⁾

Threlfall arrived at Delagoa Bay on 22 July, 1823 and the next day was introduced to several Chiefs including Mayette of the Temba who "all expressed their pleasure at the young Missionary's arrival".⁽²⁾ They provided him with a hut. Threlfall could not speak their language and an interpreter could not be found, but they managed to get along fairly well.

Although Threlfall knew that these people had murdered some Portuguese who had come to settle among them, he was unafraid. A month after his arrival he wrote: "I have few conveniences ... but I am happy. The Lord has given me favour in the eyes of the people. I now desire a knowledge of the language: then I would ... preach the everlasting Gospel."⁽³⁾

A few days after making this entry in his journal, Threlfall accompanied Captain Owen in a rowing boat up the Maputo river to a trading tent some thirty miles inland. There they met Chief Makazane, who provided a meal and a friendly reception, but, without an interpreter, little could be accomplished.⁽⁴⁾

When Threlfall returned to the coast, he started marking out the land, which Chief Mayette had granted to the W.M.M.S., but was unable to finish the work because he felt desperately ill.⁽⁵⁾

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- (1) Notices, November, 1823, p. 165, ed. comment.; Minutes of the British Conference, 1824, p. 492.
 - (2) Thomas Cheeseman, The Story of William Threlfall, p. 36.
 - (3) Ibid., p. 38.; Notices, March, 1825, pp. 419-422: journal of W. Threlfall, 5 September, 1823.
 - (4) Notices, March, 1825, pp. 419 - 422: journal of William Threlfall, 8 September, 1823.
 - (5) Notices, April, 1825, p. 435, journal of William Threlfall, 30, September, 1823.

A week passed before Threlfall felt strong enough to write a note to Captain J. L. Church of the Orange Grove, at anchor in the bay. Church attended to him in his hut and, two weeks later, he felt better. He called on the ship and then the Portuguese Governor. The fever soon returned, however, and he felt so sick that he decided to leave. It was a severe shock to him when he was refused permission to board the Orange Grove or the Andromache. Both were British ships. ⁽¹⁾

Five months later, the Nerdied, a whaler, called at Delagoa Bay for supplies and took Threlfall on board. Whether malaria was spread by Threlfall to the crew, or whether they picked it up at Delagoa Bay, will never be known. Out of a crew of thirty, thirteen died of malaria and were buried at sea by Threlfall.

By the time the ship reached Cape Town on 12 April, 1824, the captain and most of the crew were ill. ⁽²⁾ Whitworth, who was at Cape Town on his way to join Threlfall at Delagoa Bay, was given permission to board the ship with medical supplies. ⁽³⁾

Threlfall's recovery was slow and he gladly accepted the invitation of the Reverend Barnabas Shaw and his wife to be their guest at Lily Fountain. ⁽⁴⁾ There he went on a journey of missionary exploration to a northern tributary of the Orange, taking with him two Namaqua converts, Jacob Links and Johannes Jager. One night, sometime in August 1825, while they slept in the veld of Great Namaqualand, they were all murdered by their Namaqua guide with Bushmen (San) accomplices. ⁽⁵⁾

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- (1) T. Cheeseman, op. cit., pp. 41 - 49.
 - (2) T. Cheeseman, op. cit., pp. 53 - 54.
 - (3) T. Cheeseman, op. cit., pp. 53 - 60.; L. A. Hewson, op. cit., p. 11.
 - (4) T. Cheeseman, op. cit., p. 61.
 - (5) L. A. Hewson, op. cit., p. 11.; Notices, September, 1826, pp. 131 - 134: letter from Barnabas Shaw, dd. Khamies Berg, 24 March, 1826.

Nothing was done to follow up Threlfall's visit to Delagoa Bay. Nevertheless, it was not wasted effort. For one thing it clarified missionary policy: Delagoa Bay was not a safe way to Central Africa; the route would have to be inland. Secondly, the life of William Threlfall was a lesson in missionary vocation and an inspiration to the Church. ⁽¹⁾

(1) N. Allen Birtwhistle, op. cit.

CHAPTER 3
SWAZILAND, 1845

The mission which still exists at Mahamba in the south-west of Swaziland, was founded by the Reverend James Allison in 1845. (1)

Allison was born in Edinburgh, Scotland on 4 August, 1802 and came to South Africa with the 1820 Settlers. He was converted in 1831 and the following year was employed as a catechist at Boetsap in the Bechuana District. In 1833 he founded the mission at Imperani and was accepted as an Assistant Missionary in 1843. (2)

The Reverend William Shaw, who visited Imperani in 1839, reported: "... the air of neatness is equal if not superior to that exhibited by any Mission village which I have yet seen in South Africa." About Allison's converts, Shaw wrote, "The change in them is not merely a change from various heathen habits, and the adoption of Christian customs, but it is a change of hearts, producing a thorough reformation of life and a burning zeal to spread the knowledge of the truth amongst their countrymen." (3)

Imperani was the most northerly of the new stations of the Bechuana District. Here requests from the Swazi Chief, Raputse, for a missionary had been received and Shaw saw many advantages in undertaking a mission to Swaziland. The Xhosa version of the New Testament, already available, could be used because of the similarity of the language; there was not the malaria hazard that had been encountered at Delagoa Bay and yet it was close enough to combat the Portuguese slave trade. Shaw hoped to establish a mission

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- (1) W. G. Gordon Mears, The Rev. James Allison, Missionary, p. 7: letter from Allison dd. Mahamba 26 August, 1845.
(2) D.S.A.B. vol. 1., p.11.
(3) Reports, 1840 pp. 63 - 67: letter from William Shaw, dd. Grahamstown, 19 February, 1840.

in Swaziland "as soon as circumstances will allow". (1)

Nothing was done for the next two years, although repeated requests were received for a missionary. (2) Then Chief Raputse died and, in response to a plea that his wish for a missionary should be fulfilled, the meeting of the Bechuana District held at Platberg in December, 1842, appointed Allison and the Reverend Richard Giddy to go on a "journey of enquiry" and to "appoint two or three native teachers to remain in the country ... to prepare the way more fully for the entrance of European missionaries". (3)

The journey from Imperani took forty-eight days. Allison and Giddy arrived at the Royal Kraal on 21 June 1844 and a formal welcome was arranged. Chief Mswazi, not yet of age, attended with his mother. "The much wished for day has at last dawned upon us," said one of the counsellors. "We have long sought teachers and, at one time, almost despaired of ever seeing them." (4) A temporary site for a mission was selected "on the south side of the Mkonto river"; a church and a dwelling were built (5) and two teachers, Barnabas and Job, were left in charge. This first mission in Swaziland was called Hovunga. (6)

In August 1845 Allison arrived back in Swaziland and moved the mission to a new site about three miles from Hovunga on the slopes of the Mahamba mountain. He reported, "Barnabas and Job had examined the country during our absence and pronounced this the best place they could find. It ... has three good springs of water, extensive garden ground of a good quality, an abundance of good stone for building and, what is very

(1) Ibid., p. 70.

(2) Reports 1841, p.74; Reports 1842, p.96.

(3) MS. 15,001, Manuscript minute book of the Bechuana District Meetings, August, 1837 - Nov. 1850, p. 80: minutes of a meeting held at Platberg commenced on 12 December, 1843.

(4) Reports, 1845, p. 64 from the journals of Giddy and Allison.

(5) Ibid.

(6) The journal of the Methodist Historical Society of South Africa, April, 1957, vol. 2., No. 7., pp.164 - 166.

important in this climate, it is on a very elevated part of the country, and commands an extensive view towards the coast." (1)

Allison had with him his wife and a party of about thirty people including four native teachers. (2) Barnabas and Job had already taught many children and adults the alphabet and some could read easy sentences. With a start like this, Allison's congregation soon grew to about 500. (3) By October, 1845, he had erected houses for his helpers, a stone building for himself and was thatching the roof of a church. He had five out-stations at each of which he had placed teachers. (4) He used a copy of the first Catechism which he had himself translated into Swazi.

The steady progress of the mission was arrested in September, 1846, by events beyond Allison's control. Malambule, the elder half-brother of Mswazi, who had been acting as regent during his minority, retained a portion of the royal herds after Mswazi became Paramount Chief in 1840. Mswazi sent an impi to punish him and Malambule, forced to hand over the cattle, fled for asylum to the ekuNene. This action naturally diverted the wrath of the Chief against the ekuNene. Mswazi attacked them and Malambule fled to Allison's station. (5)

Allison tried, without success, to reconcile the parties. Mswazi's impiés, assisted by a party of Boers, arrived at the mission on Sunday, 14 September, 1846, just as the bell rang for worship and killed about fifty people in the presence of the missionary. (6)

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- (1) The journal of the Methodist Historical Society of South Africa, April, 1957, vol. 2, No. 7, p. 164.
 - (2) W. J. Gordon Mears, op. cit., p. 7: report from Allison, dd. 26th August, 1845.
 - (3) Ibid, p. 9.
 - (4) Ibid, p. 9: Report from Allison, dd. October, 1845.
 - (5) A. T. Bryant, Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p. 326.
 - (6) Reports, 1847, p.92.

Allison urged the armed men at the mission to escape under cover of darkness, believing that the women and children would be unharmed if they went. The next day Allison was called to meet four Swazi headmen and two Boers. They charged him with sheltering people whom Mswazi had ordered to be punished. Their instructions, they said, were to send him out of the country. Allison left on 17 September, 1846. ⁽¹⁾

Although this put a stop to all missionary work at Mahamba, about 200 Swazis, who had fled with Allison, settled with him at Indaleni in Natal. Later, Allison withdrew from the Methodist Church because he refused to accept a transfer to another mission, which would have meant separation from his Swazi followers; he purchased a farm near Pietermaritzburg, on 19 November, 1851, and set up his own independent mission which he called Edendale. ⁽²⁾ In 1860 the breach was healed, Edendale was transferred to the Methodist Church and Allison's Swazi followers were re-admitted to the Church.

The Swazi enclave at Edendale became a powerful force in evangelization, which spread to a farm Driefontein purchased by some of them. ⁽³⁾ One of them, Nathaniel Mathabule, became a minister in Natal ⁽⁴⁾ and another, Daniel Msimang, re-opened the mission at Mahamba in the 1880's.

(1) W. J. Gordon Mears, op. cit., pp. 10 - 11.

(2) W. J. Gordon Mears, op. cit., p.13.

(3) W. J. Gordon Mears, op. cit., p.15.

(4) Notices, June, 1887, pp. 126 - 132: tribute to and history of Nathaniel Mathabule.

CHAPTER 4
AFRICAN PIONEERS

A unique and special feature of the history of the Methodist Church in the Transvaal is that the pioneers of many of the mission stations were African laymen and not white missionaries. Most of these African laymen hailed from territory north of the Vaal river, went to the Cape, Orange Free State or Natal for various reasons, were converted at Methodist missions there, and returned as preachers and teachers. Not one of them was employed by the W.M.M.S. until much later when white missionaries arrived in the Transvaal.

In this chapter, only two African pioneers are presented. The others, no less remarkable, will be met when we come to the missions founded by them. Their names are listed at the end of this chapter for convenient reference.

DAVID MAGATA.

David Magata was born in the Magaliesberg mountains somewhere between Pretoria and Rustenburg. In his youth he was captured by Mzilikazi and became a personal attendant to the Chief. Magata heard the Christian message for the first time from three American missionaries who were at the Chief's kraal. ⁽¹⁾ This must have been prior to 1837 because the American missionaries withdrew from their unsuccessful attempt to establish a mission among the Ndebele in that year. ⁽²⁾

When Mzilikazi was driven from the Transvaal by the Boers, Magata escaped and fled to Thaba Nchu. Here he was converted, placed in a Class of members

(1) Notices, June, 1887, p. 135.

(2) du Plessis: A History of Christian Missions in South Africa, p. 225.

on Trial, and attended the day school. He made such exceptional progress both spiritually and mentally that he was given a Note to preach by no less a person than William Shaw, who was on a visit to Thaba Nchu. ⁽¹⁾

Magata walked back to the Magaliesberg to preach to his people, but most of them had left so he went to Potchefstroom, where the Reverend George Blencowe met him in 1871. ⁽²⁾

When Magata first started to preach at Potchefstroom the Boers objected and the Landrost had him thrashed in public and banished from the Transvaal. Some time later, he met Paul Kruger, then Commandant-Generaal, who listened to his complaint and sent him back to Potchefstroom with a letter authorising him to preach and teach. ⁽³⁾

Back in Potchefstroom, Magata ran a school for children in the mornings and afternoons while evenings were occupied with adult Classes and prayer meetings. He sought out strangers in the market-place and preached to them. Magata had a remarkable ability to lead others to Christ. During the time he was forcibly sent out of the Transvaal, he was instrumental in the conversion of a Mr. de Kock at Ladysmith, who later started a mission at Kroonstad. ⁽⁴⁾ Magata spoke Tswana, Tonga, Zulu, Dutch and English. ⁽⁵⁾ He came to Potchefstroom sometime before 1868, ⁽⁶⁾ and died there in his old age. ⁽⁷⁾ He received no regular remuneration for his work until Blencowe placed him on an allowance of £12 a year. ⁽⁸⁾ There were 140 in his congregation in 1871 and Blencowe provided them with a place in which to meet. ⁽⁹⁾ In 1873 the Reverend William Wynne reported

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- (1) Notices, June, 1887, p. 135; Shaw visited Thaba Nchu in 1837 (Reports, 1838, p. 70 and Notices, 1838, p. 14) and again in 1839, (Reports, 1840, p. 63, D. P. Dugmore, op. cit., p. 7)
 - (2) Notices, January, 1872, p. 11: letter from G. Blencowe, dd. Ladysmith, 5 October, 1871.
 - (3) Notices, March, 1878, p. 62.
 - (4) Ibid.; Notices, June, 1887, p. 136.
 - (5) Notices, March, 1878, p. 62.
 - (6) Notices, January, 1872, p. 11.
 - (7) Notices, June, 1887, p. 135.
 - (8) Notices, January, 1872, p. 11.
 - (9) Ibid.

that the African congregation had raised £40 to build a church and had "attached a room for David". (1)

MOLEMA OF MAFEKING.

Molema was the fourth child of Chief Tawane's second wife. (2) He was converted to Christianity at Thaba Nchu, and, because of his birth, was the natural leader of the Church. (3) When the Rolong returned to their tribal lands at Lotlhakane, Molema accompanied them as a fully accredited Local Preacher. (4) In 1844, the missionaries at Thaba Nchu received "pleasing accounts" of his work and they supplied him with school books. (5)

In 1849 Montshiwa succeeded Moroka as Chief. One of the first things he did was to send Molema to Thaba Nchu to ask for a missionary. (6) In response to this request the Reverend Joseph D. M. Ludorf was appointed in 1851 but, because of his outspoken opposition to the Transvaal Boers in the border dispute with the Rolong, he left in 1854. (7)

From 1854 to 1873 the Church at "Tawane's Tribe" remained under the superintendence of the missionary at Thaba Nchu, 300 miles away, (8) and, apart from occasional visits, (9) there was no resident missionary for nearly twenty years. Molema held the Church together during this time. He died just before Owen Watkins visited Mafeking in 1882. (10)

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- (1) Notices, August, 1873, p. 188: Letter from W. Wynne dd. Potchefstroom 17 March, 1873.
 - (2) S. M. Molema, Montshiwa, p. 216.
 - (3) Ibid, p. 53.
 - (4) D. P. Dugmore, op. cit., p. 10.; Reports, 1843, p. 99.
 - (5) D. P. Dugmore, op. cit., p. 10.; Reports, 1844, p. 65.
 - (6) Molema, op. cit., p. 35.
 - (7) Minutes of the British Conference, 1851 to 1854; Molema, op. cit., p. 45.
 - (8) Minutes of the British Conference, 1854 - 1873.
 - (9) MS. 15,175: An Account of early Methodist Missions in South Africa, by Mrs. J. G. Benson.
 - (10) Findlay and Holdsworth, op. cit., p. 336.

OTHER AFRICAN PIONEERS.

Klaas Olifant	Apies River, 1872	Chapter 7
Hans Aapjie	Waterberg Mission, 1879	Chapter 11
Samuel Mathabathe	Good Hope Mission, 1874	Chapter 11
Johannes Mphatlela	" " "	
May Loti	" " "	
Nathaniel Phalala	" " "	
James Puti	" " "	
Daniel Msimang	Mahamba Mission, 1882	Chapter 10
Robert Mashaba	Delagoa Bay, 1885	Chapter 13
James Kimani	Standerton, 1897	Chapter 10
Luke Longwane	"	

CHAPTER 5
A TRIAL MISSION

By 1872, forty-six years after the W.M.M.S. had withdrawn from Makwassie, the Transvaal had changed considerably. The Voortrekkers had taken possession of the land and set up a Republic in which there were a number of fairly prosperous small towns. Thomas Francois Burgers was the President. Diamonds and gold had attracted prospectors, diggers and merchants, many of whom were English-speaking. (1)

In Potchefstroom, some of these English-speaking people had formed an undenominational congregation and secured the services of various ministers. The Reverend G. T. Jeffreys, a Congregationalist minister, served them from 1864 but, as he was unable to stay, an application was made to the Chairman of the Bloemfontein District of the Methodist Church for a minister. In 1865 Potchefstroom was placed on the list of the stations of that District but no satisfactory appointment was made. An appeal was, therefore, made to the Chairman of the Natal District to send a minister to investigate the situation. (2)

The Reverend George Blencowe, who was stationed at Ladysmith, was charged with this mission and he tackled it with energy and enthusiasm. He was fifty-four years of age and a man of some maturity and experience in the ministry. Born at Banbury in England in 1817, he was converted in his youth, became a Local Preacher at sixteen and entered the ministry at the age of twenty-two. He served in England until 1858 when, in response to an appeal for more senior men for overseas missions, he came to South Africa. (3)

(1) E. A. Walker, op. cit., p. 340.

(2) MS. 15,008: Journal of the Methodist Historical Society of South Africa, July, 1953, Vol 1., No. 2., p. 5.

(3) Minutes of the British Conference, 1893, p. 52: obituary.

At Potchefstroom Blencowe met these English-speaking people and the congregation of David Magata, the African pioneer. The English congregation pledged £60 per annum towards the stipend of a minister, who would also have the oversight of Magata's Church. Blencowe further investigated the possibility of starting work in Pretoria, Heidelberg and Lydenburg and suggested that one senior man and two younger men would be adequate to start a mission in the Transvaal. He volunteered to lead the mission, suggested that it should start as part of the Natal District and later be formed into a separate District. ⁽¹⁾

The W.M.M.S. responded immediately. In 1872 the Mission beyond the Vaal River was attached to the Natal District and was served by three ministers: George Blencowe, William Wynne and George Weavind. ⁽²⁾ It was regarded as a Trial Mission to ascertain whether it would be possible to occupy the vast territory between the Vaal and the Zambesi Rivers. ⁽³⁾

William Wynne actually started in Potchefstroom before the W.M.M.S. had authorised his appointment. ⁽⁴⁾ In April, 1872 he reported progress with plans to open a school for seventy English-speaking children. ⁽⁵⁾ In August, 1872, Wynne undertook a survey of Pretoria and the western Transvaal. He discovered that there were people in Pretoria, Rustenburg, and Marico who were eager to have Methodist services. ⁽⁶⁾ Blencowe urged that these towns be occupied because, in each case,

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- (1) Notices, January, 1872, pp. 9 - 14: letter from Blencowe, dd. Ladysmith, 5 October, 1871.
 - (2) Minutes of the British Conference, 1872, p. 562.
 - (3) Notices, 1873, p. 230: editorial comment.
 - (4) Notices, May, 1893, p. 114: tribute to Blencowe by G. Weavind.
 - (5) Notices, August, 1872, p. 120: letter from W. Wynne, dd. Potchefstroom, 3 April, 1872.
 - (6) Notices, January, 1873, pp. 13 - 14: journal of W. Wynne.

the occupation of the town would give the Church command of a large district. ⁽¹⁾

George Weavind arrived at Pretoria early in 1873. Although only 23 years of age, he gained the respect of the Boers and learnt to speak their language. There being only one Methodist family in the town when he arrived, he had to rely on the support of the Boers to build the first Methodist church. ⁽²⁾ Twenty out of twenty-six names on his subscription list were Dutch and their contributions were generous. ⁽³⁾ Weavind became closely related to a number of Boer people when, on 12 May, 1875, he married Miss Jeanette Wilhelmina van Boeschoten, a sister to Cornelis van Boeschoten, the State Secretary of the Transvaal Republic. ⁽⁴⁾

Weavind periodically visited an African Society which had been started by an African pioneer to the north of Pretoria. ⁽⁵⁾ Heidelberg also fell under his pastoral care and he used to travel there by post-cart every six weeks to preach to fairly large congregations meeting in the Dutch Reformed Church. ⁽⁶⁾ When visiting Heidelberg Weavind had to cancel his services in Pretoria because there were no Local Preachers and he found that this tended to disrupt the work. ⁽⁷⁾

George Blencowe, after a year at Potchefstroom, moved

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- (1) Notices, January, 1873, pp. 13 - 14: extract of a letter from G. Blencowe, dd. Ladysmith, 5 October, 1872.
 - (2) Notices, July, 1901, pp. 202 - 207: Our Missionary Districts, Transvaal and Swaziland, by G. Weavind.
 - (3) MS. 15,261: Subscription list in aid of building of a Wesleyan Methodist Church at Pretoria, undated.
 - (4) D.S.A.B., vol. 1, P. 869.
 - (5) Notices, October, 1873, p. 230: extract of a letter from G. Blencowe, dd. 16th July, 1873; MS. 15,620, Kimberley and Bloemfontein District, minute book, Circuit and other reports, 1877 - 1895.
 - (6) Notices, February, 1876, p. 45: letter from G. Weavind, dd. Pretoria, 19 November, 1875.
 - (7) MS. 15,620, Kimberley and Bloemfontein District, minute book, Circuit and other reports, 1877, p. 21.

Middlebury(?)

to Pilgrim's Rest in 1874. ⁽¹⁾ Here he encountered a stone wall of indifference to spiritual things among the miners. ⁽²⁾ Nevertheless, living in a tent, as did many of the miners, ⁽³⁾ he built a church ⁽⁴⁾ and gathered congregations at Lydenburg and a place called Nazareth. Blencowe found that he was not able to do much for the African mineworkers because they were too tired after a day's work to meet him at night and because he was too busy with the European services on Sundays. ⁽⁵⁾

Kroonstad, although not within the Transvaal was included in the Trial Mission. The Reverend Charles Harmon was appointed as resident minister in June, 1874. Here he found an African church which, he estimated, must have cost every bit of £400 and a congregation of 100 under the leadership of a European layman. ⁽⁶⁾ This layman was the same Mr. de Kock who had been converted by the preaching of David Magata in Ladysmith. ⁽⁷⁾

Potchefstroom was without a minister in 1874 ⁽⁸⁾ and was visited twice by Harmon who found the work there at a low ebb. ⁽⁹⁾ This situation was remedied in 1875, when the Reverend James Calvert, an experienced missionary from the Fiji Islands, ⁽¹⁰⁾ was stationed there ⁽¹¹⁾

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- (1) Minute book: Potchefstroom Quarterly Meeting: 17 January, 1873 to 6 October, 1873; Notices, November, 1874, p. 263: extract of a letter from G. Blencowe, dd. August, 1874.
- (2) Reports, 1875, p. 119.
- (3) Notices, May, 1893, pp. 113-115, tribute to G. Blencowe, by G. Weavind.
- (4) Notices, October, 1874, p. 263: extract of a letter from G. Blencowe, dd. Pilgrim's Rest, 24 August, 1874.
- (5) Reports, 1875, p. 119.
- (6) Notices, May, 1875, p. 117, extract of a letter from C. Harmon, dd. 16 January, 1875.
- (7) Notices, March, 1878, p. 62: Letter from G. Blencowe, dd. 11th October, 1877; Notices, June, 1887, p. 136.
- (8) Minute book: Potchefstroom Circuit Quarterly Meetings: no record of any meetings in 1874.
- (9) Notices, May, 1875, p. 117, letter from C. Harmon, dd. 16 January, 1875.
- (10) Notices, November, 1874: cover picture of James Calvert and ed. note.
- (11) Minute book: Potchefstroom Circuit Quarterly Meeting, 8 February, 1875.

He built a church for the African congregation, ... completed the European church building and made the work as near self-supporting as possible. Unfortunately, he left before the end of the year. (1)

The first minister to stay at Potchefstroom for any length of time was the Reverend Timothy Cresswell who arrived in 1876 and remained until the beginning of 1880. (2) He devoted most of his time to teaching the African people (3) and purchased a farm called Uitkyk about twenty-four miles from Potchefstroom in the direction of Ventersdorp for the re-settlement of certain members of the Kwená tribe. (4)

The Trial Mission, although under the wing of the Natal District, did not have much contact with the Chairman or the District Meeting so, on the advice of the Reverend G. T. Perks, one of the Secretaries of the W.M.M.S., who visited the South African Districts in 1875, it was transferred to the Bloemfontein District in 1876. "Without a District Meeting and without a Chairman," wrote Perks, "it is impossible that Methodism should be satisfactorily organised and efficiently run." He hoped that under new management the work in the Transvaal would become a base for the extension of the work to the Zambesi. (5)

The new arrangement did little to improve the work. The report for 1878, although a little exaggerated, said: "For the ... Natives in the Transvaal we have as yet been able to do nothing". (6) The report for the following year described the work at Pretoria and

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- (1) Notices, January, 1876, p. 18: letter from J. Cameron, dd. Potchefstroom, 20 September, 1875.
 - (2) Minute book: Potchefstroom Circuit Quarterly Meeting, 26 July, 1876 to 25 May, 1880.
 - (3) MS. 15,620: Reports from circuits in the Bloemfontein District, 1877, p. 20.
 - (4) Record on Appeal, pp. 159 and 239.
 - (5) Reports, 1876, p. 109; Minutes of the British Conference, 1876, p. 112.
 - (6) Reports, 1878, pp. 129 - 134.

Potchefstroom as "chiefly European".

The reason for so little Missionary work being done was given at a meeting of the Transvaal ministers held under the chairmanship of Blencowe at Potchefstroom on 1 March, 1875. The meeting stated: "We find that this Republic is so occupied by the Berlin and Hermannsburg Societies, that no sphere of extensive operations is left for us within its boundaries." Swaziland was regarded as the most promising area for missionary work and the meeting recommended that immediate steps be taken to start work there. (2)

Blencowe, the pioneer and leader of the Trial Mission, was a man who held strong opinions and was very outspoken in the expression of his views in public. What he said and wrote about the Boers in the Transvaal had serious repercussions. (3) A commission, appointed by the W.M.M.S. to investigate these statements, found Blencowe unsuited to lead the work in the Transvaal and he withdrew in 1877. At the time, he felt that he had been misrepresented and unfairly treated but, years later, he wrote: "Had I remained, I should have had many obstructions in my work." (4)

Blencowe lived in England for five years and then returned to the Transvaal and settled in retirement at Wakkerstroom in 1882. (5)

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- (1) Reports, 1879, p. 126.
 - (2) Reports, 1875, p. 118.
 - (3) MS. 15,243: Watkins to Kilner, dd. Pretoria, 12 May, 1883.
 - (4) MS. 15,241: Letter from Blencowe to the District Meeting of the Transvaal and Swaziland District, 1890.
 - (5) Notices, May, 1893, p. 115.

PART TWO
THE TRANSVAAL
AND SWAZILAND DISTRICT

CHAPTER 6

A NEW DISTRICT

A new star was added to the "Districts" of the British Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church when, in 1880, the "Transvaal and Swaziland District" was constituted. ⁽¹⁾ The Trial Mission had prepared the way for this step but several factors actually brought it about.

To begin with, the annexation of the Transvaal by the British in 1877 naturally caused a great deal of interest in England. This was evident at the annual meetings of the W.M.M.S. in May, 1878, when Dr. ^{Punchon} Punccheon, the Deputy-Treasurer of the Society, said that he regarded the annexation as a special call to missionary endeavour. ⁽²⁾ Sir Theophilus Shepstone, who had accomplished the annexation, made similar statements. ⁽³⁾ Secondly, the Anglicans consecrated Henry Brougham Bousfield Bishop of Pretoria in 1878 and the Methodists did not want to be left behind. ⁽⁴⁾ Thirdly, Blencowe urged the W.M.M.S. to take action in the Transvaal pointing out that, because of the large number of English-speaking people being attracted to the gold fields, the work could soon become self-supporting. ⁽⁵⁾ Finally, Owen Watkins, a minister in Natal, volunteered to go to the Transvaal, and became the driving force in the formation of the new District. "The Lord is setting before us an open door in the Transvaal," he wrote,

(1) Minutes of the British Conference, 1880, p. 142.

(2) Notices, June-July, 1878, p. 129: abstract of report.

(3) C.1776, p. 155: Sir T. Shepstone to the Earl of Carnarvon, dd. Pretoria, 17 April, 1877.

(4) J.A.I. Agar-Hamilton, A Transvaal Jubilee, p. 25.

(5) Notices, March, 1878, pp. 56 - 63: letter from George Blencowe, dd. 11 October, 1877.

"and through this door is the way to the very heart of Africa ... " (1)

Owen Watkins was thirty-four years of age but was not a man of robust health. At the age of twenty-two his health had broken down, while at Richmond college training for missionary work. He was withdrawn from the college and sent into English Circuits. Twelve years later, he had another break-down in health and was advised by his doctors to go to South Africa. He offered to do missionary work and was accepted by the W.M.M.S.

Arriving in Natal in 1876 with his wife and family, he was appointed to Pietermaritzburg. (2) Here he increased the size of the European congregation to such an extent that the church was enlarged. (1) He was appointed Secretary of the Natal District Meeting in January, 1877. (3)

There was no lack of interest in the Transvaal, no lack of information about it and no lack of a volunteer to do the work, but there was a lack of money and this was critical. In 1877, the W.M.M.S. was struggling to catch up on an annual deficit of about £20,000. (4) Despite stringent economy, the accumulated debt in 1879 amounted to £42,677 (5) and the next year retrenchment was announced for all Districts. (6)

This financial crisis was not due to a lack of generosity on the part of the British Methodists. In 1877 they contributed £15,000 to famine relief in India in addition to their usual contributions to the

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- (1) Notices, November, 1877, p. 257: extract of letter from Owen Watkins, dd. 3 September, 1877.
 - (2) MS. 15,585: Owen Watkins, Description of the first 50 years of his life and extracts from his diaries; MS. 15,008, Journal of the Methodist Historical Society of South Africa, April, 1957, vol. 2., No. 7, p. 166.
 - (3) MS. 15,378: Minute book, Natal District Meetings, January, 1877.
 - (4) Notices, October, 1877, p. 227: circular and letters.
 - (5) Notices, August, 1879, p. 202: minutes of a special meeting of the General Committee, 30 April, 1879.
 - (6) Notices, January, 1880, p. 3: editorial comment.

missionary work. (1) It was, if anything, due to rapid expansion on the mission fields in Central Africa, Gambia, India, Japan and China and the response of more men to become missionaries. In 1877, Richmond college had an enrolment of 76, which was a record. (2)

The W.M.M.S., not having the finance, resorted to the expedient of asking the six South African Districts to support the formation of the new District. (3) The Natal District Meeting was willing to help but there is no evidence that the other Districts made any effort. (4)

Watkins, therefore, made a personal appeal through the medium of the Notices for a gift of £10,000. "What a grand chance," he wrote, "for someone who has large means, to give £10,000 to start this new mission ... Methodism has given her sons to Africa; will she not now give her money to enable those sons to penetrate the very heart of the continent? ... I repeat the offer of myself for this work and I think a life is worth £10,000." (5)

By September, 1878, three months after the publication of this appeal the W.M.M.S. had received £2,000. Half of this came from an individual donor in Natal. (6)

The Natal District, urged on by Watkins, continued to take the initiative. At successive meetings from 1878 to 1880 it offered to release Owen Watkins for the new District, to supply two Native Agents and to provide £300 a year for five years. It recommended that the Transvaal should be a separate District; that it

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- (1) Notices, June - July, 1878, p. 128: abstract of report.
 - (2) Notices, October, 1877, p. 227: editorial comment.
 - (3) Notices, January, 1878, p. 20: minutes of the General Committee, 12 December, 1877.
 - (4) Notices, May, 1878, pp. 111 - 112: letter from Owen Watkins, dd. Pietermaritzburg, 18 February, 1878.
 - (5) Ibid.
 - (6) Notices, October, 1878, p. 243: minutes of the General Committee, 11 September, 1878.

should include Swaziland and the Circuits in the Transvaal under the control of the Bloemfontein District. ⁽¹⁾

With matters thus prepared, Watkins attended the Triennial Meeting of the South African Districts at Queenstown as a delegate of Natal, in June, 1880.

These meetings had been introduced in 1873 to provide the six South African Districts with an opportunity for consultation. ⁽²⁾ The participating Districts were :

- i. The Cape of Good Hope District;
- ii. The Grahamstown District;
- iii. The Queenstown District;
- iv. The Clarkesbury and Kokstad District;
- v. The Bloemfontein District, and,
- vi. The Natal District. ⁽³⁾

At first, the delegates from the other Districts felt that Natal had been a little previous, not to say officious, in advocating policy for the Transvaal, but, after full discussion, there was complete agreement. ⁽⁴⁾ The meeting recommended to the W.M.M.S. that the Transvaal and Swaziland "be constituted a new District as soon as practicable, but that, for the present, it be a separate section of the Natal District". ⁽²⁾

The British Conference of 1880 received this recommendation but decided to form the Transvaal and Swaziland into a separate District at once and to appoint Owen Watkins as Chairman. ⁽⁵⁾

The Transvaal and Swaziland District was not included with the other South African Districts in the South

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- (1) MS. 15,378 :: Minute book: Natal District Meetings, 1878 - 1880.
 - (2) MS. 15,119: Minutes of general meeting of the Chairmen of the five (sic.) South African Districts, etc.
 - (3) Minutes of the British Conference, 1880, pp. 135 - 142.
 - (4) Amos Burnet, A Mission to the Transvaal, pp. 44-45.
 - (5) Minutes of the British Conference, 1880, p. 142; Reports, 1882, p. 197.

African Conference, formed in 1883. (1) The reason for this appears to be that the other Districts were unable to support this new work and extend it to the Zambesi in accordance with the policy outlined at the time of the formation of the Trial Mission. The matter was raised again in 1890 when Owen Watkins and George Weavind actually attended the South African Conference in Cape Town at the request of the W.M.M.S. To the surprise of everyone at that meeting, the President *Rev. S. Evans Rowe* ruled that the subject was not before the Conference and disallowed any discussion. He probably did this because the Transvaal District Meeting had not voted in favour of the proposal. (2)

The Reverend John Kilner, a Secretary of the W.M.M.S., who made an official visit to the South African Districts and the Transvaal in 1880, had a profound influence on the shaping of policy with regard to education and the African ministry.

During October to November, 1880, Kilner travelled with Owen Watkins, the newly-appointed Chairman, on a tour of inspection of the Transvaal and Swaziland District. Setting out from Pietermaritzburg, they visited Standerton, Heidelberg, Pretoria, Potchefstroom, Uitkyk, Ventersdorp, Klerksdorp, and Bloemhof and arrived in Kimberley in time for the Bloemfontein District Meeting where final arrangements were made for the transfer of the Circuits north of the Vaal to the new District. (3)

In this time, Watkins learnt a great deal from Kilner with regard to education and the African ministry. (4)

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- (1) Minutes of the Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa, 1883.
 - (2) MS. 15,492: Report on the question of the union of the Transvaal District with the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of S.A., by F. Mason, March, 1890.
 - (3) Owen Watkins, Notes of a journey taken with Rev. and Mrs. John Kilner, etc. 30 September - 16 December, 1880.
 - (4) Ibid., draft of a letter to the Committee from Watkins, dd. 16 December, 1880.

Kilner made it quite clear that missionary funds could be spent on education and pointed out that the future of the work in Africa depended on the strength of the African ministry. He felt that many capable men were being kept back from the African ministry "by a timid, if not at times, a jealous hand". He claimed to have met at least fifty men during his travels in South Africa who would be suitable candidates for the ministry. (1)

All was ready by the end of 1880 for Owen Watkins to take up his appointment in the Transvaal and Swaziland District, but he was delayed by unforeseen circumstances.

(1) John Kilner, A summary report by deputation to the South African mission field, 1881.

CHAPTER 7

WAGON POLICY

The cracking of rifles between Boer and Briton at Laing's Nek in the First Transvaal War of Independence prevented Owen Watkins from entering his District at the beginning of 1881, as he had planned.

The Boers invested the Transvaal towns, routed Colonel Anstruther at Bronkhorstspuit, engaged the troops from Natal under Major-General Sir George Pomeroy Colley at Laing's Nek and defeated them on the hill Majuba on 27 February, 1881. Peace negotiations dragged on until October, 1881. (1)

During this time, Owen Watkins went to Swaziland on horseback, accompanied by Daniel Msimang, one of Allison's Swazi converts, to obtain land from the Swazi Chief, Umbandeni. He was unsuccessful. The Swazi Council, at this time, did not grant land willingly to missionary societies and least of all to the Methodists because they believed that Allison had interfered in their affairs at Mahamba. (2)

On this journey, Watkins met (up with) Mr. Joachim Ferreira, one of the Field-Cornets, who had been instrumental in the defeat of Colley at Majuba. He claimed that he could have held Majuba against all the Boers in the Transvaal with a hundred men and, therefore, could only explain their victory as "God's victory". (3)

(1) F. Lion Cachet, *De Worstelstrijd der Transvaalers*, p. 534; Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 383 - 386.

(2) MS. 15,247: Owen Watkins, journal of a visit to Swaziland, 26 July - 3 September, 1881.

(3) *Ibid.*

There were two Methodist missionaries in the Transvaal during the war, the Reverend S. B. Cawood at Potchefstroom and the Reverend George Weavind at Pretoria, but all the work was brought to a standstill. The report for the year was brief: "War has arrested nearly all missionary work in this District for the greater part of the year". (1)

Cawood did not get on very well with the Boers in Potchefstroom. He was summoned before the Krygsraad for an infringement of the curfew but failed to appear and was fined in his absence. Later, he informed Commandant Cronje that he had not received his notice in time to appear and refused to pay the fine. He was jailed but was released when one of his friends paid the fine. (2)

Weavind, on the other hand, adopted a mediating position between Boer and Briton and assisted them to communicate with each other. He served as Chaplain and Assistant Camp Quartermaster to the British troops and was thanked on parade for these services by the British General, Sir Evelyn Wood. (3)

Owen Watkins eventually arrived at Pretoria to take up his appointment as Chairman of the Transvaal and Swaziland District on 26 December, 1881. (4) The first District Meeting in January, 1882, was composed of three men: Watkins, Cawood, and the Reverend C. S. Franklin, who had just arrived. Weavind was on furlough in England. (5) According to the records, there were only seventy-eight members of the Church in the Transvaal, (1) 379 in the Molopo Mission (6) and none in Swaziland.

(1) Reports, 1881, p. 156.

(2) J. Whitesdie, op. cit., p. 423.

(3) Ibid., p. 424.

(4) D. P. Dugmore, op. cit., p. 43.

(5) Minute book: Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, January, 1882.

(6) MS. 15,250: Transvaal Affairs, a description of the Molopo Mission by Edward Harris, dd. March, 1880.

It appeared to be a very small beginning but Watkins was due for a surprise. There were other Methodists in his District besides those in the official records. One after the other African laymen, who had pioneered little Societies, arrived at Pretoria and invited him to visit them.

Klaas Olifant ⁽¹⁾ was the first to arrive and took Watkins to his church on the ^aApies river thirty-five miles from Pretoria, a building capable of seating 200 people. Three services and a Sunday school were held every Sunday; the Society Class of seventeen members met once a week and there was a school for adults as well as children. ⁽²⁾

Klaas Olifant, born in Zebediela's tribe in the northern Transvaal, had gone to Colesburg in the Cape as a youth. There he was converted and went to school. When he returned to his home, Chief Zebediela drove him away and he fled to another branch of the tribe living on the Apies river, arriving there in about 1872. Here he started to preach and received occasional visits from Blencowe and Weavind, who baptised his converts and administered the sacrament of Holy Communion to his Church members. ⁽³⁾

Watkins accepted responsibility for the support of this Society and undertook to supply them with books and equipment. He was deeply impressed with the work and witness of Klaas Olifant and reported to the W.M.M.S., "If a man will give nine years of his life without fee or reward to preach Christ among the heathen, I think it is pretty good proof of his sincerity". ⁽²⁾

It is worth quoting Watkins' report on this visit as

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- (1) The spelling of the name varies and in some sources he is called Klass Dhoba.
 - (2) Notices, April, 1882, p. 95: letter from Owen Watkins, dd. 9 January, 1882.
 - (3) Notices, April, 1891, p. 84: brief biographical sketches (and portrait) by George Weavind.

an example of his ability to organise and inspire a local congregation and his ability to write an interesting report to capture the imagination of his supporters in England.

"We arrived at the station at 6.30 a.m. on 3 January, 1882.⁽¹⁾ Before we had finished a hasty breakfast, the people were crowding around us anxious for us to go to business. At 7 a.m. we began and for five hours sat investigating and re-organising. We then adjourned for half an hour for coffee and rest, after which we had a three hour service in the chapel ... after another rest of half an hour, we had a second service. At this service I baptised five infants and explained and enforced the duties of parents and the church to baptised children. After this ... sitting outside the wagon ... the people came ... and sat around us. I suggested to Mr. Smith that he should teach them some old Methodist tunes. We continued singing until the sun went down ... and the heathen people came outside their kraals to listen ... At last we told the people they must go home as we were in great need of our dinner. The singing lessons began again in the moonlight. Soon heavy raindrops began to fall ... and to the chapel we adjourned. It was a grand sight! There were between fifty and sixty black people sitting with eager faces around the three white men singing with all their hearts and souls, the whole scene lit up by a couple of candles ..." ⁽²⁾

Soon after Watkins returned to Pretoria, there were

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- (1) Watkins was accompanied on this visit by the Reverend C. S. Franklin and the organist of the Pretoria (European) congregation, Mr. E. Smith.
 (2) Notices, April, 1882, p. 95: Letter from Owen Watkins, dd. 9, January, 1882.

invitations to visit other African Societies. "I do not know where to go first," he wrote, "I am down for Pretoria but the fact is my District is my Circuit ... for the first two or three years I must travel three quarters of the time, if the work is to go on." (1)

Watkins thus conceived what may be called his wagon policy. Henceforth, for months at a time, he would live in his wagon travelling across the length and breadth of his District organising Societies and Circuits and placing missionaries in strategic positions. As a rule, he tried to visit the whole of the District each year in three long journeys; one to the south-west and Mafeking; one to the north and one to Swaziland.

This wagon policy would not have been possible without the assistance of George Weavind, who attended to all the secretarial and accounting work of the District. "He works the District," wrote Watkins, "while I travel." There was no difficulty about this because of the close friendship between the two men. "We are more than brothers to each other," (2) wrote Watkins, "We have but one mind, one heart and one plan of missionary operations." (3) Watkins preferred the travelling to the administrative work. (4)

The following route taken by Owen Watkins by wagon from Pretoria via the Waterberg and the Soutpansberg to Sekhukhuneland and back to Pretoria and Potchefstroom, in 1885, gives some idea of the length of his journeys.

28 July (Tuesday) Left Pretoria.
 29 July (Wednesday) Aapjies River.
 31 July (Friday) Makapan's Kraal.
 6 Aug. (Thursday) Kollerfontein and Khoarefontein.
 7 Aug. (Friday) Rooipoort - Harzenbergs and Swanepoels.
 8 Aug. (Saturday) Hotsprings (Warmbaths) and Tweefontein (De Beers).

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- (1) Notices, June - July, 1882, p. 152: address to the Annual Meetings of the W.M.M.S. by the Reverend F. Mason.
 (2) Notices, December, 1885, p. 303: letter from Watkins, dd. 7 October, 1885.
 (3) MS. 15,262: Watkins to Kilner, dd. Potchefstroom, 19 December, 1885.
 (4) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Pretoria, 5 April, 1886.

- 10 Aug. (Monday) Kranskop near Nylstroom -
Krause's Station.
- 12 Aug. (Wednesday) Zebediela's River.
- 13 Aug. (Thursday) Good Hope.
- 20 Aug. (Thursday) Marabastad.
- 24 Aug. (Monday) Gamatsesebelo.
- 3 Sept. (Thursday) Good Hope.
- 4 Sept. (Friday) Left Good Hope - Zebediela's.
- 5 Sept. (Saturday) Olifants River.
- 6-10 Sept. (Sunday to Thursday) On banks of
Olifants River.
- 11 Sept. (Friday) Machalo's Place.
- 12 Sept. (Saturday) Marachane's Place.
- 16 Sept. (Wednesday) Maritzale.
- 19 Sept. (Saturday) Kgolokoi's Place.
- 22 Sept. (Tuesday) Steelpoort River.
- 25 Sept. (Friday) Lydenburg.
- 28 Sept. (Monday) Middelburg.
- 1 Oct. (Thursday) Pretoria.
- 3 Oct. (Saturday) Pretoria.
- 4 Oct. (Sunday) Potchefstroom. (1)

Owen Watkin's wagon policy was, to a large extent, responsible for the success of the Transvaal and Swaziland District.

(1) Journal of the Methodist Historical Society of South Africa, October, 1958, vol. iii, No. 2., p. 77.

CHAPTER 8
A DISTRICT PLAN

Like the needle of a compass, Owen Watkins' thoughts were attracted to the north. There, in the vast, primitive continent of Africa were people who had never heard of Christ and he felt the urge to reach them. A plan to reach the Zambesi started to take shape in his mind as African laymen invited him to visit the Societies they had founded further and further to the north.

In January, 1882, he had visited Klaas Olifant's Society on the Apies river, thirty-five miles north of Pretoria. In March, 1882, he visited Makapanstad, thirty-five miles further on. Here another African pioneer, Hans Aapjie had built a substantial church and gathered a congregation. ⁽¹⁾ In June, 1882, Watkins sent the Reverend C. S. Franklin to find out what possibilities there were for missionary work further north. Franklin went as far as the Soutpansberg, where he found a number of Christian people, who were without a missionary. ⁽²⁾ A little later in the year 1882, two messengers arrived at Pretoria with news of a Methodist by the name of Samuel Mathabathe who had founded a Society in Sekhukhuneland. ⁽²⁾

Thus Watkins envisaged his mission reaching north to the Zambesi. Using the Transvaal and Swaziland District as a base, he envisaged three "chains" of mission stations reaching north; one from a western base at Mafeking; one from a central base at Pretoria and one from an eastern base in Swaziland.

(1) Notices, August, 1883, pp. 208 - 211: letter from Owen Watkins, undated.

(2) MS. 15,242: Watkins to Mason, dd. 10 July, 1882.

Watkins worked out the details of his plan to reach the Zambesi and submitted it to the W.M.M.S. on 23 August, 1882, only eight months after his arrival at Pretoria. ⁽¹⁾ He later had an opportunity to present the plan in person at the Annual Meetings of the W.M.M.S. in London in May, 1884. ⁽²⁾

Starting with the three bases in the Transvaal and Swaziland District, Watkins planned to have a European missionary stationed every 200 miles along the line to the north with African men in between, about thirty-five miles apart. Thus, in case of disaster or death, which he fully anticipated, the station behind would be able to hold the station before. ⁽²⁾

The ruling principle of the plan was "a mission by Natives to Natives". European missionaries were to confine their activities to construction, supervision, and education. Nevertheless, they would have to be strong men capable of leading people who had only recently been converted from heathenism. They would need to be able to cope with such diverse activities as building, mending wagons and attending to the sick. They would have to face loneliness and would have to be men faithful to God. They would have to assist with the training of African preachers and so build up a strong African ministry.

A Training Institution was vital to the whole scheme. Watkins felt that it should be at Pretoria, where the Chairman lived, so that he could get to know the men personally before they left for the mission field.

The cost of the scheme Watkins estimated at £2,000 for a Training Institution and £1,000 for each of the main stations. Buildings at the intermediate stations would be erected by the people themselves at no cost to the W.M.M.S. ⁽³⁾

(1) MS. 15,243: Watkins to Kilner, dd. 23 August, 1882.

(2) Notices, June - July, 1884, pp. 124 - 167.

(3) MS. 15,243: Watkins to Kilner, dd. 23 August, 1882.

At about this time, two events in the Transvaal almost prevented the fulfilment of these plans.

The first was an objection to Methodist missions in the Transvaal from the Vice-Superintendent of the Hermannsburg Missionary Society, the Reverend Mr. Behrens. He claimed that, in 1866, the Hermannsburg and the Berlin Missionary Societies had divided the Transvaal between themselves by a line running due north from Pretoria. The Berlin Society worked to the east of this line and the Hermannsburg Society to the west. (1)

It will be remembered that a meeting of the ministers of the Trial Mission under the chairmanship of Blencowe in 1875 had reported: "We find that this Republic is so occupied by the Berlin and the Hermannsburg Societies, that no sphere of extensive operations is left for us within its boundaries". (2) Watkins, however, was convinced that there was ample room for other missionary societies. He had visited Makapanstad on the invitation of Hans Aapjie and he had found no clear evidence of the work of the Hermannsburg Society there. He had sent Franklin to investigate the extent of the coverage given by the Hermannsburg Society as far north as the Soutpansberg and he had found many people without a missionary. He therefore informed the Reverend Mr. Behrens that he "declined to recognise any partition of the Transvaal ... to which the Wesleyan Missionary Society is not a party". (3)

Eventually, the Reverend W. Behrens, son of the Vice-Superintendent, met Watkins personally and withdrew all claims based on the partition of the Transvaal; he acknowledged that Hans Aapjie did not want to join the Hermannsburg Society once he had moved to Makapanstad

(1) MS. 15,243: Watkins to Behrens, dd. Pretoria, 29 May, 1882.

(2) Reports, 1875, p. 118.

(3) MS. 15,243: Watkins to Behrens, dd. Pretoria, 29 May, 1882.

and admitted that they could not claim the sole right to work among a tribe simply because they had a missionary in the area. ⁽¹⁾ Thus, the first challenge to Watkins' plan was removed.

Another and more serious threat to the very existence of the Methodist Church in the Transvaal came in the form of an accusation of interference in the politics of the Transvaal Republic.

On 25 October, 1882, Weavind, was shocked to read in his copy of the Volksstem an accusation levelled against Watkins and himself of interference in the case of Chief Marishane, who had been jailed by the Boers for resisting their attempts to capture his brother-in-law, Mampoer.

"En op dit oogenblik interesseren zich hier in Pretoria twee geestelijken in bijzondere mate over de persoonlijke vrijheid van de Kafferfoofd die hier in den tronk zit. Een van die Eerwaarde heeren was hier gedurende de Engelsche overheersching." ⁽²⁾

This accusation had been made by no less a person than Marthinus Wessel Pretorius, who, with Petrus Jacobus Joubert and Paul Kruger, was a member of the triumvirate in whose hands the government of the Transvaal had been placed when the Boers challenged the British annexation.

When Watkins discovered who had made the accusation, he wrote to the State Secretary requesting an interview. ⁽³⁾ This was granted and Weavind accompanied him on 1 November, 1882. They were received by Pretorius and Kruger.

(1) MS. 15,243: Watkins to Kilner, dd. Pretoria, 20 July, 1882.

(2) Volksstem, 25 October, 1882.

(3) MS. 15,243: Watkins to State Secretary, dd. Pretoria, 29 October, 1882.

Having stated that it was the declared policy of the W.M.M.S. not to interfere in politics, Watkins went on to explain what had happened to give rise to the thought that they had departed from their policy in this instance. He said that a Methodist Local Preacher, May Loti, being one of the few literate people in Marishane's tribe, had been sent to Pretoria to make enquiries as to what steps could be taken to secure the release of their Chief. Being a Methodist, May Loti had naturally gone to Weavind for advice. Weavind, anxious to keep out of politics, had done nothing more than introduce him to an attorney. This, Watkins pointed out, was all that had happened.

Pretorius and Kruger were satisfied with the explanation and they were, at the same time, impressed with the sincerity of the missionaries' intention not to interfere in politics. Paul Kruger assured them that they would always be welcome in the Transvaal if they continued to act on this principle and added that the Government would listen to any complaints they might have at any time. ⁽¹⁾ Thus, a serious threat to the existence of the Methodist Church in the Transvaal was successfully removed.

Watkins' plan to reach the Zambesi was approved in principle by the W.M.M.S. in December, 1882. He was instructed to start with the base in the west and the Training Institution. For these two projects, the sum of £3,454 was made available. ⁽²⁾

At the beginning of 1883, George Weavind moved from Pretoria to Potchefstroom ⁽³⁾. and Watkins joined him there at the end of 1884, after a period of sick leave in England. ⁽⁴⁾ During his leave, Watkins presented

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- (1) MS. 15,243: Watkins to Kilner, dd. Pretoria, 6 November, 1882.
 - (2) Notices, February, 1883, p. 43: Minutes of the General Committee, 20 December, 1882.
 - (3) Minute book: Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, November, 1882, p. 29.
 - (4) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Durban, 11 November, 1884.

his plan to the Annual Meeting of the W.M.M.S. and gained considerable support. ⁽¹⁾ When he returned, he brought with him three young missionaries, the first of many recruits from England, for his District. ⁽²⁾

In the next three chapters we follow the development of the District in the west, the east and the centre. The Witwatersrand Mission and Johannesburg and the Reef Circuits are reserved for later consideration because they were not envisaged in Watkins' plan for his District.

(1) Notices, June - July, 1884, pp. 124 - 167.

(2) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Durban, 11, November, 1884.

POTCHEFSTROOM.

David Magata, the pioneer of Methodism in Potchefstroom, was joined by Blencowe and Wynne of the Trial Mission in 1872. In 1883 Potchefstroom became the headquarters of the Transvaal and Swaziland District and, although Mafeking was regarded as the western base, it was from Potchefstroom that this side of the Transvaal was developed. In fact, by the time Watkins and Weavind moved the District headquarters back to Pretoria, in 1886, most of the development work had been done.⁽¹⁾

In Potchefstroom a school for European boys occupied all the missionary's time until a second man was appointed for this work.⁽²⁾ The African day school struggled to get back onto its feet after it had been closed by Watkins and Kilner in 1880,⁽³⁾ but it was later improved by John Klassen, a hard-working lay agent.⁽⁴⁾ A revival took place among the young people of the European congregation in 1885, in which twenty were converted and placed in a junior Class.⁽⁵⁾

The African Circuit was extensive. Besides the church at Potchefstroom, there were preaching places at Klerksdorp, Uitkyk, Paardekop and Vaal River.⁽⁶⁾ Machabastad was added in 1886 and Michael Bowen, an Evangelist, was stationed there. The Magaliesberg

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- (1) Minute book: Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, 1886.
(2) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Kilner, dd. 15 January, 1884.
(3) Notices, August, 1883, pp. 212 - 213: letter from Weavind, undated.
(4) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Chairman, dd. Potchefstroom, 30 April, 1884.
(5) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Potchefstroom, 15 January, 1885.
(6) Notices, October, 1886, pp. 237 - 239: report from Weavind, dd. 28 June, 1886.

Society was formed as a result of the work of Malakia Rusele in about 1889. ⁽¹⁾ By 1895, there were forty preaching places. Many of these consisted of small groups of families living on European-owned farms. A number of these groups would gather at a central place once a quarter for the sacramental service conducted by the Superintendent minister. There were six of these centres. ⁽²⁾ The membership of this Circuit, by 1898, was 1,400 and it was entirely self-supporting. ⁽¹⁾

UITKYK.

Uitkyk, a farm of 5,500 morgen, twenty-four miles north of Potchefstroom, was purchased on 11 November, 1878 by the Reverend Timothy Cresswell. ⁽³⁾

Cresswell, who was stationed at Potchefstroom, purchased the farm as a settlement for part of the Kwena who had migrated from Thaba Nchu, under their Chief, Petros Molefo. The arrangement was that each man would pay a rental of £6 for the first year and £1 a year thereafter. Molefo reckoned that there would be sufficient income from rent to pay for the farm. Chief Moroka, however, prevented any more of the Kwena from leaving Thaba Nchu and Cresswell was landed in serious financial trouble. ⁽⁴⁾ The Bloemfontein District Meeting of 1879 advised him to sell the farm, ⁽⁵⁾ but Cresswell felt that he could not do this because he was morally and financially committed to the Kwena ⁽⁶⁾ and obtained a loan of £1,000 from the Reverend James Scott, Chairman of the Bloemfontein District. ⁽⁷⁾ Cresswell had

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- (1) Notices, January, 1898, pp. 3 - 5, report by C. W. Mowson.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Mowson to Hartley, dd. Potchefstroom, 12, December, 1895.
 - (3) Record on Appeal, p. 159, copy of Deed of Sale, dd. 11 November, 1878.
 - (4) Record on Appeal, p. 239, Cresswell to Kilner, dd. Kroonstad, 21 April, 1880.
 - (5) Record on Appeal, p. 247, James Calvert to Wesleyan Missionary Society, dd. Bloemfontein, 15 April, 1880.
 - (6) Record on Appeal, p. 252, Cresswell to Kilner, dd. Boulagne-Sur-Mer, 4 January, 1882.
 - (7) Record on Appeal, p. 247, James Calvert to Wesleyan Missionary Society, dd. Bloemfontein, 15 April, 1880.

purchased the farm in his own name. (1) This was quite unconstitutional and, for punishment he was ordered back to England. (2) The Bloemfontein District Meeting then recommended that the farm be taken over from Cresswell for missionary purposes (3) and the W.M.M.S. had little option but to agree.

Kilner and Watkins inspected the farm in 1880. They found that Cresswell had appointed four Leaders and four Local Preachers, that Services were held twice a Sunday and that there was a Sunday school, a day school and a night school. Petros Molefo was authorised to manage the farm, rule the people and collect the rents. (4) Weavind was pleased to see that Molefo exercised a strong Christian influence over the people. (5) When Molefo died on 23 November, 1885 (6) he was succeeded by his son Melia Molefo, a weak man given to habitual drinking. (7)

The Reverend G. S. Sheldon was appointed as the first resident missionary at Uitkyk in April, 1886. (8) At that time, only seventy of the 500 people on the farm were Church members. Nevertheless, they built a house for him and planned to erect a proper church. (9)

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- (1) Record on Appeal, p. 159, Copy of Deed of Sale, dd. 11 November, 1878.
 - (2) Record on Appeal, p. 249, Kilner to Puncheon, dd. Kroonstad, 23 April, 1880.
 - (3) Record on Appeal, p. 248, Minutes of Bloemfontein District Meeting, Kimberley, 30 November - 9 December, 1880.
 - (4) Owen Watkins: Notes of a journey taken with Rev. and Mrs. Kilner, 11 November, 1880.
 - (5) Notices, August, 1883, p. 213, letter from Weavind, undated.
 - (6) MS. 15,240, Watkins to his wife, dd. Potchefstroom, 18 November, 1885.
 - (7) Notices, October, 1886, pp. 237 - 239, Report from Weavind dd. 28 June, 1886; MS. 15,432, Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 28 June, 1895.
 - (8) Notices, September, 1886, pp. 202 - 209, Report from Watkins, dd. Mafeking, 11 May, 1886.
 - (9) Notices, October, 1886, pp. 237 - 239, Report from Weavind, dd. 28 June, 1886.

Sheldon conducted a successful night school which earned for the farm the name "Schoolplaats". He held regular services, visited the neighbouring kraals and preached, from time to time, to the European congregation at Potchefstroom, Klerksdorp and Ventersdorp. (1)

In 1887, the W.M.M.S. received an offer of £10,000 for Uitkyk farm, conditional upon prospecting rights being given and payable gold being found. (2) There were three alternatives :

- (a) to retain the farm under the provisions of the gold law,
- (b) to lease it,
- (c) to sell it.

The W.M.M.S. felt that it could not become a commercial company and would, therefore, not retain the farm under the provisions of the gold law. It felt that its agents could not be called upon to supervise tenants; therefore, it would not lease the farm. The only alternative was to sell and this meant that the Kwenas would have to be provided with alternate accommodation. There was no time to delay. The Transvaal Government might, at any time, declare the farm a public gold field. (3) The Missionary Committee felt that the issues at stake were of sufficient importance to warrant sending Watkins, who was on furlough in England, to investigate. As a result of his visit, however, the farm was not sold. (4) Another offer of £25,000 for Uitkyk was received in 1895 but again the farm was not sold. (5)

In 1890 Weavind gave verbal notice to Melia Molefo

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- (1) Notices, August, 1887, pp. 181 - 182, Report from G. J. Sheldon, dd. School Plaats, 11 April, 1887.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Thomas Leask to Weavind, dd. Klerksdorp, 28 February, 1887.
 - (3) Notices, June, 1887, pp. 121 - 122, editorial comment.
 - (4) MS. 15,432, Watkins to Kilner, dd. Pretoria, 11 June, 1887.
 - (5) MS. 15,432, Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 25 May, 1895.

to leave the farm. Molefo refused to move and, from that time, the missionary in charge experienced great difficulty in collecting the rent. ⁽¹⁾ Three years later the Reverend George Lowe reported that some of the people thought the farm belonged to them. ⁽²⁾ Melia Molefo contested the ownership of the farm in the law courts but judgement was given in favour of the W.M.M.S. ⁽³⁾

The Reverend F. J. Briscoe was appointed resident missionary at Uitkyk from 1888 to 1889. He found that many of the African men had gone to work on the mines ⁽⁴⁾ and when he left, the work was carried on by a Native Agent under the supervision of the missionary at Potchefstroom. ⁽⁵⁾

VENTERSDORP.

Nine miles north of Uitkyk was the town of Ventersdorp. Here, in 1880, Kilner and Watkins preached in a school-room, baptised two children and arranged with a local Methodist to start a Sunday school. ⁽⁶⁾ Later, Cawood secured a plot of land for a church. ⁽⁷⁾ In 1883 the Boers were without a minister and Weavind conducted services for them in their own language. ⁽⁸⁾ In 1887 an African Local Preacher from Uitkyk went to live in Ventersdorp ⁽⁹⁾ and, with his leadership, the people built a church. ⁽¹⁰⁾ A Native Agent was appointed in 1889. ⁽¹¹⁾

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- (1) Record on Appeal, p. 174, Statement by Weavind dd. Pretoria, 25 February, 1893.
 - (2) Record on Appeal, p. 255, Minutes, Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, 1893; MS. 15,220, Lowe to Weavind, dd. Potchefstroom, 16 June, 1893.
 - (3) Record on Appeal.
 - (4) Reports, 1889 - 1890.
 - (5) Reports, 1891 - 1894; Minutes of the British Conference, 1894 - 1899.
 - (6) Owen Watkins, Notes of a journey taken with the Reverend and Mrs. John Kilner, 8 - 15 November, 1880.
 - (7) MS. 15,243, Watkins to Kilner, dd. Pretoria, 3 July, 1882.
 - (8) Notices, August, 1883, p. 213, letter from Weavind, undated.
 - (9) Reports, 1888, p. 182.
 - (10) Reports, 1889, p. 99.
 - (11) Reports, 1890, p. 98.

KLERKSDORP.

The following brief statement appears in the Report of the W.M.M.S. for 1877: "Two of our people live at Klirks Dorp, a village about thirty-six miles from Potchefstroom, and keep a Sabbath school for Natives."⁽¹⁾ Nothing further is heard of these Methodists until Weavind visited the town in 1883 and was welcomed by them. He undertook to visit the town once a month to conduct services and promised a teacher for the African people.⁽²⁾ The African people first hired a building for worship,⁽³⁾ and then erected a church of their own.⁽⁴⁾ A Native Agent, Joel Mahati,⁽⁵⁾ was appointed in 1885.⁽⁶⁾

Joel Mahati visited Hartbeesfontein, a village seventeen miles west of Klerksdorp. The Boers not only encouraged their servants to attend his services but went themselves to "worship in a service conducted by a black man".⁽⁷⁾

Gold was discovered at Klerksdorp in August, 1886, and in July, 1887 the Schoonspruit Gold Fields were proclaimed. Until this time, Klerksdorp had been a quiet little town with one main street. Now, to provide for the increased population a new township was surveyed on the east bank of the Schoonspruit. This became known as "New Town" and the original village was referred to as the "Old Town".⁽⁸⁾

Weavind visited Klerksdorp in November, 1887 and reported: "the place is greatly changed by the influx of population and our congregations are much increased."⁽⁹⁾

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- (1) Reports, 1877, p. 116.
 - (2) Notices, May, 1883, p. 117, letter from Weavind, undated.
 - (3) Notices, November, 1884, p. 279, letter from Weavind, dd. 13 August, 1884.
 - (4) Notices, October, 1886, pp. 237 - 239, Report from Weavind dd. 28 June, 1886.
 - (5) Notices, October, 1887, pp. 222 - 224, Report from the Reverend A. S. Sharp, dd. Vryburg, 13 September, 1887.
 - (6) Reports, 1886, p. 173.
 - (7) Notices, October, 1886, pp. 237 - 239, Report from Weavind, dd. 28 June, 1886.
 - (8) Herman Guest: "Voortrekkerdorp" pp. 59 - 62.
 - (9) Notices, February, 1888, p. 42: Report from the Reverend George Weavind, dd. Pretoria, 25 November, 1887.

Isaac Shimmin was transferred from the Waterberg Mission to Klerksdorp in 1888 as the first resident minister. ⁽¹⁾

The work grew rapidly. The dining-room, in which services were held, was soon too small for the congregation and, on 20 June, 1888, the foundation-stone of a church in the "Old Town" was laid by Mrs. Thomas Leask. ⁽²⁾ This church seated two hundred and was built of wood and iron. ⁽³⁾

On 21 August, 1889 the foundation-stone of a second church was laid by Mrs. Thomas Leask in the "New Town." ⁽⁴⁾ This church seated three hundred and was a substantial building. ⁽⁵⁾ At the same time as the second church was in the process of erection, a minister's house was built in the "Old Town". ⁽⁶⁾

When the second church was opened, the Quarterly Meeting requested the appointment of a second minister to Klerksdorp and undertook to pay his stipend. The reason for having two churches was that the Schoonspruit river, which divided the "New Town" from the "Old Town", was often impassable during the wet season. ⁽⁷⁾

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- (1) Minutes of the Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, Pretoria, 5-13 March, 1888, p. 159.
 - (2) Trowel in the safe of the Klerksdorp Methodist Church: "presented to Mrs. Thomas Leask on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of the Wesleyan church, Klerksdorp, Z.A.R. June, 20, 1888."
 - (3) Notices, February, 1890, p. 27: "Eighteen months at a new gold centre in the Transvaal", undated; Transvaal and Swaziland District, General Summary, 1888, p. 157, 181.
 - (4) Trowel in the safe of the Klerksdorp Methodist Church: "Presented to Mrs. Thos. Leask on the occasion of her laying the foundation stone of The Wesleyan Church, New Township, Klerksdorp on the 21st August, 1889."
 - (5) Transvaal and Swaziland District, General Summary, 1889, p. 191, 215.
 - (6) Ibid, p. 215; Note: The Second church still stands at number 40, Siddle street, The minister's house still stands at 7, Theunisen street.
 - (7) MS. 15,432, Watkins to Hartley, dd. Kilnerton, 23 August, 1889.

The Reverend C. W. Mowson, was sent from England in response to this request and arrived in January, 1890.⁽¹⁾

By the end of 1890, however, there was no longer any need for two ministers in Klerksdorp. The Anglican and Presbyterian Churches had started work⁽²⁾ and acute commercial depression had forced many people to leave.⁽³⁾ There were only fifteen infant baptisms in 1891, whereas there had been fifty-one in 1889 and sixty-one in 1890.⁽⁴⁾ Shimmin was transferred to Johannesburg⁽⁵⁾ and Mowson was left on his own to conduct one service in each of the two churches every Sunday.⁽⁶⁾

The African population at Klerksdorp increased during the gold boom. In January, 1890, the foundation-stone of a large new church was laid and the building was opened on 25 February, 1890. It cost just over £250 and there was no debt. The total amount, which included £50 from the sale of the old church, had been raised by the people themselves. The African Circuit at Klerksdorp was entirely self-supporting.⁽⁷⁾ The Reverend Samuel Olifant was appointed to Klerksdorp in 1894,⁽⁸⁾ and the Reverend Henry Ntsiko succeeded him in 1898.⁽⁹⁾

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- (1) MS. 15,432, Watkins to Hartley, dd. Kilnerton, 14 January, 1890; MS. 15,432: Mowson to Hartley, dd. Klerksdorp, 29 November, 1890.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Mowson to Hartley, dd. Klerksdorp, 24 June, 1890.
 - (3) Transvaal and Swaziland District, General Summary, 1890, p. 222.
 - (4) Klerksdorp Methodist Church: Wesleyan Methodist Register of Baptisms, 7 June, 1888 - 21 March, 1899.
 - (5) Minutes of the Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, Pretoria, 20 - 25 October, 1890, p. 253.
 - (6) Transvaal and Swaziland District, General Summary, 1891, p. 251.
 - (7) Notices, October, 1890, p. 228 - 229: "Klerksdorp New Native church", report by C. W. Mowson; Transvaal and Swaziland District, General Summary, 1888, p. 169; 1889, p. 209; 1890, p. 231 and 238.

In 1895 the foundation stone of a hall to be used for a church and a school was laid at the Buffelsdoorn mine. ⁽¹⁾ The W.M.M.S. had no title to this property. ⁽²⁾ In 1897 a hall was built at Eastleigh on property leased from the mine. It was used for services on Sundays and as a reading room during the week. ⁽³⁾

BLOEMHOF.

In 1880, Kilner and Watkins conducted a service in the Dutch Reformed Church. They were assisted by the Reverend Charles Harman of Mafeking. ⁽⁴⁾

In 1883 it was reported that a Methodist layman by the name of Palmer held regular services in his home and planned to start services for the African people as well. ⁽⁵⁾

The Reverend George Weavind visited Bloemhof in January, 1884 and found that the English-speaking people of the town planned to erect an undenominational church. One of them had donated an erf on condition that "no church claiming to use this building should appoint a resident minister". ⁽⁶⁾ Trustees were appointed to receive contributions and prepare plans for the building.

At this stage, Bishop Bousfield visited Bloemhof and appointed a resident minister. The new spiritual leader made it one of his first duties to call on Palmer to tell him that he could stop his services. Palmer refused and a meeting of the Trust was called. It was

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Milward to Hartley, dd. 16 November, 1895.
 - (2) MS. 15,575: Palmer to Rogers, dd. Durban, 6 April, 1903.
 - (3) Ibid.
 - (4) Owen Watkins: Notes of a journey taken with the Reverend John Kilner, etc. 20 - 22 November, 1880.
 - (5) Notices, August, 1883, p. 214, letter from Weavind, undated.
 - (6) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Chairman, dd. Potchefstroom, 12 February, 1884.

now felt that the undenominational scheme would not work. The majority were in favour of the Methodist Church and, with the co-operation of the donor of the erf, it became a purely Methodist project. ⁽¹⁾ To promote the African work at Bloemhof, Weavind offered £24 per annum towards the stipend of a Native Agent and Palmer tried to secure the services of a suitable man. ⁽²⁾

Weavind visited Bloemhof again in August, 1884. He found that a considerable sum of money had been promised for the European church building. Five African people had been converted and there was a prospect of starting African work at Mamusa, a few miles from town. Palmer had not managed to secure the services of an assistant and did all the work himself. ⁽³⁾

In January, 1885, the Reverend A. S. Sharp was appointed to Bloemhof. ⁽⁴⁾ A corrugated-iron lean-to was used as a church and the people brought their own chairs. Here Sharp conducted his first service in Bloemhof with thirty-five people present. There were sixty present at his first service with African people. A meeting of all interested persons was held to discuss the proposed new European church and a building committee was appointed. Christiana was visited ⁽⁵⁾ and the people there were promised a monthly service. ⁽⁶⁾

One of the first things Sharp did for the African people was to form a Class which met every Sunday afternoon. They belonged to the Kora tribe and could speak Dutch. ⁽⁷⁾ At Bamboo Spruit, a few miles from the town,

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- (1) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Calvert and Webster, dd. Potchefstroom, 11 March, 1884.
 - (2) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Chairman, dd. Potchefstroom, 2 July, 1884.
 - (3) Notices, November, 1884, p. 278: Letter from Weavind, dd. 13 August, 1884.
 - (4) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Potchefstroom, 31 January, 1885.
 - (5) Notices, May, 1885, p. 108: Report of a journey to Bloemhof and the South West Transvaal from Watkins, dd. 6 March, 1885.
 - (6) MS. 15,262, Weavind to Sharp, dd. Potchefstroom, 14, March, 1885.
 - (7) Notices, September, 1885, p. 225: letter from Sharp, dated Bloemhof, 20 February, 1885.

Sharp found fourteen full members of the Church. They were Rolongs who had come from the Free State and were in possession of their Class Tickets, the oldest of which was dated 1875. One of them donated a bullock towards a fund for the erection of a church for the African people in Bloemhof. ⁽¹⁾

A start was made with both European and African building schemes in June, 1885, ⁽²⁾ and the opening services for both churches were conducted by Weavind on 18 September, 1885. The African church, constructed of limestone and thatch, cost £70 and was opened free of debt. Most of the money was contributed by the African people themselves. The European church cost just over £465 and there was only a small debt of £30. Sharp tells in his own words how he collected the funds.

"Having exhausted every source available among the English friends, and coming far short of the amount required, we determined to seek help from the Boers in the district ... I saddled my horse and rode one day in one direction and one day in another direction and begged sheep and oxen, produce and anything I could get ... In all my travels I only met with one refusal. I think that fully one third of the amount has been collected in this way." ⁽³⁾

In September, 1886, the Reverend J. G. Benson was appointed to Bloemhof. ⁽⁴⁾ Palmer had got himself into personal financial difficulties and tried to solve his problems by selling drink to the African people.

(1) Ibid., letter from Sharp, dd. Bloemhof, 28 May, 1885.

(2) Ibid.; MS. 15,262: Weavind to Sharp, dd. Potchefstroom, 1 April, 1885.

(3) Notices, January, 1886, pp. 17 - 21: letter from Sharp, dd. 30 October, 1885.

(4) Notices, September, 1886, pp. 202 - 209: Report of a journey to the South West Transvaal, etc., from Watkins, dd. Mafeking, 11 May, 1886.

Weavind instructed Benson not to allow him to preach,⁽¹⁾
but not to deprive him of his status as a preacher⁽²⁾
in view of all he had done for the Church in Bloemhof.⁽³⁾

In 1888, the minister was removed from Bloemhof due
to the decline in the population and the town was
visited once a month by the minister at Vryburg.⁽⁴⁾
From 1892 it was visited from Klerksdorp⁽⁵⁾ and an
African Evangelist was appointed.⁽⁶⁾

VRYBURG.

In July, 1885, a Local Preacher, Mr. J. Dednam re-
ported to Watkins that he had gathered a congregation
of thirty African people at Vryburg.⁽⁷⁾ The Reverend
A. S. Sharp was sent to investigate.⁽⁸⁾ When he
arrived, he sent a man around the town with a bell
and a board to announce a service for Europeans to be
held in the magistrate's court. Such a large crowd
arrived that another venue had to be found to accommo-
date them. In the location, he held an open-air service
which was well attended.⁽⁹⁾ Sharp reported that Vryburg
should be occupied at once and offered to go there him-
self. Weavind, with greater caution, advised him to
visit the town every six weeks, for a start.⁽¹⁰⁾

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- (1) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Benson, dd. Potchefstroom,
16 February, 1886.
 - (2) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Benson, dd. Potchefstroom,
5 March, 1886.
 - (3) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Benson, dd. 16 March, 1886.
 - (4) Reports, 1889, p. 98.
 - (5) Reports, 1892, p. 93.
 - (6) Reports, 1889 - 1894; Minutes of the British
Conference, 1894 - 1899.
 - (7) MS. 15,262: Watkins to Dednam, dd. Potchefstroom,
8 July, 1885.
 - (8) MS. 15,262: Watkins to Sharp, dd. Potchefstroom,
8 July, 1885.
 - (9) Notices, July, 1886, pp. 154 - 155: Report from
Sharp dd. 29 April, 1886.
 - (10) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Sharp, dd. Potchefstroom,
19 August, 1885.

At the end of 1885, Weavind visited Vryburg and found that it had a population of about 800 Europeans, although it had only been in existence for about three years. (1) It was now the Capital of British Bechuana-land. (2) Weavind appealed to the Missionary Committee for a man for Vryburg and was strongly supported by Watkins, who said, "The case is unique ... No minister of any church resides near the place". (3) The Reverend G. S. Sheldon was sent by the Committee but Watkins chose to have Sharp at Vryburg and appointed Sheldon to Uitkyk. (4)

Sharp arrived on 21 April, 1886, accompanied by Watkins. The town was so crowded that there was not a room available and a bell-tent served as Sharp's first home. (5) He regarded Vryburg as another link in the "chain" to reach the interior of Africa: "I am eighty miles from Bloemhof ... We are thus moving on into the interior." (6)

Sharp built a church for Europeans and a church for Africans but, in July 1887, he reported that many of the European people had left the town and he was struggling to pay off the remaining debt on the church. The African work was not affected. Four Societies were established in the district and Sharp was ably assisted by an African Evangelist. This Evangelist, Elisha Leshome, was related to the local Rolong Chief and he was trained at Healdtown. (7) Their united effort

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- (1) Notices, March, 1886, pp. 65 - 66: Report from Weavind, dd. 23 December, 1885.
 - (2) E. A. Walker, op. cit., pp. 399 - 403.
 - (3) MS. 15,262: Watkins to Kilner, dd. Potchefstroom, 23 December, 1885.
 - (4) Minutes of the British Conference, 1886, p. 145.
 - (5) Notices, September, 1886, pp. 202 - 209: Report from Watkins, dd. Mafeking, 11 May, 1886.
 - (6) Notices, July, 1886, pp. 154 - 155: The New Station at Vryburg, from A. S. Sharp, dd. 29 April, 1886.
 - (7) Notices, October, 1887, pp. 222 - 224: Report from A. S. Sharp, dd. 28 July, 1887.

brought about the conversion of Chief Rachuana of the Tlhaping, who lived at Bullpan, forty miles from Vryburg. ⁽¹⁾

Sheldon was appointed to Vryburg in 1888, but, at the end of 1889, the European missionary was withdrawn and, from then on, Vryburg was visited from Mafeking. ⁽²⁾

By 1897, the European work had declined to such an extent that the church building was sold. ⁽³⁾ The African work, however, continued to grow in strength. ⁽⁴⁾

RUSTENBURG AND ZEERUST.

William Wynne of Potchefstroom preached in Rustenburg in August, 1872 to a congregation of 150, most of whom were Boers. ⁽⁵⁾ Watkins passed through the town in December, 1882, on his way to Mafeking, but found no opportunity to start work there. ⁽⁶⁾ Many years later the Reverend Edwin Bottrill of the Johannesburg West Circuit visited Rustenburg. As a result of his visit, the Local Preachers' Meeting of that Circuit agreed on 7 June, 1899, to hold monthly services there, ⁽⁷⁾ but the War intervened and there was little Methodist activity in Rustenburg before the turn of the century.

Passing through Zeerust in 1882, Watkins found that a Mr. Coetzee had donated a stand each to the Anglicans and the Methodists. The Anglicans had got their building up first but had built it on the Methodist stand in error. The mistake was rectified amicably by an exchange of stands. ⁽⁸⁾ Watkins hoped to have a monthly service here taken by the missionary at

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- (1) Notices, December, 1887, pp. 281 - 283: Report from A. S. Sharp, dd. Vryburg, 13 September, 1887.
 - (2) Reports, 1889 to 1892.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 12 July, 1897; The Methodist Churchman, 9 December, 1897, p. 291.
 - (4) Minutes of the British Conference, 1894 - 1899.
 - (5) Notices, January, 1873, pp. 13 - 14: journal of W. Wynne.
 - (6) MS. 15,249: Owen Watkins, journal of visit to the Great Chief Montsioa, 6 December, 1882.
 - (7) Minute Book: Johannesburg West Circuit Local Preachers' Meeting, 7 June, 1899.
 - (8) MS. 15,249: Owen Watkins; journal of a visit to the Great Chief Montsioa, dd. 15 December, 1882.

Mafeking, ⁽¹⁾ but this did not work out because he had more than enough to do in his own Circuit. An attempt was made to secure a second man at Mafeking to do the work at Zeerust ⁽²⁾ but, before he arrived, the Methodists at Zeerust became impatient, secured their own minister and set up an Independent Church. ⁽³⁾

MAFEKING.

The mission at Mafeking on the Molopo river or the Molopo Mission, as it was known, was transferred from the Bloemfontein District to the Transvaal and Swaziland District in 1880. It consisted of 379 members and 100 on Trial; there were six wattle-and^{-daub} church buildings, a school ⁽⁴⁾ and seven out-stations. ⁽⁵⁾ It was all African work carried on mainly by African preachers and teachers, notably the Molemas who belonged to the Royal Family of the Rolong. Nevertheless, at the time of the transfer to the Transvaal and Swaziland District, both Molema and his brother, the paramount Chief Montshiwa, asked for a white missionary. "We do not despise black ministers", wrote Molema, "but we require a white minister to teach our nation." ⁽⁶⁾

It was not until December, 1882, that Owen Watkins visited Mafeking for the first time ⁽⁷⁾ because of the

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- (1) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Zeerust, 19 May, 1886.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. 3 August, 1892.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 17th June, 1893.
 - (4) MS. 15,250: Transvaal affairs, a description of the Molopo Mission, by Edward Harris, March, 1880.
 - (5) MS. 15,250: Transvaal affairs: report of the Rev. Charles Harman, dd. Mafeking, 30 October, 1880.
 - (6) MS. 15,250: Transvaal affairs, Molema to the Bloemfontein District Meeting, dd. Sehuba, 2 November, 1880; Montsioa to the District Meeting, dd. Sehuba, 5 November, 1880.
 - (7) MS. 15,243: Watkins to Kilner, dd. 1 December, 1882.

war between Montshiwa and Gey van Pittius.⁽¹⁾ Molema had died, in the interim, but Montshiwa, although not a Christian, was sufficiently interested in the Church to assist the Chairman in his work. Watkins described him as "an old man, hair and beard quite white, a kindly face and much dignity". Montshiwa expressed concern that no white missionary had been appointed to Mafeking for the past two years, and that the church building erected by his brother, Molema, was in need of repair. In order to remedy the first situation Watkins agreed to appoint leaders to carry out some of the duties of a minister until he could send them a missionary. With regard to the church building, Watkins offered Montshiwa £10 for renovation and £60 to build a large new church. Meanwhile, services were to be held as usual, under a large tree because there was no building big enough for the congregation.

Watkins visited Polfontein, thirty-six miles south-east of Mafeking and found a Church of fifty-nine members. The local Chief Machabi gave his allegiance to Moshette who, in 1881, had driven Montshiwa from his old headquarters at Sehuba to Mafeking.

Watkins was impressed with what he had seen in the Mafeking area and believed that he could establish a "chain" of missions to the Zambesi using these people alone. "Mafeking" he reported, "is the key position on the western side of the Transvaal."⁽²⁾

The Reverend C. S. Franklin was appointed to Mafeking in 1883 but the next year he became involved in the dispute between Montshiwa and van Pittius and resigned.⁽³⁾

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- (1) MS. 15,243: Watkins to Kilner, dd. Pretoria, 28 April, 1882; E. A. Walker, op. cit., pp. 395-396.
 - (2) Notices, May, 1883, pp. 111 - 115: report of a visit to the Molopo Mission by Owen Watkins.
 - (3) MS. 15,143: Franklin to Weavind, dd. Taungs, 25 June, 1884.

At the end of April, 1885, Watkins was back at Mafeking to undertake the erection of a large new church. Sir Charles Warren who was in Mafeking with the Bechuana-land Field Force had offered the services of his engineers under the command of Colonel Durnford. Montshiwa selected a site and cleared it of rocks. ⁽¹⁾ The foundation-stones of the church were laid on 17 June, 1885. At this function the Rolong contributed £256 to the building fund ... "even the little babies on their mothers' backs had a coin put into their tiny hands so that they might be told in years to come that they had helped to build the church." ⁽²⁾ The church was almost complete when the engineers were recalled in August, 1885, and Weavind had to arrange for a builder from Potchefstroom to finish the work. ⁽³⁾ On 5 December, 1885, Weavind conducted the opening ceremony which was attended by the Administrator, Sir S. G. A. Shippard, Chief Montshiwa, his headmen and about 1,500 people. ⁽⁴⁾

If the building of this church provided encouragement for the local congregation so did the return to the Church of Israel Molema, son of the late Chief Molema. He had been excluded from membership for nineteen years because he had taken a second and a third wife after his first wife went blind. He had come to reconsider his position in the Church seriously during the recent war between Montshiwa and van Pittius. Wounded, he had fallen beside the British soldier Christopher Bethell, who died. ⁽⁵⁾ He recovered and, after the war, applied to the Leaders' Meeting to be re-admitted to full membership, having put away his second and third wives and having invited his first wife to return to him. The Leaders' Meeting accepted

(1) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. 3 and 10 May, 1885.

(2) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Mafeking, 17 June, 1885; MS. 15,244: Watkins to Kilner, dd. Potchefstroom, 13 July, 1885; Notices, September, 1885: "An appeal from Bechuanaland and Pretoria."

(3) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Chairman, dd. Potchefstroom, 12 and 19 August, 1885.

(4) Notices, March, 1886, p. 61; MS. 15,262: Weavind to Kilner, dd. Mafeking, 7 December, 1885.

(5) Tombstone, The Horse Camp, Mafeking: Christopher Bethell, 31 July, 1884, aged 29.

him and he made a public confession before the whole congregation. (1)

The Reverend R. F. Appelbe served the Church at Mafeking from 1886 to 1889. (2) He started services for Europeans in a large marquee which was used during the week as a court-house (3) and on 16 July, 1886 the foundation-stones of a church were laid. (4) In October, 1886 Appelbe opened a day school for European children. It assisted the growth of the Church because it provided a contact with many homes in Mafeking. (5) The church was opened on 14 August, 1887 (6) and a mission house was built. (7)

The Reverend Alfred Spring Sharp was appointed to Mafeking in 1890 and stayed for seven years. This is one of the longest periods for which a minister remained at one church during this period in the history of the District and provides a contrast to the policy of moving men from one station to another on an average of every three years. (8)

Sharp found that the best time to hold his week-day meetings was at 4.30 a.m. because the Rolong retired at sunset. He spent a great deal of his time counselling. (9)

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- (1) MS. 15,244, Watkins to Kilner, dd. Potchefstroom, 13 July, 1885; Notices September, 1885: An Appeal from Bechuanaland and Pretoria.
 - (2) Minutes of the British Conference, 1886-89.
 - (3) Notices, July, 1886, pp. 160-161: news from R. F. Appelbe, dd. Mafeking, 10 March, 1886.
 - (4) MS. 15,240, Watkins to his wife, dd. Mafeking, 16 July, 1886.
 - (5) Notices, October, 1887, pp. 224-226: report from R. F. Appelbe, dd. 5 August, 1887.
 - (6) MS. 15,432: J. O. Earley to Kilner, undated.
 - (7) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Kilner, dd. Pretoria, 28 July, 1887.
 - (8) Minutes of the British Conference, 1890 - 1897.
 - (9) MS. 15,432: Sharp to Hartley, dd. Mafeking, 21 November, 1891.

He found that the missionary work, if it was to be done properly, demanded all his time and therefore he applied for a second man to be appointed to Mafeking to do the European work. There were 500 African members of the Church and eight out-stations. ⁽¹⁾ Sharp was the first missionary in the Transvaal and Swaziland District to master an African language. His first published work in Tswana was an elementary reader. ⁽²⁾ The Notices paid tribute to his splendid missionary work at Mafeking and it would appear that the longer period of service was an advantage. ⁽³⁾

The old chief Montshiwa died in October, 1896. Although he had encouraged the work of the Church, he had never joined it himself until, on his death-bed, he was baptised by Sharp. ⁽⁴⁾ He was succeeded by his son Wesley Montshiwa who was a rather heavy drinker and not much of an example to the people. ⁽⁵⁾

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Sharp to Hartley, dd. Mafeking, 4 August, 1892.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Kilnerton, 25 November, 1893.
 - (3) Notices, June, 1895, p. 90.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Sharp to Hartley, dd. Mafeking, 23 October, 1896.
 - (5) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 12 July, 1897.

CHAPTER 10
THE EAST

SWAZILAND.

The major problem connected with the work in Swaziland was the inability of the W.M.M.S. to obtain land for a mission station.

In 1881, while Owen Watkins was delayed from entering the Transvaal he went to Lozite, the Royal Kraal, and met Umbandeni, the Swazi Chief, but was unsuccessful in his attempt to obtain land. ⁽¹⁾

Again, in 1882, Watkins travelled all the way from Pretoria to Natal to see whether Sir Theophilus Shepstone could assist him. Shepstone, who was held in high esteem by the Swazi people, sent a message to Umbandeni with his most trusted messenger, widely known as "Shepstone's mouth", supporting Watkins' application, but nothing came of it. ⁽²⁾

The reason for this reluctance to grant land to the Methodists was that the Swazi Council had not forgotten the circumstances of Allison's departure from Mahamba in 1846. They firmly believed that he was involved in the trouble at that time. ⁽¹⁾ Moreover, Umbandeni had been rather liberal in the granting of concessions to white people and the Swazi Council was, at the time, trying to prevent this. ⁽³⁾ Bishop Mackenzie of Zululand had been granted land for the Anglican mission a few weeks before Watkins' visit, but his Church had waited on the border for ten years for this grant. ⁽¹⁾

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- (1) MS. 15,247: Owen Watkins, journal of a visit to Swaziland, 26 July - 3 September, 1881.
(2) Notices, March, 1883, p. 66: letter from Watkins, dd. 28 August, 1882; MS. 15,243: Watkins to Kilner, dd. Pretoria, 16 October, 1882.
(3) C-6201: Report on Swaziland by Colonel Sir F. de Winton, p. 21.

It seemed that the only way for the Methodists to convince the Swazi Council of their peaceful intentions was to do what the Anglicans had done and begin on the border.

The site of Allison's old mission at Mahamba had, by a recent border commission, been placed in the Transvaal and it seemed as good a place to start as any. It was, however, not possible to purchase this land because it had not yet been surveyed. Nevertheless, the Native Commissioner at Piet Retief, a Mr. Ferreira, who was well-disposed towards the Methodist Church, gave his verbal consent for the use of the land. ⁽¹⁾

Daniel Msimang, one of Allison's Swazi converts, was chosen by Watkins for this work and he started at Mahamba in January, 1882. ⁽¹⁾ He was about 50 years of age and a man of some experience.

Msimang had followed Allison from Mahamba to Natal in 1846 and lived first at Indaleni and then at Edendale. Later, he moved to the farm Driefontein, near Ladysmith, which he owned jointly with a number of African men. ⁽²⁾ Here, in 1874, he became one of the founders of Unzondelelo, a revivalist and missionary movement among the African Methodist people in Natal. This movement originated in the independent evangelistic spirit of the African people and was remarkably successful. When, however, it appointed a lay agent, supported from its funds, to a place called Jonono's Kop, a few miles from Driefontein, there was a strong objection from the white missionaries at the Natal District Meeting. A Committee was appointed to investigate the matter and Daniel Msimang was one of the men who represented

(1) MS. 15,247: Owen Watkins, journal of a visit to Swaziland, September, 1883.

(2) J. Whiteside, op. cit., pp. 370 and 435.

Unzondelelo. After lengthy discussion this committee eventually established complete understanding and harmony. ⁽¹⁾

At Mahamba Daniel Msimang built a church of wattle-and-daub and later replaced it with a more substantial building of sun-dried bricks. The Boer farmers in the neighbourhood spoke well of him and even attended some of his services. His own people looked upon him as their "father", treated him with great respect, and came to consult him with their problems. ⁽²⁾ Although some witch-doctors threatened to kill him, he was unafraid. "When I came to Swaziland to preach Christ," he said, "I knew it was possible I might be killed." ⁽³⁾

In December, 1885, the Reverend W. J. Underwood was appointed to work with Daniel Msimang. He travelled to his appointment in a small wagon containing building materials, furniture and provisions for a year. The 200 mile journey was hard going because the summer rains had set in and the wagon was frequently bogged down. On the last stage of the journey, Underwood went ahead of the wagon on horseback, eager to see his new station. Confronted with the barren, stony slopes of the Mahambamountain and the simple buildings erected by Msimang, he burst into tears. "I wept," he wrote, "I could not help it ... I felt such ... loneliness as I had never felt before." ⁽⁴⁾

A warm welcome from Daniel Msimang and a time of prayer helped him to recover from his depression. He preached his first sermon on Christmas Day from the text: "I bring you glad tidings of great joy ..." ⁽⁵⁾ Thereafter, Underwood set to work with enthusiasm. He built a house for himself, ⁽⁶⁾ started a class for

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- (1) J. Whiteside, op. cit., pp. 399 - 405; MS. 15,378: Minute book: Natal District Meeting, 1878, pp.33-36.
 - (2) Notices, June-July, 1885, p. 130: abstract of report.
 - (3) Notices, August, 1885, pp. 209 - 211: report from Owen Watkins, dd. 30 March, 1885.
 - (4) Notices, May, 1886, pp. 110 - 115: report from W. J. Underwood, dd. 24 December, 1885.
 - (5) Notices, June, 1886, pp. 137 - 139: report from W. J. Underwood, dd. Mahamba, 19 January, 1886.
 - (6) Notices, December, 1886, pp. 274 - 278: report from W. J. Underwood, dd. Mahamba, 30 July, 1886.

sixteen Local Preachers on Trial, ⁽¹⁾ and a night school for forty-five young people. ⁽²⁾ He started learning the language and within eight months could just make himself understood without an interpreter. His Local Preachers went out to neighbouring kraals, where they taught the Catechism and expounded, to Underwood's satisfaction, such Christian doctrines as the Fall of Man, and Repentance and Faith. ⁽³⁾

Underwood was just beginning to see the fruits of his work at Mahamba, when he was transferred to Barberton to meet an urgent need there. ⁽⁴⁾

After this, Daniel Msimang was on his own again. He had been ordained a Native Assistant Missionary at the Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting in November, 1885 ⁽⁵⁾ and, although this did not confer on him the right to administer the Sacraments, he was authorised to do so by the Chairman from time to time. His reaction to receiving this authority was one of deep humility. He wrote to Weavind: "My hands are unclean to take such work ... will you pray for me ... that I may not fall ... thinking myself something when I am nothing." ⁽⁶⁾

The responsibility of maintaining peace in the Church and good relations with the Swazi Nation as well as the Transvaal officials rested heavily, at times, on the shoulders of Daniel Msimang. In 1892 Weavind assisted him to settle differences within the Church ⁽⁷⁾ and in 1897 the Native Commissioner at Piet Retief fined him £12.10.0d. for trying cases, fining people himself and "speaking against the government". ⁽⁸⁾

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- (1) Notices, June, 1886, pp. 137 - 139: report from W. J. Underwood, dd. Mahamba, 19 January, 1886.
 - (2) Notices, December, 1886, pp. 274 - 278: report from W. J. Underwood, dd. Mahamba, 30 July, 1886.
 - (3) Notices, November, 1886, pp. 257 - 259: report from W. J. Underwood, dd. Mahamba, 11 August, 1886.
 - (4) Notices, May, 1887, p. 114: report from W. J. Underwood, dd. Barberton, 11 January, 1887.
 - (5) Minute Book; Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, November, 1885, p. 99.
 - (6) MS. 15,432: Daniel Msimang to Weavind, dd. Mahamba, 25 March, 1887.
 - (7) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 25 August, 1892.
 - (8) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 27 March, 1897.

Apart from these difficulties, Msimang retained the respect of the Boers and won the confidence of the Swazi people. The Boers continued to attend some of his services ⁽¹⁾ and, in 1890, he succeeded, at last, in opening a church in Swaziland at Makhosini, the sacred burial-place of the Swazi Chiefs. Here, his son, Joel Msimang, a Native Assistant Missionary, was appointed. ⁽²⁾ By 1894, Daniel Msimang had so far won the confidence of the Swazi that he was invited to preach before the Queen Mother at the Royal Kraal. ⁽³⁾

To obtain title to the land at Mahamba was a constant problem. On 6 January, 1885, Owen Watkins applied to the Transvaal Government to hire the land he had only been given verbal permission to use. ⁽⁴⁾ Although his application was made in terms of Government Notice No. 322 whereby government land could be hired for grazing before it was surveyed, the reply was that the land must first be surveyed. ⁽⁵⁾ On 15 April, 1885, Weavind renewed the application ⁽⁶⁾ and received the same reply. ⁽⁷⁾

Weavind then consulted Cornelis van Boeschoten, the State Secretary (his brother-in-law) ⁽⁸⁾ and, with his help, a lease was signed on 23 March, 1886. The W.M.M.S. agreed to hire the farm on terms whereby the Government was completely indemnified and the missionaries had no claim to the property. These were some of the terms of the lease:

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Msimang to Weavind, dd. Mahamba, 25 March, 1887.
 - (2) Notices, December, 1890, pp. 280 - 283: report from Owen Watkins, dd. 23 July, 1890.
 - (3) Reports, 1894, p. 113.
 - (4) MS. 15,262: Watkins to State Secretary, dd. Potchefstroom, 6 January, 1885.
 - (5) W.A. Venter, op. cit., pp. 108 - 109.
 - (6) MS. 15,262: Weavind to State Secretary, dd. Potchefstroom, 15 April, 1885.
 - (7) W. A. Venter, op. cit., p. 110.
 - (8) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Chairman, dd. Potchefstroom, 26 August, 1885 and 23 September, 1885.

- i. The Government could cancel the lease and the farm would have to be vacated without compensation.
- ii. A rental of £2 per month was to be paid to the Magistrate at Wakkerstroom.
- iii. The lessee would be responsible for any loss sustained by the Government in the event of the farm being private property.
- iv. The Government would not be liable to pay compensation for any improvements effected during the period of hire.

The farm was, at the time, not defined by beacons, but in 1889 the Baken Kommissie visited the area and marked off 1,000 morgen for the mission. ⁽¹⁾

Without any prior warning, in April, 1897, George Weavind received instructions from the magistrate at Piet Retief to vacate the farm because it had been given to the Dutch Reformed Church in Wakkerstroom. ⁽²⁾ The Dutch Reformed Church offered the farm for sale for the sum of £1,000 and Weavind tried to purchase it, ⁽³⁾ but the W.M.M.S. did not provide the money ⁽⁴⁾ and it was sold to a member of the First Volksraad who agreed to allow Daniel Msimang to live on the farm for a further six months at a rental of £8 for that period. ⁽⁵⁾

Weavind was shocked at the treatment received by the Church after leasing the farm for eleven years. He pointed out, in fairness, however, that the Dutch Reformed Church knew nothing about the lease. The Government, apparently, was also unaware of the lease, because it had not been registered at Pretoria, although it was signed by the Magistrate at Wakkerstroom. ⁽⁶⁾

(1) W. A. Venter, op. cit., p. 112.

(2) Letterbook: Landdrost Piet Retief, p. 172, No. 329/97: Landdrost to Weavind, dd. Piet Retief, 28 April, 1897.

(3) MS. 15,432: Cable, Weavind to Wesley, dd. Pretoria, 9 May, 1898.

(4) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 21 May, 1898.

(5) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 5 September, 1898.

(6) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. 8 May, 1897.

The Methodist people moved across the border into Swaziland, where they occupied land, given in 1887 to certain Christian Swazis under the leadership of Titus Gule, by the Swazi Chief, Umbandeni. Daniel Msimang followed later. ⁽¹⁾

BARBERTON.

Within a month of Graham Barber's strike of payable gold in the Kaap valley in 1884, a mining settlement sprang up and was named Barberton. A year later the Sheba Mine, yielding twenty ounces to the ton, provided further stimulus to the economy. Shares rocketed from a nominal value of £1 to over £100 and two new mining towns - Fairview and Eureka - came into existence a few miles from Barberton. The population in the Kaap valley soared to over 6,000 and President Paul Kruger visited the miners in March, 1886 to discuss improvements in the administration of the new gold fields. ⁽²⁾

The Methodists in Barberton rallied around a Local Preacher who held services for them in his home. They appealed to the W.M.M.S. for a minister, pointing out the opportunities for missionary work among the large African population that had gathered around the mines. ⁽³⁾

Owen Watkins was in England at the time, so the appeal was dealt with by George Weavind, the Acting Chairman. This was an opportunity not to be missed, but, as there was no minister readily available, Weavind had to send a man from one of the existing stations in the District. Underwood at Mahamba was the nearest to Barberton, so Weavind recommended to the Missionary Committee that he be transferred and arranged to meet him at his new station during the second week in November, 1886.

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- (1) MS. 15,466: Memorandum signed by Sir Theophilus Shepstone touching the grant of land by the Swazi Chief to the Christian Swazis residing at Edendale, Pietermaritzburg, 13 February, 1886; Deed of gift of land to the Christian Swazis residing at Edendale, signed by Umbandeni, 28 May, 1887.
 - (2) T. V. Bulpin, Lost Trails on the Transvaal, pp. 299 - 332.
 - (3) Reports, 1887, p. 196.

Lightning struck Underwood's wagon on the way killing three oxen and two horses, so he was delayed and did not arrive in Barberton until Weavind had been and gone. ⁽¹⁾ Meanwhile, Weavind conducted services and met the congregation which consisted of men only. They were eager to support the Church and two stands were secured in a central position for future buildings. ⁽²⁾

Underwood arrived in Barberton on Sunday and, instead of finding the quiet solemnity usually associated with that day, there was a din of hammers and saws and men staggered out of canteens intoxicated. Other Churches were already at work. The Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and Independent Churches were there and they were soon joined by the Dutch Reformed Church and the Salvation Army. ⁽³⁾

Each Church group was intent on establishing itself in the rapidly developing town. The foundation-stone of a Methodist church was laid on 9 March, 1887 ⁽⁴⁾ and it was opened in May. It cost £900 and, at that stage, the builder had only been paid £450 ⁽⁵⁾ but this debt was almost wiped out by the end of the year. ⁽⁶⁾ At Fairview and Eureka services were held in billiard rooms. ⁽⁷⁾

The African people were not neglected. Underwood, with the assistance of a European Local Preacher, held services under a tree in the location on Sunday afternoons and, by the end of March, 1887, had gathered a

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- (1) Notices, May, 1887, pp. 113 - 116: report from W. J. Underwood, dd. Barberton, 11 January, 1887.
 - (2) Notices, February, 1887, pp. 44 - 47: report from George Weavind, dd. 3 December, 1886; MS. 15,263: Weavind to Kilner, dd. 27 July, 1887; Weavind to Underwood, dd. Pretoria, 23 March, 1887.
 - (3) Notices, May, 1887, pp. 113 - 116: report from W. J. Underwood, dd. Barberton, 11 January, 1887.
 - (4) The South African Methodist, 23 March, 1887, p.135.
 - (5) Notices, December, 1887, p. 280: report from W. J. Underwood, dd. Barberton, 28 June, 1887.
 - (6) Notices, March, 1888, pp. 64-67: report from W.J. Underwood, dd. 20 December, 1887.
 - (7) Notices, May, 1887, pp. 113-116: report from W.J. Underwood, dd. 11 January, 1887; Notices, August, 1887, pp. 185-188: report from W.J. Underwood, dd. Barberton, 21 March, 1887.

congregation of thirty. ⁽¹⁾ By December of the same year they had their own church building. ⁽²⁾ Albert Msimang, son of Daniel Msimang of Mahamba, was appointed as an Evangelist in April, 1888. He started a night school and he visited Underwood twice a week to instruct him in Zulu. ⁽³⁾

Underwood was transferred to Pretoria at the end of 1889. ⁽⁴⁾ His appointment to Barberton had only cost the W.M.M.S. £200 by way of a grant towards a house, ⁽⁵⁾ and £100 for the African church, over which Underwood had a difference of opinion with Weavind. ⁽⁶⁾ He was succeeded by J. G. Benson (1890 - 1891), ⁽⁷⁾ C. W. Mowson (1892 - 1893), ⁽⁸⁾ J. C. Whiting (1895 - 1896), ⁽⁹⁾ S. H. Hardy (1897 - 1898) ⁽¹⁰⁾ and William Meara (1899). ⁽¹¹⁾ David Mabanza was appointed to work as an Evangelist at Moodie's Concession in 1893 and, although he was a man of little education, he was an excellent pastor. ⁽¹²⁾

Although the work at Barberton was self-supporting from the start, it was entirely dependent on the prosperity of the mines. In 1889, when gold production declined, the population of 6,000 dropped to 2,000 and there was a corresponding fall-off in Church membership. ⁽¹³⁾ There was an improvement in 1896 ⁽¹⁴⁾ and

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- (1) Notices, August, 1887, pp. 185 - 188: report from W. J. Underwood, dd. Barberton, 21 March, 1887.
 - (2) Notices, March, 1888, pp. 64 - 67: report from W.J. Underwood, dd. 20 December, 1887.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Underwood to Kilner, dd. Barberton, 22 May, 1888.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Underwood to Hartley, dd. 17 December, 1889.
 - (5) Notices, March, 1887, p. 71: Minutes of the General Committee, 28 January, 1887.
 - (6) MS. 15,432: Watkins to Kilner, dd. Pretoria, 1 March, 1888; Notices, March, 1888, pp. 64 - 67: report from W. J. Underwood, dd. 20 December, 1887.
 - (7) Reports, 1891 - 1892.
 - (8) Reports, 1893 - 1894.
 - (9) Minutes of the British Conference, 1894 - 1896.
 - (10) Minutes of the British Conference, 1897 - 1898.
 - (11) Minutes of the British Conference, 1899.
 - (12) MS. 15,432: Mowson to Hartley, dd. Barberton, 5 April, 1893.
 - (13) Reports, 1890, p. 100.
 - (14) MS. 15,432: Whiting to Hartley, dd. Barberton, 25 February, 1896.

the work continued to make slow but steady progress until the exodus of the English-speaking population prior to the Anglo-Boer war of 1899. ⁽¹⁾

ERMELO.

On 10 September, 1883, Watkins conducted the first Methodist service in Ermelo at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Little, local Methodists. ⁽²⁾ He visited the town again in 1885, received a request for regular services, and promised that the missionary he proposed to station at Mahamba would visit Ermelo once a month. With this in view, he arranged for the purchase of an erf for a church building. An attempt by the Anglican Church to start work in Ermelo a few weeks earlier had failed because Bishop Henry Bousfield had taken the liberty of speaking against Methodism in the home of the Littles. ⁽³⁾

The Reverend W. J. Underwood conducted a service in Ermelo on his way to Mahamba in December, 1885 but he declined to visit Ermelo once a month because of the distance. ⁽⁴⁾

In 1892, two hundred people attended a service conducted by Weavind and asked for a resident minister. Weavind found that an African Local Preacher had gathered a congregation which met every Sunday in a stable. "It is really wonderful," he wrote, "how these native Christians strive to carry the light wherever they go." ⁽⁵⁾

The Reverend George Eva was appointed to Ermelo towards the end of 1897. ⁽⁶⁾ He superintended the Swaziland Mission ⁽⁷⁾ and took over the African work at Volksrust

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- (1) MS. 15,432: report to Perkins, dd. Barberton, 14 January, 1899.
 - (2) MS. 14,247: Watkins, journal of a visit to Swaziland, September, 1883.
 - (3) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, undated.
 - (4) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Chairman, dd. Pretoria, 16 January, 1886.
 - (5) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 15 September, 1892.
 - (6) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 9 August, 1897; MS. 15,432: Eva to Hartley, dd. Ermelo, 1 October, 1897.
 - (7) Minutes of the British Conference, 1897, p. 164.

and Utrecht from the Natal District. He was often away from home for weeks at a time visiting the scattered Societies of his vast Circuit. There were about 1,000 members. The Church had no property and was, therefore, dependent on the good-will of the farmers for permission to erect buildings on their land. Eva found most of the farmers willing to co-operate, but there were a few exceptions. ⁽¹⁾

MIDDELBURG.

In 1877 the Reverend George Blencowe suggested Middelburg as the place of residence of the Chairman of the District. There were coal mines nearby and the large tribe of Mapoch was within easy reach of the town. ⁽²⁾

In 1890 the Reverend W. J. Underwood of Pretoria held a service in the Magistrate's Court and about 100 people attended. Local Methodists had secured two erven for church purposes. He discussed with them the possibility of having a resident minister ⁽³⁾ and a formal application was made in 1891, ⁽⁴⁾ but it was not until 1892 that the Reverend E. H. Morgan was appointed, ⁽⁵⁾ and a church was built. ⁽⁶⁾ The Reverend Ernest Titcomb succeeded Morgan in 1899. ⁽⁷⁾

PILGRIM'S REST.

Ever since 1872, a few gold diggers had been working at Pilgrim's Rest and, by 1874, the number had increased to 1,500. ⁽⁸⁾ In that year, the Reverend George Blencowe had started Methodist work in the town

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- (1) Notices, September, 1899, pp. 136 - 137: Report from George H. Eva, undated.
 - (2) Notices, March, 1878, pp. 56 - 63: letter from G. Blencowe, dd. 11 October, 1877.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Report from W. J. Underwood, dd. May, 1890.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Residents of the Town ^{of} Middelburg to Watkins, dd. 25 May, 1891.
 - (5) Minutes of the British Conference, 1898, p. 172.
 - (6) Methodist Churchman vol. 5, p. 29, 11 August, 1899.
 - (7) Minutes of the British Conference, 1899, p. 164.
 - (8) G. M. Theal, South Africa, p. 395; T.V. Bulpin, Lost Trails on the Low Veld.

but he left in 1877 and nothing further was done until the District Meeting stationed a minister there in 1895 because of the offer of a layman in Pretoria to make good any financial losses it might sustain in so doing.⁽¹⁾ Accordingly, the Reverend T. H. Watson was appointed and started services in the office of the Mining Commissioner.⁽²⁾ With the help of his small congregation and some of the mining houses he built a church costing £350 and opened it on 19 May, 1895.⁽³⁾ At Lydenburg services were held in a private home once a month.⁽⁴⁾ In 1896 an Evangelist was stationed at Pilgrim's Rest for the African work.⁽⁵⁾ The European work, however, declined to such an extent that no minister was appointed at the beginning of 1898.⁽⁶⁾

STANDERTON.

Some time before the end of 1897 two Class Leaders from Natal, James Kimani and Jacob Lukelongwane settled in Standerton and started services and Class meetings in a stable. These African pioneers started the work entirely on their own initiative and extended it to the farms in the district. They had gathered quite a large number of people, by the time they invited the Reverend R. F. Appelbe of Heidelberg to visit them.⁽⁷⁾

Appelbe travelled by train to Standerton in November, 1897 and was amazed at the attendance of 300 people at the Sunday service. The work was spreading like a grass fire. The local people contributed £50 for the purchase of a stand; the W.M.M.S. made a grant of £100 for a church, and in March, 1899, Weavind was invited

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 27 January, 1895.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Watson to Hartley, dd. Pilgrim's Rest, 21 March, 1895.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Watson to Hartley, dd. Pilgrim's Rest, 16 May, 1895; Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 1 June, 1895; Watson to Hartley, dd. Pilgrim's Rest, 4 July, 1895; Notices, September, 1896, p.131.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Watson to Hartley, dd. Pilgrim's Rest, 21 March, 1895.
 - (5) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 9 February, 1896.
 - (6) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 30 April, 1898.
 - (7) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Perkins, dd. Pretoria, 20 March, 1899.

to conduct the opening ceremony. (1) It was a great occasion. People had arrived on four wagons, several carts and eighty-two horses.. They had already contributed £100 towards the building and at the service the offering amounted to £40. The church, costing £250 was all but paid for. (2)

Owen Watkins and John Kilner had held services for the European people in Standerton on Sunday, 24 October, 1880. With the help of a local Methodist, a Mr. Polgase, they had purchased a stand, but nothing further happened (3) until Appelbe visited Standerton for the African work and held services for the European people as well. (4)

WAKKERSTROOM.

In 1882, the Reverend George Blencowe settled in Wakkerstroom in retirement. Owen Watkins and George Weavind both had misgivings about his return to the District. Blencowe had hoped to take charge of Pretoria while Watkins was away on his long missionary journeys but was not invited to do so because Watkins felt it would result in most of the congregation leaving. (5) Weavind, faced with the prospect of taking the chair at the District Meeting in 1884, felt that it would be a heavy trial "if father Blencowe should take it into his head to come". (6)

Watkins visited Blencowe at Wakkerstroom in 1885 and this had the effect of bringing about a complete change of attitude. Blencowe was eager to hear about the
Ibid.;

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- (1) / MS. 15,432: Appelbe to Hartley, dd. Heidelberg, 23 November, 1897; Appelbe to Hartley, dd. Heidelberg, 5 April, 1898.
 - (2) The Methodist Churchman, 23 March, 1899, p. 117.
 - (3) Owen Watkins: journal of a journey with Kilner, 24 October, 1880.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Perkins, dd. Pretoria, 20, March, 1899.
 - (5) MS. 15,243: Watkins to Kilner, dd. Pretoria, 12 May, 1883.
 - (6) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Chairman, dd. Potchefstroom, 30 April, 1884.

progress of the work in the District and took a real interest in all that he was told. Watkins, observing his poverty, ⁽¹⁾ offered him an extra £50 per annum ⁽²⁾ and Blencowe showed his appreciation by making an annual donation of ten guineas to the District. ⁽³⁾ The District Meeting that year sent a letter to Blencowe conveying the "affectionate veneration" of all the men ⁽⁴⁾ and in 1890 the greetings of the Secretaries of the W.M.M.S. were conveyed to him. ⁽⁵⁾

From the time of his arrival, Blencowe had conducted services in the Magistrate's Court at Wakkerstroom and had gathered a congregation of about twenty-five. ⁽⁶⁾ In 1890 he was obliged to give up the services because most of the people had left for the gold fields. ⁽⁷⁾ He moved to Pietermaritzburg in 1892 ⁽⁸⁾ where he died on 16 February, 1893. ⁽⁹⁾

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- (1) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. 6 April, 1885.
 - (2) MS. 15,262: Watkins to Blencowe, dd. Potchefstroom, 14 April, 1885.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 18 February, 1893.
 - (4) Minute Book: Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, November, 1885.
 - (5) MS. 15,241: Blencowe to Watkins, dd. Wakkerstroom, 12 November, 1890.
 - (6) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. 6 April, 1885.
 - (7) Notices, December, 1890, p. 280.
 - (8) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 2 July, 1892.
 - (9) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 18 February, 1893.

CHAPTER 11

THE CENTRE

PRETORIA.

Pretoria, the Capital of the Transvaal Republic, was also the headquarters of the Transvaal and Swaziland District, apart from a short period (1883 - 1886) when Watkins and Weavind lived at Potchefstroom.

Weavind had pioneered the Methodist Church in Pretoria in 1873 and remained in this appointment for ten years.⁽¹⁾ This was another exception to the itinerant system, whereby Methodist ministers moved from one appointment to another on an average of every three years. Weavind's longer ministry at Pretoria gave him an opportunity of getting to know the Transvaal Boers personally.

A church, which Weavind built and enlarged in the early 1870's, was replaced in 1894 by a large church in Andries Street costing £7,000. The site for this church was purchased in 1873 for the sum of £130 and revenue of £1,000 a year was derived from leasing a portion of the property.⁽²⁾

In the Pretoria old location Mangena Mokone, who later left the Methodist Church, started a Society in 1883 with three people and, seven years later, had 113 members and 178 scholars.⁽³⁾ He ran a Sunday

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- (1) Notices, March, 1897, p. 37: Methodism in Pretoria; Notices, September, 1897, p. 132: Methodism in the Transvaal Capital, by J. S. Morris.
(2) Reports, 1890, p. 99; MS. 15,432: Underwood to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 29 October, 1892; Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 5 January, 1895
(3) Notices, January, 1891, p. 4: editorial comment.

school with the assistance of three European laymen ⁽¹⁾ and was glad to have their help. ⁽²⁾ In 1891 his congregation moved to the new township of Marabastad where a new church was built. ⁽³⁾

A school for Indian children was started in 1898 by a qualified Methodist teacher from India, Mr. Joshua Rajakembriam. ⁽⁴⁾ He was supported and encouraged by the Reverend J. S. Morris, who obtained a site for the school in the Indian township and a grant from the W.M.M.S. towards the cost of a building. ⁽⁵⁾

Pretoria was an important educational centre for the Transvaal and Swaziland District. The Training Institution for the District was situated at Kilnerton farm (Koedoespoort), only a few miles from the town, and a successful school for Europeans was conducted in the town.

HEIDELBERG.

Heidelberg was included in the Pretoria Circuit in 1877 ⁽⁶⁾ but, after the discovery of gold on the Reef, it was visited from Johannesburg. ⁽⁷⁾ In August, 1890, the Reverend W. B. Milward was appointed as resident minister. ⁽⁸⁾ He visited Nigel every second Sunday and held services for the African people in Heidelberg. ⁽⁹⁾

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- (1) Notices, March, 1884, pp. 63 - 65: report from the Reverend F. T. Nicholson.
 - (2) Notices, March, 1885, p. 64; letter from Watkins, dd. 5 January, 1885.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Watson to Hartley, dd. Kilnerton, 20 November, 1891.
 - (4) Notices, September, 1898, p. 130: report from J. S. Morris.
 - (5) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 30 April, 1898; Morris to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 2 May, 1898; Morris to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 30 May, 1898; Morris to Hartley, dd. 4 July, 1898.
 - (6) MS. 15,620: reports from Circuits in the Bloemfontein District, p. 22.
 - (7) Notices, December, 1890, pp. 279 - 280: report from Owen Watkins.
 - (8) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 15 August, 1890.
 - (9) MS. 15,432: Milward to Hartley, dd. Heidelberg, 28 October, 1891; Hattie Milward to Hartley, dd. Heidelberg, 11 March, 1892.

The European congregation at Heidelberg met successively in the Dutch Reformed Church; in a shop in Ueckermann street; in the Good Templar's Hall in Marais street and in an old coach house in Church street. Finally, a Methodist church was opened on 29 September, 1895. ⁽¹⁾ Two years later, with the assistance of the Reverend R. F. Appelbe, the African people in Heidelberg raised £300 and built their own church. ⁽²⁾

The Reverend Glyndwr Davies was appointed to Nigel in 1897 and soon gathered a congregation of 140 people. ⁽³⁾ He conducted services in Welsh at the Y.M.C.A. in Johannesburg. ⁽⁴⁾

THE WATERBERG MISSION.

Makapanstad, about seventy miles north of Pretoria, was the place where the work of this wide-spread mission was started in 1879 by Hans Aapjie, an African pioneer.

Hans Aapjie, born in Makapanstad, had gone to the Cape in 1874 at the age of about 34. Here he was converted in a Methodist Church, learnt to read and write and married a Christian woman. He returned to the Transvaal in 1876 and joined the Hermannsburg Mission in Pretoria because there was, at the time, no Methodist Church among the African people. A year later he left the Hermannsburg Mission and went to his birth-place to start a Church and a school. Chief Makapan, however, refused to allow Christian teaching in his kraal and Hans Aapjie was silenced until the old Chief died and was succeeded by his son, Hendrik Makapan. The new Chief not only adopted a more liberal policy towards Christians, but actually encouraged Hans Aapjie to start work in 1879.

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- (1) Heidelberg: Diamond Jubilee Brochure, 1895 - 1955.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Appelbe to Hartley, dd. Heidelberg, 23 October, 1897.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Appelbe to Hartley, dd. Heidelberg, 17 July, 1897.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. 4 July, 1898; Davies to Weavind, dd. Nigel, 4 September, 1898.

By the time Owen Watkins visited Makapanstad in 1882, Hans Aapjie had already built a substantial church near the Chief's hut. It was used as a school during the week by about twenty adults and forty children. About thirty converts wanted to be baptised, but Watkins placed them on Trial so that they might first receive instruction. (1)

Makapanstad became the scene of great activity a few weeks after Watkins' visit, when the Reverend C. S. Franklin spent a month there, conducting revival services and organising the work. Class leaders were appointed and seven Local Preachers on Trial started preaching in the neighbouring kraals. (2) So effective was the local organisation that, within three years and just before the appointment of the first full-time European missionary to this station, there were 244 Church members. (3)

When, in 1886, the first European missionary, Isaac Shimmin was appointed to the Waterberg mission, the W.M.M.S. had no property in the area and there was nowhere for him to live. It was, therefore, decided that he would live in his wagon, travel from Society to Society, and return to Pretoria every six months for supplies.

This method of work proved most effective in the early stages of the development of the Waterberg Mission because Shimmin was able to spend time at each Society to organise the work and to supervise the erection of buildings. All the buildings, at this stage, were of wattle-and-daub and were put up by the local Church members at no cost to the W.M.M.S. (4)

(1) Notices, August, 1883, pp. 208 - 211: report from Owen Watkins.

(2) MS. 15,242: Watkins to Mason, dd. 10 July, 1882.

(3) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Makapan's Tribe, 1 August, 1885.

(4) MS. 15,244: Watkins to Shimmin, dd. 30 December, 1885; MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Pretoria, 5 April, 1886; Notices, October, 1886, p. 239: report from Isaac Shimmin.

Effective as it was in the beginning, it was not altogether satisfactory to have the missionary living in a wagon continuously, both from his own point of view and because it meant that the Mission had no permanent headquarters. Thus, in 1887, the farm Hartingsberg was purchased ⁽¹⁾ and the central mission station, which was developed here, was called Olverton, after the Reverend George Olver, one of the General Secretaries of the W.M.M.S. ⁽²⁾ It was still necessary, however, to travel around to the various Societies once a quarter. About ten years after the founding of Olverton, there were eighteen Societies to be visited and the round trip was 250 miles and took six weeks. ⁽³⁾ The Church membership, at that time, was 1,400 and the Mission employed eight Evangelists. ⁽⁴⁾

One disadvantage of Olverton, from the point of view of the white missionary, was that there was no European town in the vicinity. For months at a time he met only African people with whom it was not easy to enjoy close friendship because of cultural and language differences. Nevertheless, in spite of this isolation, the W.M.M.S. had no difficulty in finding men who were willing to accept an appointment to the Waterberg Mission. ⁽⁵⁾

Hans Aapjie was accepted as a candidate for the Native Assistant Ministry in 1885. ⁽⁶⁾ Two years later, however, he was suspended by Owen Watkins for immoral conduct ⁽⁷⁾ and he resigned from the ministry. ⁽⁸⁾ This was a regrettable end to the ministry of one who had been a pioneer.

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- (1) Notices, November, 1887, pp. 251 - 253: report from Isaac Shimmin, dd. Hartingsberg, 28 June, 1887.
 - (2) Reports, 1888, p. v.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Rolland to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 25 April, 1896.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Rolland to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 10 April, 1897.
 - (5) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 15 December, 1894.
 - (6) Minute Book: Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, November, 1885, p. 123.
 - (7) MS. 15,263: Weavind to Shimmin, dd. 15 June, 1887.
 - (8) MS. 15,263: Weavind to Chairman, dd. 19 August, 1887.

THE GOOD HOPE MISSION.

Samuel Mathabathe is usually regarded as the pioneer of the Methodist church in the Soutpansberg and Sekhukuneland, ⁽¹⁾ but he was not alone in this work. Closely associated with him was his friend and fellow-worker, a very gracious Christian gentleman, Johannes Mphatllela. ⁽²⁾ Others at work in the area were May Loti, Nathaniel Phalala and James Puti from the L.M.S. mission at du Toit's Pan. ⁽³⁾

Samuel Mathabathe was born in the Mphahlele tribe north of the Olifants in about 1840. He went to Pietermaritzburg at the age of twenty-seven and was converted shortly after his arrival by the Reverend James Allison. He went to school there for about seven years and returned to his birth-place in 1874 as a preacher. He was accompanied by Johannes Mphatllela. The idea was that they would start the missionary work and Allison would visit them later, ⁽⁴⁾ but Allison died on 1 April, 1875, ⁽⁵⁾ and no other Methodist missionary visited them.

Unaided by European missionaries, Mathabathe and Mphatllela^h went to work with courage and determination. Chief Mphalele, afraid that his authority would be undermined, threatened to kill them if they preached to his people. For four years they lived under this threat teaching the Bible secretly from house to house.

The threat was lifted when Mphalele^h died and his chief wife, a sister to Sekhukhune succeeded him. Christianity flourished in this new atmosphere of freedom. A building was erected to serve as a church and a school; many were converted and the attendance at the school increased

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- (1) MS. 15,697: The Story of Samuel Mathabathe, etc.
 - (2) MS. 15,218: George Lowe, Early Transvaal Missions, an address delivered to the Rand Ministers' Fraternal on 12 October, 1925.
 - (3) MS.15,246: Owen Watkins, notes of meeting with Native ministers and agents, Pretoria, 19 November, 1883.
 - (4) Notices, October, 1883, pp. 256 - 261: report from Watkins, dd. Pretoria, 25 June, 1883.
 - (5) D.S.A.B., vol. 1, p. 11.

to such an extent that the two best scholars were sent to the French Mission in Lesotho to be trained as teachers. The Reverend Stephanus Hofmeyer of the Dutch Reformed Church baptised the converts of these two Methodist preachers and gave them Holy Communion, but respected their wish to wait for the representatives of the W.M.M.S. rather than join his Church.

Persecution again fell on these Christians when one of their number, who had given birth to twins, refused to give up one of the children, as required by tribal custom, to be thrown into a river. Unless this was done, it was believed that the country would be deprived of rain.

Later on, one of the twins died of natural causes and was buried in a grave near the church. Armed warriors demanded the body. At the point of the assegai, the Christians pleaded to be allowed to take the body themselves and bury it far away. Their request was eventually granted and they buried the child forty miles away on Good Hope farm near the mission of their friend, Stephanus Hofmeyer.

Those who went to the burial returned to find their church burnt to the ground. The Christian men had been beaten, deprived of their possessions and ordered out of the country with their families. Although nearly two hundred people were involved, Mathabathe and Mphatllela took command of the situation. Mphatllela took some of the people to the north and the rest went with Mathabathe to Good Hope farm.

These exiled groups of Christians were discovered by Owen Watkins in 1883. Their greatest need, at the time, was for a place to live. Good Hope farm was on the market and the Dutch Reformed Church was moving elsewhere so Watkins appealed to the W.M.M.S. to buy it. It was 3,300 morgen in extent, had a good supply of water and an old house. ⁽¹⁾ It was situated twelve

(1) Notices, October, 1883, pp. 256 - 261: report from Watkins, dd. Pretoria, 25 June, 1883.

miles east of Marabastad and twenty miles south of Pietersburg.⁽¹⁾ The Missionary Committee in London agreed to the purchase⁽²⁾ and the farm was bought for £600 out of a fund for this purpose which was over-subscribed by Watkins' supporters in England.⁽³⁾

In 1885, when the Reverend George Lowe was appointed to Good Hope as the first European missionary, he found that most of the pioneering work had already been done. "When I arrived at Good Hope," he wrote, "... no less than a dozen vigorous and, in some cases, deeply spiritual Methodist Societies had been established in different parts of the country. Each ... had its own unpretentious place of worship with a weekly Class meeting and regular Sunday services. None of these places, except Good Hope, had ever been visited by a Wesleyan minister."⁽⁴⁾

Lowe started his work at Good Hope by forming a class for Local Preachers and meeting them three times a week.⁽⁵⁾ Within two years of his arrival, there were 152 people living on the farm.⁽⁶⁾ In order to distinguish themselves from the heathen they built their houses square instead of round in a neat township planned by Lowe.⁽⁷⁾ For seven years Lowe served this mission in spite of many hardships and problems.⁽⁸⁾

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- (1) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Good Hope, 26th August, 1885.
 - (2) Notices, November, 1883, p. 293: minutes of the General Committee, 26 September, 1883.
 - (3) Notices, November, 1883, p. 296: December, 1883, p. 320, January, 1884, p. 24 - Special contributions towards the purchase of Good Hope farm.
 - (4) MS. 15,550: George Lowe, The beginnings of our missions in Zoutpansberg and Secoecoeniland, 11 August, 1913.
 - (5) Notices, September, 1885, p. 229: report from G. Lowe, dd. Good Hope, 30 June, 1885.
 - (6) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Chairman, dd. Pretoria, 6 May, 1887; MS. 15,263: Weavind to Kilner, dd. 19 August, 1887.
 - (7) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Good Hope, 19 August, 1885.
 - (8) MS. 15,262: Watkins to Lowe, dd. Potchefstroom, 22 December, 1885; MS. 15,376: Note book, minutes of meeting to enquire into certain acts of insubordination, etc., 18 February, 1889.

Sekhukhuneland was separated from the Good Hope mission by the Olifants, which was impassable when in flood. ⁽¹⁾ Frequent appeals were, therefore, made from Good Hope for a missionary for this area, but the W.M.MS. was unable to appoint one for lack of funds. ⁽²⁾ The Chairman of the District visited the area once a year, ⁽³⁾ the missionary at Good Hope went occasionally ⁽⁴⁾ and a couple of visits were made by the missionary at Pilgrim's Rest in 1895 ⁽⁵⁾ but virtually all the work was done by the African men. Samuel Mathabathe, who lived at Marishane's supervised the work and was given authority to administer the Sacraments, ⁽⁶⁾ having been accepted as a candidate for the Native Assistant Ministry in 1886. ⁽⁷⁾

Although Samuel Mathabathe did splendid work, he was unable to pass the examinations to complete his course of probation. He struggled for nine years but failed every time. Finally, in 1895, the District Meeting, with his full co-operation, continued him in the work as an Evangelist. ⁽⁸⁾

The Good Hope Mission, like the Waterberg Mission, was spread over a large area. In 1899, there were twenty-eight Societies, forty-seven Local Preachers, eight schools and 1,875 members. ⁽⁹⁾ It was not as isolated as the Waterberg Mission because it was situated near the town of Pietersburg.

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- (1) MS. 15,218: George Lowe, diary, 11 September, 1885.
 - (2) MS. 15,220: report from George Lowe 1887; Lowe to Kilner, dd. 11 June, 1888; MS. 15,217, Hartley to Lowe, dd. London, 24 October, 1889.
 - (3) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Marishane's tribe, 14 September, 1885.
 - (4) MS. 15,219: Lowe to Benson, dd. Good Hope, 16 July, 1888.
 - (5) MS. 15,432: Watson to Hartley, dd. Pilgrim's Rest, 4 July, 1895.
 - (6) MS. 15,219: Lowe to Wainman, dd. Potchefstroom, 18 February, 1891.
 - (7) Minute book: Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, November, 1885, p. 125.
 - (8) Minute book: Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, Native Section, January, 1895.
 - (9) MS. 15,432: Rolland to Hartley, dd. Pietermaritzburg, 21 September, 1899.

PIETERSBURG.

Methodist services were first held at Pietersburg by the missionary stationed at Good Hope. ⁽¹⁾ By 1896, the town had grown to such an extent that the Reverend James Chamberlain was stationed there. ⁽²⁾ The foundation-stone of a church building was laid on 27 July, 1898 ⁽³⁾ and it was opened a few months later. ⁽⁴⁾

Rinderpest, a cattle disease, swept across the Transvaal in 1896. In addition to causing a shortage of beef, it brought transport virtually to a halt. The cost of transporting 100 lb. weight from Pretoria to Pietersburg soared from three shillings and six pence to over £1. ⁽⁵⁾ This was followed by two years of drought and swarms of locusts. By 1898, famine conditions prevailed in the northern and western Transvaal.

Relief-work was undertaken by the Churches at Pietersburg and Mafeking. A large number of those who received assistance were Christian widows, whose only alternative means of support was to become secondary wives of non-Christian men, and the missionaries did not wish to see them sell their faith "for a morsel of bread". ⁽⁶⁾

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. 26 May, 1894.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: James Chamberlain to Hartley, dd. Pietersburg, 3 March, 1896.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: James Chamberlain to Hartley, dd. Pietersburg, 5 August, 1898.
 - (4) Notices, February, 1898, p. 28.
 - (5) MS. 15,432: James Chamberlain to Hartley, dd. Pietersburg, 10 July, 1896.
 - (6) MS. 15,432: F. J. Briscoe to Hartley, dd. Mafeking, 15 October, 1898.

KILNERTON AND SCHOOLS

Kilnerton is a name widely known in the Transvaal and beyond. Here, for about seventy years, African teachers have been trained and have spread far and wide. ⁽¹⁾

The idea of having a Training Institution for the District was conceived by Owen Watkins as a result of conversations with the Reverend John Kilner, after whom the Institution was named. ⁽²⁾ Kilner regarded education as an essential part of missionary work and used every opportunity, during his visit to the South African Districts in 1880, to encourage the missionaries to educate their people and to build up a strong African Ministry. He made it quite clear that missionary funds could be used for this purpose and that the missionaries themselves were allowed to spend time teaching. ⁽³⁾

There were already well-established Training Institutions in the other South African Districts, such as Healdtown ⁽⁴⁾ but they were unable to supply the Transvaal with trained staff because they could hardly meet the needs of their own Districts. Kilner's answer to this situation was, "Hatch your own chickens ... in ten years time you will have as many Agents as you will need". ⁽³⁾

To get things started in his District, Watkins and his colleague, C. S. Franklin, each undertook, in July,

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- (1) M. I. Mlahleki, Little known facts about Kilnerton Institution.
 - (2) Owen Watkins: Notes of a journey taken with Rev'd. and Mrs. John Kilner, 30 September - 16 December, 1880.
 - (3) J. Kilner, A summary report by deputation to the S.A. mission field.
 - (4) L. A. Hewson, Healdtown, a study of a Methodist experiment in African education.

1882, to train one man at their own expense. ⁽¹⁾ When Watkins went to England on sick leave in 1884, ⁽²⁾ he used the opportunity to take his student with him and put him in an English school, but the experiment did not prove a success. ⁽³⁾ This student was later put in the Institution and did not do as well as some of the other students. ⁽⁴⁾ Not much came of this early attempt to train men privately.

The District headquarters had been moved to Potchefstroom in 1883, and a start was made there with the proposed Institution. Seven students were accommodated in a small house near the Potchefstroom manse. ⁽⁵⁾ The Reverend J. G. Benson was in charge and was assisted by an African teacher, Henry Ntsiko. ⁽⁶⁾ The opening ceremony was held on 5 March, 1885 and on that day Watkins wrote: "To-day we have laid the seed of a mighty tree whose branches will reach over the Zambesi and spread over the great lakes." ⁽⁵⁾

Small as it was, this Institution was held in very high regard. Weavind replied to a parent who did not make proper application for his son: "Het is niet zoomaar een school waar ieder zijn kind sturen kan, al is hij gewillig om daarvoor te betalen ..." ⁽⁷⁾ The majority of the first group of students were selected from the school run by Mangena Mokone, Native Assistant Missionary, in Pretoria. ⁽⁸⁾ Applications were received far in excess of what the Institution was able to accommodate. ⁽⁹⁾ Students who were married had to give an assurance that they were able to support their wives during the period of training and all students had to

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- (1) MS. 15,243: Watkins to Kilner, dd. Pretoria, 17 July, 1882.
 - (2) Notices, April, 1884, p. 74.
 - (3) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. 7 April, 1885.
 - (4) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Potchefstroom, 1 July, 1885.
 - (5) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Potchefstroom, 5 March, 1885.
 - (6) MS. 15,262: Watkins to Mangena Mokone, dd. Potchefstroom, 28 January, 1885.
 - (7) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Jeremiah Molotsuau, dd. Potchefstroom, 20 May, 1885.
 - (8) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Kilner, dd. Potchefstroom, 13 March, 1885.
 - (9) George Weavind: Kilnerton Training Institution, the story of its early days and some present day facts.

give an undertaking to go where they were sent on completion of the course. ⁽¹⁾ The examinations for the first half of the year 1885 were conducted by Owen Watkins and the results were, on the whole, encouraging. ⁽²⁾

A farm, ideally situated for the Institution, four miles to the east of Pretoria, came onto the market on 25 July, 1885. This farm, Koedoespoort, was part of a deceased estate ⁽³⁾ and was to be sold by public auction on 16 September, 1885. ⁽⁴⁾

An application to buy the farm for the estimated price of £1,500 was made to the W.M.M.S. by Owen Watkins on 28 July, 1885. ⁽⁵⁾ No reply had been received by 2 September, 1885, and Weavind, who knew the value of the farm, was worried that the opportunity to buy it might be lost. ⁽⁶⁾ The General Committee of the W.M.M.S. met in London on 9 September, 1885, agreed to purchase the farm ⁽⁷⁾ and cabled "Buy". ⁽⁸⁾ Weavind, in Potchefstroom, received the cable via a member of the Church in Pretoria on 13 September, 1885. ⁽⁹⁾ He arrived in Pretoria on the day of the sale, but was two hours too late. Fortunately, however, the member of the Church in Pretoria, Mr. Manning, had been equal to the occasion and had arranged for an agent to purchase the farm for the W.M.M.S. for the sum of £1,500. ⁽¹⁰⁾

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- (1) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Wilkinson, dd. Potchefstroom, 8 July, 1885.
 - (2) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Potchefstroom, 1 July, 1885.
 - (3) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Pretoria, 28 July, 1885.
 - (4) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Chairman, dd. Potchefstroom, 19 August, 1885.
 - (5) MS. 15,244: Watkins to Kilner, dd. 28 July, 1885.
 - (6) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Manning, dd. Potchefstroom, 2 September, 1885.
 - (7) Notices, October, 1885, p. 164: minutes of General Committee, 9 September, 1885.
 - (8) Notices, September, 1885: an appeal from Bechuana-land and Pretoria, p. 16.
 - (9) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Chairman, dd. Pretoria, 17 September, 1885.
 - (10) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Marishane's Tribe, 14 September, 1885.

The Institution was moved to a rented house in Pretoria at the beginning of 1886 and a start was made with the erection of buildings on the farm. ⁽¹⁾ The students built their own wattle-and-daub huts ⁽²⁾ and a house was built for the missionary. ⁽³⁾

George Weavind was, at this time, in charge of the Institution ⁽⁴⁾ but, with all the work involved in moving to Kilnerton as well as the administration of the District, he left most of the teaching to the African teacher, Henry Ntsiko. Ntsiko, although a good teacher, was unable to manage the upper classes, so from August, 1887, Weavind taught them himself ⁽⁵⁾ and the result was a 100% pass at the end of the year. ⁽⁶⁾

The subjects taught were: Scripture, the Catechism, English, Arithmetic, Geography and History. The cultural background of the syllabus was decidedly British. ⁽⁷⁾ The Boers had no influence on the educational system in African schools at the time because the Transvaal Government did nothing for African education in the nineteenth century. ⁽⁸⁾

In March, 1888, Weavind was transferred to Johannesburg and Watkins took over the Institution. ⁽⁹⁾ Teaching was something he had not done before, but he settled down to it on five days in the week ⁽¹⁰⁾ and felt that this was the most important work he had ever done. ⁽¹¹⁾ There were

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- (1) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Rorke's Drift, 8 February, 1886.
 - (2) MS. 15,244: Watkins to Kilner, dd. Potchefstroom, 16 December, 1885.
 - (3) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Pretoria, 5 April, 1886.
 - (4) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Chairman, dd. Pretoria, 16 January, 1886.
 - (5) MS. 15,263: Weavind to Chairman, dd. 19 August, 1887.
 - (6) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Kilner, dd. Pretoria, 20 December, 1887.
 - (7) Notices, March, 1888, pp. 62 - 63: report from G. Weavind, dd. Pretoria, 23 December, 1887.
 - (8) W. A. Venter, op. cit., p. xxi.
 - (9) Minute book: Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, March, 1888, pp. 5 - 13.
 - (10) MS. 15,432: Watkins to Kilner, dd. 6 April, 1888.
 - (11) Notices, April, 1889, p. 76: Watkins to Hartley, dd. 15 February, 1889.

sixteen students when he started ⁽¹⁾ and, by 1890, he had built the number up to thirty-four. ⁽²⁾ Students, already in residence, assisted those who were to come by building huts for them. ⁽³⁾ They also assisted in the erection of a new church at Kilnerton ⁽⁴⁾ in which they worshipped with members of the Church not in the Institution, who had been given permission to live on the farm. ⁽⁵⁾

George Weavind returned to Kilnerton at the beginning of 1892 to replace Watkins, who had left the District in poor health after his trip to Mashonaland. ⁽⁶⁾ The numbers had dropped to twenty while Watkins had been away. ⁽⁷⁾ Weavind hoped to build them up again ⁽⁸⁾ but experienced a setback in the work when his new assistant, Mangena Mokone, resigned at the end of the year. ⁽⁹⁾ Four students went with him, two of their own accord and two whom it was found necessary to expel. ⁽¹⁰⁾

John Klassen replaced Mangena Mokone and Weavind received further assistance from the second minister of the Pretoria European Circuit who taught on four mornings a week, ⁽¹¹⁾ but the arrangement with this Circuit did not last long. An arrangement was then made with the Reverend George Rolland, who was stationed at Olverton, but this did not work out either. ⁽¹²⁾

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- (1) Reports, 1889, p. 98.
 - (2) Reports, 1891, p. 107.
 - (3) Reports, 1890, p. 101.
 - (4) Notices, March, 1889, pp. 58 - 60: Watkins to Hartley, dd. Kilnerton, 28 December, 1888.
 - (5) Reports, 1887, p. 197.
 - (6) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 26 February, 1892.
 - (7) Reports, 1892, p. 91.
 - (8) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 27 September, 1892.
 - (9) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 26 November, 1892.
 - (10) General Summary, Transvaal and Swaziland District, 1893.
 - (11) Minutes of the British Conference, 1894, p. 148.
 - (12) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 27 January, 1895; Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 9 November, 1895.

Weavind taught for five hours a day on five days a week ⁽¹⁾ and visited the District during the holidays. ⁽²⁾

Eventually, after repeated appeals to the W.M.M.S. for assistance, ⁽³⁾ two men were sent out in 1898, but only one of them, the Reverend S. J. Baker, remained after the first year. ⁽⁴⁾ The Institution made steady progress. By the end of the century there were thirty students in residence and many others had gone out as teachers to various parts of the District. ⁽⁵⁾

SCHOOLS.

It was the policy of the Transvaal and Swaziland District to have an efficient day school on every station and at every preaching place. ⁽⁶⁾

These schools existed, from the missionary's point of view, for the development of the Church. The school at Potchefstroom, for example, was closed by Kilner and Watkins in 1880 because the teacher "refused to become an agent of the Society and to run it as a Wesleyan school". ⁽⁷⁾ On the other hand, Watkins expressed extreme satisfaction with the school at Mafeking because the teacher, Silas Molema, had succeeded in converting nearly all the older scholars. ⁽⁸⁾ "It has been no uncommon thing," he reported, "for the work of the school to be suspended while the master and others prayed with the scholars as they wept on account of their sin; the day school ... being turned into a prayer meeting." ⁽⁹⁾

The African people supported the schools eagerly, although not always from the same motive as the missionaries.

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- (1) MS. 15,432: James Chamberlain to Hartley, dd. Pietersburg, 3 March, 1896.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 10 October, 1895.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Rolland to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 25 April, 1896.
 - (4) Minutes of the British Conference, 1898, p. 171; 1899, p. 164.
 - (5) Reports, 1899, p. 109.
 - (6) General Summary, Transvaal and Swaziland District, 1888 - 1890, pp. 150 - 238.
 - (7) MS. 15,249: Owen Watkins, Potchefstroom notes, 1880.
 - (8) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Mafeking, 5 May, 1886.
 - (9) Reports, 1887, p. 200.

Where there was no school, they made "repeated and urgent requests for one to be started".⁽¹⁾ Many of them regarded the school as the most important part of a mission station. The popular name for the Uitkyk Mission for example, was "Schoolplaats".⁽²⁾ C. P. Groves in The planting of Christianity in Africa, says that this clamour for schools was motivated by a desire "to share the white man's power".⁽³⁾

Whatever the motives of the various parties, there is no doubt that the educational policy of the Transvaal and Swaziland District was the back-bone of its missionary expansion.⁽⁴⁾ Also, when trained teachers began to reach the stations in the 1890's, the African people received the benefit of a good education from the Church.⁽⁵⁾ Thousands of children learnt to read and write in Methodist schools.

Although it was also the policy of the Transvaal and Swaziland District to have a Sunday school at every station, it was difficult to obtain competent staff; the day school teachers feeling that they had done their duty during the week.⁽⁶⁾ Generally speaking, Sunday schools were more successful in the European Circuits.⁽⁷⁾

Education for English-speaking people received scant support from the Transvaal Government in the nineteenth century. English-speaking people, therefore, looked to their Churches for help. Some of the Churches, the Anglican and Roman Catholic, in particular, established large, permanent schools during this period. The Methodist Church, however, provided only small schools conducted on Church premises, which ceased to exist once

(1) Reports, 1887, p. 202.

(2) Notices, August, 1887, pp. 181 - 182: report from the Reverend G. S. Sheldon, dd. School Plaats, 11 April, 1887.

(3) C. P. Groves, The Planting of Christianity in Africa, vol. III, p. 235.

(4) Reports, 1899, p. 109.

(5) Reports, 1889, p. 100; MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Barberton, 27 July, 1893.

(6) Reports, 1889, p. 100.

(7) Johannesburg Wesleyan Sunday School Register, 5 October, 1888.

the Government provided adequate facilities. (1) Nevertheless, the education given at these schools was of a high standard. There were schools at Potchefstroom, Pretoria, Barberton, Mafeking, Johannesburg and Jeppe. (2) The Pretoria school, opened in 1882, with a qualified American teacher as principal, (3) was so successful that some of the leading Boers in Pretoria sent their children to it. (4) The ministers stationed at Pretoria gave a considerable amount of their time to teaching. (5)

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Morris to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 30 April, 1893.
(2) Reports, 1888, p. 184.
(3) MS. 15,243: Watkins to Kilner, dd. Pretoria, 28 April, 1882.
(4) MS. 15,242: Watkins to Mason, dd. 10 July, 1882.
(5) MS. 15,432: Morris to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 28 March, 1896.

Robert Ndevu Mashaba, one of the most remarkable of the African pioneers, founded a mission at Delagoa Bay in 1885, sixty-two years after the unsuccessful attempt made by William Threlfall.

Born in the Tembu clan of the Tsonga at Delagoa Bay in about 1850, Mashaba, went to work first in Durban and then in Port Elizabeth. He was converted while at Port Elizabeth and went to the Lovedale Institution for three years. (1) Returning to Delagoa Bay in 1885, he established a Church and a school among the Tembu about three miles from Lourenco Marques. A year later, he had spent all his savings and went to work as a labourer on the construction of the railway to Pretoria. He returned to his church in 1887 and, with the help of men trained by himself, he established Societies at the kraals of chiefs Mabaju, Mvalo and Gwanazu. (2)

Friction arose between Mashaba and the Reverend P. Berthoud of the Swiss Romande Mission because Mashaba insisted on working as a Methodist. Berthoud complained that Mashaba had accepted as members of his Church people whom he had disciplined. He wrote to Owen Watkins, but received no reply so he wrote to the Chairman of the Natal District and an African minister was sent to investigate. (3)

(1) L. A. Hewson, op. cit., pp. 57 - 59.

(2) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 17 September, 1892.

(3) MS. 15,432: W. Cornforth to Secretary, W.M.M.S., dd. Lausanne, 10 November, 1891 (letter giving details of correspondence "between the Reverend P. Berthoud and some of our missionaries with reference to Robert Mashaba).

On receipt of the report of this investigation, the Natal District Meeting decided that Mashaba should continue as a Methodist. Berthoud expressed his regret at this decision and, later, the Delagoa Bay Conference of the Free Church Mission referred the matter to the South African Conference which met in Cape Town in 1890. Owen Watkins and George Weavind were present at that Conference and, after negotiation, Delagoa Bay was placed under their District. ⁽¹⁾ The Conference de Missionnaires de la Suisse Romande expressed its strong disapproval: "We note that you are going to support Robert Mashaba and foster the Wesleyan work. You do so in spite of all our entreaties. Thus, the W.M.M.S. burdens itself with all the responsibility for there being two missions overlapping each other." ⁽²⁾

Owen Watkins intended to visit Delagoa Bay in July 1890 ⁽³⁾ but was prevented by reports of an outbreak of smallpox. ⁽⁴⁾ Other matters intervened after that and it was not until August, 1892 that the first official visit was made. George Weavind, on this occasion, inspected Mashaba's work, interviewed Berthoud and concluded that God had called Mashaba to work among his own people. There was room, he felt, for the Methodists as well as the Swiss Mission. He, therefore, officially recognised and appointed Robert Mashaba as an agent of the W.M.M.S. ⁽⁵⁾ In 1893 Mashaba attended the District Meeting of the Transvaal and Swaziland District at Johannesburg and was recommended for acceptance as a candidate for the ministry. ⁽⁶⁾

Mashaba continued to expand his work. He moved his headquarters to Mabota, about eight miles from Lourenco

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- (1) Notices, September, 1890, p. 213.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: H. A. Junod to Weavind, dd. Rikatla, Delagoa Bay, 30 May, 1893.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Watkins to Hartley, dd. Kilnerton, 10 July, 1890.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Worcester, 16 November, 1891.
 - (5) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 17 September, 1892.
 - (6) Minute book: Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, 20 - 28 January, 1893.

Marques, and built a church there to seat 400. Weavind conducted the opening ceremony in July, 1893 and was impressed with the neat furnishings which included pews fitted with book-racks. The members of the Church had done all the work themselves and raised the money to pay for the materials, including a galvanised iron roof. Here Weavind baptised forty adults and twenty-four children and administered the sacrament of Holy Communion to about seventy-four communicants. The school met in the old church and there were about sixty pupils. Mashaba had translated reading books into Shona and had them printed. He had also prepared a manuscript of just on 100 hymns in Shona. Some of them were translations of Wesley's and Sankey's hymns and some were composed by Mashaba himself. (1)

In October, 1894, the Gaza people rebelled against the Portuguese authorities and Mashaba fled across the Tembe river where he built a temporary church. He had been warned that the Portuguese suspected him of complicity in the rebellion because it had started in the vicinity of his church and was led by Chief Zihlahla, with whom he was on friendly terms. (2) In July, 1895 George Weavind visited Delagoa Bay and could not discover any evidence that Mashaba had taken part in the rebellion. (3) Six months later, however, on 7 January, 1896, Mashaba was arrested and tried the next day. (4) Chief Zihlahla, who had been sentenced to life imprisonment, gave evidence against him. He produced a letter, in which he had been exhorted by the accused not to be afraid of the Portuguese. Mashaba admitted that he had written the letter (4) and was deported to the Cape Verde Islands. (5) His name does not appear again on the list of stations of the Transvaal and Swaziland District until 1903. (6)

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 17 August, 1893.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 20 October, 1894.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 3 August, 1895.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Mashaba to Weavind, dd. Lourenco Marques, 11 January, 1896.
 - (5) Notices, October, 1896, p. 146: Mashaba to a friend in Ireland, dd. 30 June, 1896.
 - (6) Minute book: Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, 15 - 22 January, 1903.

During his exile on the Cape Verde Islands, Mashaba was kept in touch with the W.M.M.S. by the missionary at Oporto who organised a relief fund, sent him food parcels and negotiated with the Portuguese authorities for his release. ⁽¹⁾

Mashaba was a man of considerable culture. He wrote to one of the ministers in the Transvaal describing his inner feelings at being banished from the work he loved:

"The first Sunday in February ... as we were steaming along the South Atlantic, I chanced to stand on deck ... about eleven o'clock I wished I could hear the sound of church bells. Some birds were flying about, and, wishing to be one of them, I began to recite:

Free bird of God's holy forest once thou wert,
The pulpit thy happy nest it were,
From His Holy vineyard thou wert fed,
Thou didst fear nor shield nor spear the world to face,
For His Bible was thy strong shield and spear
Satan's host to meet and peace proclaim.

But now in cage art shut, hands, feet with chains
To hear no more sound of gospel bells, bound
To share thy religious rights no more,
The remainder of thy life in jail to pass,
With streams of tears on thought of thy land
And bleeding heart on thy past freedom." ⁽²⁾

The British vice-Consul at Lourenco Marques, who knew Robert Mashaba well, was amazed at his achievement. He said to Weavind, "I cannot understand how he could have gone out, educated himself and then come back among these heathen surroundings and kept himself so respectable". ⁽³⁾

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Moreton to Hartley, dd. Oporto, 10 August, 1897; 14 September, 1897; 24 September, 1897.
(2) MS. 15,432: Mashaba to J. S. Morris, dd. Cape Verde, 16 April, 1896.
(3) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 17 September, 1892.

John Bowen, an Evangelist from Potchefstroom, who was descended from the Tsonga, was sent to Delagoa Bay to replace Mashaba in March, 1896. (1) Weavind inspected his work four months later and was satisfied with what he found. (2)

An attempt was made on Bowen's life in June 1898 by a member of the congregation against whom he had taken disciplinary action. He received a bullet wound in the cheek, neck and shoulder but recovered after treatment at Lourenco Marques and Johannesburg. (3)

The extent of the work at Delagoa Bay, by the end of the nineteenth century, did credit to the pioneer, Mashaba and his successor, John Bowen. There were three main Societies, each with a school, conducted by a teacher trained at Kilnerton, and a total of 180 scholars. (3) There were 170 Church members, 289 on Trial for membership and seven Local Preachers. (4)

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 15 March, 1896.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 18 July, 1896.
 - (3) Notices, October, 1898, p. 154: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 25 July, 1898.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Perkins, dd. Pretoria, 13 February, 1899.

CHAPTER 14

PIONEERS OF THE RHODESIA DISTRICT

Owen Watkins was ready to advance to the Zambesi at the beginning of 1886. He included in his budget for the year the cost of the journey, estimated at £300. ⁽¹⁾ The W.M.M.S., however, was desperately short of funds and, although in fullest sympathy with his plans, could not allow the proposed expenditure. ⁽²⁾

Disappointed by this decision, Watkins, nevertheless, explored the route to Shoshong in conjunction with a visit to Mafeking in 1886. His idea was, partly, to retain the interest of his supporters in England. Little came of this journey, except that, on the way, Watkins met up with James Courtenay Selous, the well-known hunter and explorer, who had extensive knowledge of the territory to the north of the Limpopo. Selous advised Watkins to establish his mission among the Shona. ⁽³⁾

In 1889 the British South Africa Company was granted a Royal Charter to develop and administer the territory between the Limpopo and the Zambesi. Watkins saw this as a golden opportunity to proceed with his plans and urged the W.M.M.S. to authorise the advance. ⁽⁴⁾ Once more, funds were not available. In fact, because of public criticism of some of the missionaries in India, ⁽⁵⁾ the income for 1889 had dropped by £10,000. ⁽⁶⁾ Watkins

(1) MS. 15,432: Watkins to Kilner, dd. Potchefstroom, 23 December, 1885.

(2) Notices, April, 1886, p. 94: minutes of the General Committee, 12 February, 1886.

(3) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Shoshong, 14 June, 1886.

(4) MS. 15,432: Watkins to Hartley, dd. Kilnerton, 5 September, 1889.

(5) Notices, March, 1890, pp. 49 - 50: editorial notes.

(6) Notices, June, 1890, pp. 121 - 122: editorial notes.

expressed his utter despair: "It is a great misfortune and I am sure that in the coming time the Committee will spend both men and money in trying to obtain what just now we could get easily. I have done my duty in this matter and must now leave it." (1)

At last the opportunity to advance, for which Watkins had waited five years, came as a result of a meeting in Klerksdorp in November, 1890, between the Reverend Isaac Shimmin and Cecil John Rhodes. Rhodes showed great interest in Watkins' plans, as they were described to him by Shimmin, and suggested that they should apply to the British South Africa Company for a grant. (2) This was done and the Methodists were assured of an annual grant of £100 towards the cost of their proposed mission. (3) The Dutch Reformed Church had been promised an annual grant of £200. (2) Not only did the Company provide these grants, but also gave the assurance that land would be available for missionary purposes. (4)

Equipped with this generous offer, Watkins again urged the W.M.M.S. to authorise the advance. The Anglicans and Roman Catholics, he pointed out, were already at work in the territory. (5) The W.M.M.S. was persuaded to act and on 11 February, 1891, decided "that the mission to Mashonaland be undertaken forthwith". (6)

At this stage, there was some uncertainty as to who should lead the mission. Watkins had informed the W.M.M.S. that he was not available for health and "other reasons". (5) The "other reasons" are not stated but one of them may well have been that he did not want to leave the District while Weavind was on furlough in England. (7) He expressed extreme regret at not being

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Watkins to Hartley, dd. 20 February, 1890.
 - (2) MS. 15,241: Shimmin to Chairman, dd. Klerksdorp, 21 November, 1890.
 - (3) MS. 15,241: Rutherford Harris to Watkins, dd. Kimberley, 9 December, 1890.
 - (4) MS. 15,241: Rutherford Harris to Watkins, dd. Kimberley, 8 January, 1891.
 - (5) MS. 15,432: Watkins to Hartley, dd. Kilnerton, 17 December, 1890.
 - (6) Notices, March, 1891, p. 67: minutes of General Committee, 11 February, 1891.
 - (7) MS. 15,689: Hartley to Watkins, dd. London, 12 February, 1891.

able to undertake the mission himself: "It has been my desire and prayer for many years that I might preach Christ on the Zambesi - but the time is past and my sorrow is great." (1)

Weavind volunteered to lead the mission and to stay in Mashonaland for about two years to organise the work. (2) This would have meant delaying the mission until his return, however, and the Committee, having announced its intention of starting, wanted immediate action so Weavind's offer was turned down. (3) The Reverend R. F. Appelbe, had also offered his services (4) and was strongly recommended by Watkins. (5) Isaac Shimmin also offered to lead the mission and, having written direct to the W.M.M.S., received the appointment, (6) although he was not supported by Watkins. Watkins felt that it would be useless to send Shimmin alone (7) and, having put so much work into the planning of the mission, he decided, in the end, to go with him rather than see it fail. (8) He sent Shimmin off in a wagon from Pretoria, and travelled by post-cart to join him at Pietersburg. (9) Appelbe was appointed Acting Chairman of the District. (10)

The wagon bound for Mashonaland left Pretoria on 2 June, 1891 (9) and arrived at Salisbury just on four months later on 29 September, 1891. (11)

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Watkins to Hartley, dd. Kilnerton, 17 December, 1890.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Wimbledon, 23 February, 1891.
 - (3) MS. 15,689: Hartley to Watkins, dd. London, 12 March, 1891.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Appelbe to Watkins, dd. Johannesburg, 19 February, 1891.
 - (5) MS. 15,432: Watkins to Hartley, dd. Kilnerton, 25 February, 1891.
 - (6) MS. 15,241: Cablegram - Wesley to Watkins, dd. London, 12 March, 1891.
 - (7) MS. 15,432: Watkins to Hartley, dd. Kilnerton, 21 March, 1891.
 - (8) MS. 15,432: Watkins to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 18 April, 1891.
 - (9) MS. 15,432: Watkins to Hartley, dd. Kilnerton, 10 June, 1891.
 - (10) MS. 15,432: Watkins to Hartley, dd. Kilnerton, 22 June, 1891.
 - (11) MS. 15,686: Owen Watkins, Private journal of a journey to Mashonaland.

The party consisted of an Evangelist, Michael Bowen, who spoke several African languages; John Peters, the wagon-driver and John Walters the voorloper, besides Shimmin and Watkins. ⁽¹⁾ The route followed was the wagon-track, cut by the pioneers of the British South Africa Company in 1890, to Fort Tuli, Fort Victoria and Fort Salisbury. Owen Watkins kept a private journal in which he recorded the details of the journey. ⁽²⁾

"We start at sunrise and travel for about 3½ hours; then we outspan until about 2 p.m., choosing a place where there is grass and water ... While the oxen are feeding, we get our own breakfast. In the evening we outspan a little before sunset and after dinner the three native men come into the wagon for family prayer."

Crossing the Limpopo was a major operation. They were assisted by a Boer named Botha. " ... our wagon being heavy they put in forty-four oxen ... The mission wagon was like a modern Noah's Ark as it pitched and rolled in the surges of the river. At one part of the drift the oxen only had their heads above water ... " On that day, Watkins wrote in his journal: "This is a great day in the history of Wesleyan missions in Africa. My dream is fulfilled ... I thank God I have lived to see this day."

They met many interesting people coming and going on the pioneers' road; there were traders, hunters, fortune-seekers, solitary wanderers, financiers, administrators, missionaries and members of an abortive Boer trek. They met Alfred Beit and Alfred Caldecot of the British South Africa Company; Stegman and Hofmeyer of the Dutch Reformed Church and Knight-Bruce, the Anglican Bishop of Mashonaland.

Knight-Bruce informed them that he had visited all the Chiefs in his diocese and had left a native agent with each of them, implying that there was very little left for the Methodists. ⁽²⁾ He sent a letter to Watkins,

(1) Notices, October, 1891, p. 229.

(2) MS. 15,686: Owen Watkins, Private journal of a journey to Mashonaland.

later on, addressed "to all the Wesleyan Missionaries in Mashonaland" in which he said that there was only one Chief he did not claim for his Church. Watkins, however, was not prepared to recognise his claims ⁽¹⁾ and told him so when he met him again at Beira. ⁽²⁾

Having reached Salisbury, Watkins had to wait there for three weeks to see Rhodes who was away at the time. During this time, he was well looked after by the officials of the British South Africa Company. A hut was placed at his disposal and three stands, later increased to four, were given to the W.M.M.S. in a central position in the town. The first Methodist services were held on 4 October, 1891. Four people attended the service for Europeans and three people attended the service for Africans. It was a day of small beginnings.

Watkins' impression of the town gave some idea of what life would be like on the new mission: "Most people live in round huts built of poles, reeds, mud and grass ... a wooden door is a sign of being a man of means." The cost of living was high. Sugar was three shillings and ninepence a pound, butter was as much as fifteen shillings a pound and meal was twelve pounds ten shillings a bag.

When, at last, Rhodes arrived in Salisbury, everyone wanted to see him at once. Watkins, resourceful as ever, decided to wait. He made discreet enquiries as to where Rhodes slept in the police camp and what time he got up in the morning. In his private journal, under the date of 20 October, 1891, Watkins recorded his interview with Rhodes.

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- (1) MS. 15,691: Draft of a letter, Owen Watkins to Knight-Bruce, undated.
 (2) MS. 15,432: Watkins to Hartley, dd. Kilnerton, 13 February, 1892.

"Had a cup of tea at six o'clock this morning and then Shimmin and I started for the camp. When we got there, I saw the door of Mr. Rhodes' hut open so I walked straight to it. He had just got out of bed. He smiled and said, 'Just wait a few minutes and I will see you ...' After a little talk I told him ... that Dr. Harris, the Secretary of the Company had given me as much as he could but that I wanted more land ... he said, 'Well, let us have Harris in and see what we can do.' So out he went in his bare feet, roused Dr. Harris out of bed and also Dr. Jameson, the Administrator, and brought them along just as they were in their pyjamas ... Rhodes said, 'Mr. Watkins is not satisfied with one farm for the Wesleyan Missionary Society; he wants five or six farms. What do you say to that?'

Dr. Harris said, 'No, it can't be. I have given one farm to the Church of England, one to the Roman Catholics and one to the Wesleyans. If we give Mr. Watkins more, then the others will come and want more.'

Mr. Rhodes said, 'Well, we don't want the country filled with mission stations. What do you say to that, Mr. Watkins?'

I replied that I had only to do with our own Society ... They must bear in mind that they gave one farm to any man who would come into the country - they would give me one for myself and one to each man I might bring if I only asked - but we did not ask for land for ourselves but for our Society ... Dr. Harris still fought hard against it and I answered him point by point.

Then Mr. Rhodes said, 'Well, Harris, you must remember the Wesleyans will do good in the country ... They will not bring in loafers who can do nothing but drink whisky at £4 a

bottle.' Then, turning to me, he said, 'What do you say to this? Suppose I give you three farms to start with - then, when you get them going, ... apply for more and I promise your application shall receive every favourable consideration.'" (1)

Before Watkins left Salisbury on 22 October, 1891, he had in his possession the following documents from the British South Africa Company:

- i. Deed of gift for the stands in Salisbury;
- ii. Letter authorising him to select four stands in the township of Umtali;
- iii. A promise of land for a church, a house and a school in every new township;
- iv. Gift of three farms, each of 1,500 morgen, one in the district of Salisbury, one in the district of Lo Magondi and one in the district of Umtali;
- v. A promise in writing that, should the W.M.M.S. require more farms for missionary purposes, Rhodes would give them "every favourable consideration". (1)

Watkins selected the stands in the township of Umtali and, leaving Shimmin and Bowenii to carry on the work, walked to Beira to catch a steamer to Durban. "I am in splendid health," he wrote, "and expect I shall quite enjoy this strange journey." He was accompanied on the 200 mile walk by John Walters, the wagon-driver. (1)

The walk went well, but, while waiting for the ship, Watkins caught malaria and became seriously ill. (2) He managed to get to Durban and from there to Pretoria but his condition, when he arrived, was critical and his doctor did not have much hope of his recovery. (3)

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- (1) MS. 15,686: Owen Watkins, Private journal of a journey to Mashonaland.
 (2) MS. 15,432: Watkins to Hartley, dd. Durban, 30 November, 1891.
 (3) MS. 15,432: Appelbe to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 12 December, 1891.

A week later, on 19 December, 1891, he was out of danger but still very ill. ⁽¹⁾ His doctor was of the opinion that his only chance of complete recovery was to return to England as soon as possible. ⁽²⁾ Weavind, who had arrived back on 16 January, 1892, informed the W.M.M.S. of this, and sick leave was granted immediately. ⁽³⁾ Watkins left Pretoria with his wife and family on 20 February, 1892. ⁽⁴⁾

Little did anyone realise, on that day, that the great ministry of Owen Watkins in the Transvaal had come to an end. Officially, he remained Chairman of the District for the year 1892, but Weavind acted for him during this time and succeeded him in office in January, 1893. ⁽⁵⁾

The phenomenal growth of the Transvaal and Swaziland District under the chairmanship of Owen Watkins is revealed in the following tables :-

	<u>1880</u> ⁽⁶⁾	<u>1884</u> ⁽⁷⁾	<u>1892</u> ⁽⁷⁾
Ministers	4	10	22
Native Agents	?	97	538
Members	457	774	3,539
Members on Trial	132	385	1,491

Watkins' plan to extend to the north had succeeded, and at the Annual Meeting of the W.M.M.S. in May, 1893 he urged the Methodist people to support the Mashonaland Mission with a view to taking the next step:

"... our eyes are looking already to the land that is beyond the Zambesi." ⁽⁷⁾

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Underwood to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 19 December, 1891.
 (2) MS. 15,432: Kay to Weavind, dd. Pretoria, 16 January, 1892.
 (3) Notices, April, 1892, p. 93: minutes of the General Committee, 9 March, 1892.
 (4) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Kilnerton, 19 February, 1892.
 (5) Minute book: Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, 20 - 28 January, 1893.
 (6) Reports, 1881, p. 156; Minute book: Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, 23 January, 1882; MS. 15,250: Transvaal affairs, a description of the Molopo Mission by Edward Harris, March, 1880.
 (7) Notices, June, 1893, pp. 139 - 141.

Owen Watkins did not return to the Transvaal but he continued to serve his Church with distinction in England: he was financial secretary of the Liverpool District (1894-1899); Chairman of the Cardiff and Swansea District (1899-1902); Chairman of the Oxford District (1902-1905) and a delegate to the Ecumenical Councils in London (1901) and Toronto (1911). ⁽¹⁾ He died after a short retirement in the Chelsea Circuit on 22 December, 1915 at the age of 74 and in the 52nd year of his ministry. ⁽²⁾

Watkins was a man of vision and his plans were brought to fruition because of his tremendous energy and enthusiasm, his wise judgement and ability to lead men.

The Mashonaland Mission, although constituted as a separate District in 1894, ⁽³⁾ continued to receive assistance from the Transvaal and Swaziland District until the end of the century. In May, 1892, a party of eight African volunteers went as Evangelists to the new District. ⁽⁴⁾ The Reverend George Eva was transferred there from Heidelberg a few months later ⁽⁵⁾ and the Reverend John White of Klerksdorp joined the team in 1894. ⁽⁶⁾ Isaac Shimmmin was the first Chairman of the Mashonaland District ⁽⁷⁾ and Alfred Spring Sharp, another man from the Transvaal, succeeded him as Chairman towards the end of 1898. ⁽⁸⁾ In 1899 the name of the District was changed from the "Mashonaland District" to the "Rhodesia District". ⁽⁹⁾

(1) D.S.A.B. vol. 1, p. 868.

(2) Minutes of the British Conference, 1916, p. 149: Obituary.

(3) Minutes of the British Conference, 1893, p. 157.

(4) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 14 May, 1892 and 21 May, 1892.

(5) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 13 July, 1892.

(6) MS. 15,432: John White to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 21 July, 1893 and 27 April, 1894; C. F. Andrews, John White of Mashonaland.

(7) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 3 March, 1894.

(8) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 30 July, 1898; Sharp to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 19 August, 1898.

(9) Minutes of the British Conference, 1899, p. 168.

PART THREE

GOLD FRONTIER

JOHANNESBURG AND THE REEF

The missionary policy of the Methodist Church in the Transvaal and Swaziland District was determined, until 1886, by Watkins' plan to reach the Zambesi. After 1886 policy was determined by the discovery of gold.

Wherever a gold mine was opened, mining camps sprang up and towns were established. Most of the people were English-speaking and many of them were Methodists. (1) One or two laymen would gather the Methodists together and then ask for a minister. The minister was supported by the European congregation and he was able, from this base, to start work among the African people who had also come to the mines.

In the early days, before the skilled techniques of deep-level mining ensured a constant supply of payable gold, (2) mines frequently came to an end as quickly as they had started. Barberton boomed for three years and then suddenly declined; its population of 6,000 shrank to 2,000. Klerksdorp, at the peak of mining development had two Methodist ministers and two churches. A year later one minister was struggling to keep the two churches going. (3) Johannesburg likewise went through a period of recession in the early 1890's. (4) Under these circumstances, it was not easy to make decisions as to policy.

The main gold reef, on which the city of Johannesburg now stands, was discovered in March, 1886 by George Harrison and George Walker on a portion of the farm

(1) Reports, 1890, p. 99; 1891, p. 106.

(2) E. A. Walker, op. cit., p. 441.

(3) Reports, 1890, pp. 99 - 100.

(4) Reports, 1891, p. 105.

Langlaagte, which belonged to Gerhardus Oosthuizen. News of the strike spread like wild-fire and, within a few weeks, extensions of the Reef to the east and west were discovered. Samples of rock crushed at Struben's mill, produced payable gold but the nature of the reef was such that expensive machinery and qualified mining engineers were required to work it at a profit. Mining had to be undertaken by companies backed by capital. The Transvaal Government appointed Captain Carl von Brandis as Mining Commissioner with Jan Eloff as his assistant. ⁽¹⁾ The first public gold field was proclaimed in September, 1886 ⁽²⁾ and soon a large number of people gathered in mining camps on the bare veld.

A Local Preacher, J. Thornhill Cook, gathered the Methodist people and started regular Sunday services in one of the camps. The Reverend George Weavind visited them in December, 1886, and conducted a service which was held in a store. The counter was used as a pulpit and deal boxes were used as seats. Surprised to find a fairly large congregation, Weavind made arrangements for the Reverend F. J. Briscoe, who was assisting him at Kilnerton Institution, to visit them once a month. ⁽³⁾ Weavind met the congregation again in April, 1887, by which time it was evident that they needed a minister of their own. ⁽⁴⁾

Briscoe was appointed and arrived in Johannesburg in April 1887. He was the first resident minister of any denomination in Johannesburg. ⁽⁵⁾ An ox-wagon was his home for the first two months ⁽⁶⁾ and the Theatre Royal was used for services. ⁽⁷⁾ The foundation-stone of a

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- (1) T. V. Bulpin, *Storm over the Transvaal*, pp. 58 - 80.
 - (2) *Staats Courant*, 15 September, 1886.
 - (3) MS. 15,263: Weavind to Mattherson, dd. 23 September, 1887; *Notices*, March, 1887, pp. 64 - 65, Report from George Weavind, dd. 17 December, 1886.
 - (4) MS. 15,263: Weavind to Cook, dd. 1 April, 1887; Weavind to Chairman, dd. 22 April, 1887.
 - (5) *Notices*, September, 1897, p. 130, ed. notes on missionaries at Leeds Conference, 1897.
 - (6) MS. 15,263: Weavind to Briscoe, dd. Pretoria, 26 April, 1887.
 - (7) Anna H. Smith, *Pictorial History of Johannesburg*, p. 24.

church was laid by Carl von Brandis ⁽¹⁾ on property in Commissioner Street, Marshall's Town ⁽²⁾ on 23 July, 1887 and Weavind opened the building on 25 September 1887. ⁽³⁾ It was built of stone, seated 300 and cost £900. ⁽⁴⁾ The property, consisting of four stands, was donated to the Church by Mr. Marshall, the owner of the township. ⁽⁵⁾ Here, also, two rooms were built for Briscoe. ⁽⁶⁾

Weavind was appointed to take charge of the work in Johannesburg in March, 1888 and Briscoe was transferred to Uitkyk Mission. ⁽⁷⁾ Under Weavind's direction the work grew rapidly. A day school was opened, Evangelistic services were held ⁽⁸⁾ and the Sunday school had 200 scholars and twenty-one teachers. ⁽⁹⁾ The Band of Hope, a temperance organisation for young people, did well and later organised the first flower show to be held in Johannesburg. ⁽¹⁰⁾ The church, by this time, was too small. A decision was taken to enlarge it, ⁽¹¹⁾ but, within a few months, it was realised that the plans would be inadequate. ⁽¹²⁾ In May 1889 the Marshall's Town property was sold ⁽¹³⁾ and a new building was erected on property which had been secured

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- (1) The South African Methodist, 10 August, 1887, p.338.
 - (2) MS. 15,263: Weavind to Marshall, dd. 5 May, 1887; Anna H. Smith, op. cit., p. 37.
 - (3) Notices, December 1887, p. 280; Report from George Weavind, dd. 7 October, 1887.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Kilner, dd. Pretoria, 20 December, 1887.
 - (5) MS. 15,263: Weavind to Marshall, dd. 5 May, 1887.
 - (6) MS. 15,263: Weavind to Briscoe, dd. 3 May, 1887.
 - (7) Minutes of Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, March, 1888, p. 156.
 - (8) Transvaal and Swaziland District, General Summary, 1888, p. 153.
 - (9) Johannesburg Wesleyan Sunday School Register, 5 October, 1888.
 - (10) Minute book: Wesleyan Band of Hope, Johannesburg, 1 - 2 February, 1893.
 - (11) MS. 15,432: letter from Weavind, dd. Johannesburg, 27 September, 1888.
 - (12) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 8 February, 1889.
 - (13) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 31 May, 1889.

on the corner of President and Kruis streets. (1) This building was completed at the end of 1889, it seated 550 and was full every Sunday. (2)

The Reverend R. F. Appelbe was appointed Superintendent of the Johannesburg Circuit when Weavind left to take over Kilnerton in the emergency caused by the illness of Watkins at the beginning of 1892. (3) Appelbe had already been in the Circuit for two years, (4) during which time he had acted as Chairman of the District. (5) The Circuit Stewards, however, felt that Johannesburg needed a minister of greater experience and they looked around for someone suitable. (6) Eventually, the Reverend William Hudson, who had retired to South Africa for health reasons, after thirty-three years service in England, was appointed in 1895. (7) He was fifty-nine years of age (8) but sufficiently active to take the lead in what was to be one of the biggest developments in the history of Methodism. (9)

The Johannesburg Circuit included the whole of the Witwatersrand gold fields. As new townships developed along the Reef a team of a dozen Local Preachers assisted the minister to start new Societies. By the end of 1890, services were held at Jeppestown, Heriot Mine, Simmer and Jack, Blaauwbank, Booysens, Fordsburg and Krugersdorp. (10) A church was opened at Jeppe in 1890 (11) and a school was started there three years

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- (1) Letter Book, Johannesburg Circuit: Hudson to S.A. Mutual, dd. Johannesburg, 26 January, 1897.
 - (2) Transvaal and Swaziland District, General Summary, pp. 214 - 215; Notices, December, 1890, pp. 276-278: Report by the Reverend J. C. James.
 - (3) Minutes of the British Conference, 1892, p. 155.
 - (4) Minutes of the British Conference, 1890, p. 150; 1891, p. 173.
 - (5) MS. 15,432: Watkins to Hartley, dd. Kilnerton, 22 June, 1891.
 - (6) Minute book: Johannesburg Circuit Quarterly Meeting, 29 June, 1893.
 - (7) Minutes of the British Conference, 1895, p. 148.
 - (8) The Methodist Churchman, 18 March, 1897, p. 101.
 - (9) MS. 15,432: Hudson to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 3 May, 1896.
 - (10) MS. 15,241: Johannesburg European Circuit Plan, October to December, 1890.
 - (11) MS. 15,241: letter from Weavind, dd. Johannesburg, 30 May, 1890.

later. (1) At Langlaagte the foundation-stone of a church was laid in 1893. (2) In 1894, services were held at Boksburg, Germiston, New Primrose and Krugersdorp. More ministers were required and it was only the inability of the W.M.M.S. to provide men that slowed down the growth of the Circuit. (3) The Circuit Quarterly Meeting guaranteed to support the additional ministers requested. (4)

What was needed, in the circumstances of this rapid growth on the Reef, was a comprehensive plan of development and this was provided by Hudson. In September, 1895, he launched what he called, The Johannesburg Wesleyan Methodist Extension Fund to build fourteen new churches at an estimated total cost of £50,000. Hudson envisaged, in this scheme, a large new central church on the corner of Kruis and Pritchard streets. Four other churches were to be built in the central area at Jeppestown, Marshallstown, Clifton and Doornfontein. These were to be buildings of prestige and nine smaller churches were to be spread across the Reef. (5)

By 1899, there were church buildings on the East Rand at Jeppestown, New Heriot, Germiston, Boksburg and Van Ryn; on the West Rand at Clifton, Roodepoort, Champ d'Or, Krugersdorp and Randfontein and in the South At Caseystown, (Turffontein). Including manses and a few properties taken over and renovated, twenty buildings were provided in less than four years. (6) The staff on the Reef was increased from three in 1894 (7) to twelve in 1899. (8) Included in this number were two Deaconesses, Sister Evelyn Oats and Sister Miriam Scriven. (9) These two Deaconesses succeeded Sister Theresa,

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- (1) Minute Book: Johannesburg Circuit Quarterly Meeting 13 April, 1893.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Appelbe to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 16 December, 1893.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Morris to Hartley, dd. 19 March, 1894.
 - (4) Minute book: Johannesburg Circuit Quarterly Meeting 3 January, 1895.
 - (5) MS. 15,512: Pamphlet: The Johannesburg Wesleyan Methodist Extension Fund.
 - (6) The Methodist Churchman, 27 July, 1899.
 - (7) Minutes of the British Conference, 1894, p. 148.
 - (8) Minutes of the British Conference, 1899, pp. 164 - 165.
 - (9) Notices, January, 1898, p. 10, report from Sister Miriam Scriven.

who was the first Deaconess in Johannesburg. (1)

The Johannesburg Circuit was divided into three Circuits in March, 1898. The Johannesburg Central Circuit consisted of President Street, Fordsburg, Vrededorp, Marshallstown, Ophirton and Caseystown. The Johannesburg East Rand Circuit included all the churches from Jeppestown and Bertrams to the east. The Johannesburg West Rand Circuit consisted of all the churches in the west from Clifton. Each Circuit had three ministers. (2)

JOHANNESBURG EAST RAND CIRCUIT.

The Reverend Walter T. Goodwin had been stationed on the far east Rand in 1895. He started by making a thorough survey of the area (3) and the van Ryn West Gold Mine was selected as the place for a church. Building was started on 16 November, 1895 (4) but the workers fled at the time of the Jameson Raid and Goodwin had to finish the work himself. The building was opened on 11 April, 1896. (5) At Jeppestown, Walter Goodwin's brother, Henry Goodwin, was the minister (6) and here a church was opened on 3 April, 1898. (7)

Boksburg had a population of 600 when, in 1897, the Reverend Ernest Titcomb was appointed there to assist Walter T. Goodwin on the east Rand. Titcomb visited about a dozen mines on a bicycle and was frequently away from home for a week at a time assisting miners who were ill with typhoid. (8)

Walter T. Goodwin moved to Germiston in March, 1898

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- (1) The South African Methodist, 25 May, 1895.
 - (2) Minute book: Transvaal and Swaziland District Meetings, March, 1898.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Goodwin to Hartley, dd. 18 May, 1895.
 - (4) The Methodist Churchman, 14 December, 1895, p. 600.
 - (5) Notices, September, 1896, pp. 134 - 136, Report by Harwill.
 - (6) Minutes of the British Conference, 1897, p. 162.
 - (7) The Methodist Churchman, 11 August, 1898, p. 21.
 - (8) MS. 15,432: Titcomb to Hartley, dd. Boksburg, 2 August, 1897.

and, within three months, gathered thirty members and erected a small church. (1) At Simmer and Jack mine a disused engine-house was adapted for Church services and dedicated on 1 October, 1898. (2)

Denver church was opened on 17 December, 1898 to provide for the workers at Nourse Mine and New Heriot. (3) Bertrams church was opened on 14 June, 1899. (4) Springs was visited by Local Preachers but, when it was found that the Presbyterians had started services there, the Methodists withdrew. (5)

The membership of the Johannesburg East Rand Circuit increased from sixty-five in 1894 to 259 in 1898 and the adherents increased from 300 to 1,500. (6)

JOHANNESBURG WEST RAND CIRCUIT.

Clifton Church in de Korte street, Braamfontein, was the head of the Johannesburg West Rand Circuit. (7) Here a prestige church was built for £6,555 in 1897. The Trust Committee ran into financial difficulty from the start because it had counted on the sale of the President Street stands to provide half the cost of the building and they were not sold. (8) This led to a very strained relationship between the two Churches, which was aggravated by the fact that the minister of the Clifton church, the Reverend M. F. Crewdson, suffered from a lack of tact. For example, when invited to address the Y.M.C.A. in Johannesburg, he took the liberty of preaching against the methods of the Salvation Army. (9) Relationships were so bad that when Crewdson preached at President Street Church, many of the leading members

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Goodwin to Hartley, dd. Germiston, 15 June, 1898.
 - (2) The Methodist Churchman, 27 October, 1898, p. 198.
 - (3) The Methodist Churchman, 5 January, 1899, p. 356.
 - (4) The Book of Remembrance of the Johannesburg East Methodist Circuit.
 - (5) Minute book: Johannesburg East Rand Circuit Local Preachers' Meetings, 2 December, 1898, p. 17; 3 March, 1899, p. 20.
 - (6) MS. 15,432: H. Goodwin to Hartley, dd. 16 January, 1899.
 - (7) Minutes of the British Conference, 1898, p. 172.
 - (8) Minute book: Clifton Trust Committee, 8 September, 1896; 12 August, 1898.
 - (9) The Methodist Churchman, 31 December, 1896.

stayed away. ⁽¹⁾ Hudson was thankful when Clifton was included in the Johannesburg West Rand Circuit. ⁽²⁾

Fordsburg Church replaced Clifton as the head of the Johannesburg West Rand Circuit in 1899 with Appelbe as Superintendent. ⁽³⁾ This church, opened in 1895, ⁽⁴⁾ was almost completely destroyed in 1896 by the explosion of a train-load of dynamite in the marshalling yards nearby. The railway company paid compensation, however, and it was restored. ⁽⁵⁾ Fordsburg was an area notorious for crime. Here Appelbe lost his wife as a result of a street attack to rob her of what possessions she had with her. ⁽⁶⁾

The Reverend J. H. Nield was stationed on the West Rand in 1895. He lived for a year at Langlaagte Church and then moved to Roodepoort to build a church there. He visited Maraisburg, Florida, Hamburg and the Vogelstruis Deep Mine regularly but was unable to do much at Krugersdorp and Randfontein for lack of time. ⁽⁷⁾

To provide for these towns, the Reverend Edwin Bottrill was stationed at Randfontein in 1896 and at Krugersdorp in 1897. ⁽⁸⁾ At first the Krugersdorp Methodists were cautious about accepting him because services had been started before by the Methodists and they were not continued. During this time, some had joined the Baptist Union Church and others had joined the Anglicans. ⁽⁹⁾

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- (1) MS. 15,220: Lowe to Weavind, dd. Johannesburg, 16 November, 1897.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 1 November, 1897.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Crewdson to Perkins, dd. Johannesburg, 3 April, 1899.
 - (4) Pulpit notice book: President Street church, 13 January, 1895.
 - (5) Notices, May, 1896, pp. 68 - 71; Report from George Weavind, dd. 22 February, 1896.
 - (6) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Perkins, dd. Pretoria, 6 May, 1899.
 - (7) MS. 15,432: Nield to Hartley, dd. Roodepoort, 4 May, 1896.
 - (8) Minute book: Johannesburg Circuit Quarterly Meeting, 30 December, 1896.
 - (9) MS. 15,432: Bottrill to Hartley, dd. Krugersdorp, 17 March, 1897.

The work in the Johannesburg West Rand Circuit continued to grow. By 1899 the Circuit employed four ministers and a Deaconess. There were fourteen preaching places and twenty-three Local Preachers. (1)

(1) The Methodist Churchman, 6 July, 1898, p. 355.

CHAPTER 16
WITWATERSRAND MISSION

Owen Watkins never imagined, when he made his plans for the Transvaal and Swaziland District in 1882, that one of the largest fields for missionary work would suddenly appear on the bare veld between Pretoria and Heidelberg. Recognising the importance of the Witwatersrand a year before his journey to Mashonaland, he wrote, "I consider this the most important work at present to be found in South Africa".⁽¹⁾ This point of view was shared by other men in the District.⁽²⁾ Notwithstanding the importance of the Witwatersrand, Owen Watkins was committed to his plans for Mashonaland and this new development was handled by his colleague, George Weavind.

The first ten African members of the Methodist church in Johannesburg used a stable⁽³⁾ for their Class meetings and conducted their services in the open-air.⁽⁴⁾ They approached George Weavind on the occasion of his first visit to Johannesburg in December, 1886 and asked him for a teacher. Unable, at the time, to grant their request, Weavind sent Mangena Mokone to visit them once a month. Briscoe took over this work when he moved into Johannesburg in April, 1887. He was assisted by a layman of the European congregation, a Mr. J. Dednam.⁽⁵⁾

By the time Weavind moved to Johannesburg in March, 1888, a Native Assistant Missionary, John Klassen,

(1) MS. 15,432: Watkins to Hartley, dd. 27 March, 1890.

(2) Notices, December, 1889, pp. 266 - 267: report by George Weavind, undated; MS. 15,432: Morris to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 17 February, 1896; Reports, 1890, p. 99.

(3) General summary: Transvaal and Swaziland District, 1888, p. 162.

(4) MS. 15,263: Weavind to Chairman, dd. 6 May, 1887.

(5) MS. 15,263: Weavind to Briscoe, dd. 6 May, 1887.

and an Evangelist were at work on the Witwatersrand.⁽¹⁾
 A wood and iron church building was opened in the Johannesburg location on 5 August, 1888 and it was used day and night during the week as a school. Many who attended the school also joined the Church and, by the end of August, 1889, there were 100 members on Trial.⁽²⁾

In 1890, the Witwatersrand Mission was separated from the European Circuit and Briscoe was put in charge.⁽³⁾ Five different areas of work had to be catered for.

First, there were those who worked as domestic servants. Many of them lived in rooms on the property of their employers,⁽⁴⁾ and, for them, Briscoe built a large church in Albert street in the European town.⁽⁵⁾ This church was enlarged in 1892⁽⁶⁾ and again in 1896, when it was made to accommodate 1,000 people.⁽⁷⁾ It was the largest church in the District and became the centre of inspiration and leadership for the rest of the Witwatersrand Mission.

The second area of work was on farms in the district as far afield as the Vaal and half-way to Pretoria.⁽⁸⁾ The greatest advantage of this work was that families lived together and could be ministered to as a unit.⁽⁹⁾ Some farmers objected to the activity of the Church,⁽¹⁰⁾ but the majority were sympathetic. The Landdrost of Krugersdorp, for example, invited the Church to start

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- (1) Minutes of the British Conference, 1888, p. 151.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 9 August, 1889.
 - (3) Minute book: Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, November, 1889, p. 218.
 - (4) General summary: Transvaal and Swaziland District, 1890, pp. 225 - 227.
 - (5) G. Mears, Witwatersrand Methodist Mission, p. 6.
 - (6) MS. 15,432: Briscoe to Weavind, dd. Johannesburg, 23 December, 1892.
 - (7) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 17 August, 1895; Lowe to Hartley, dd. 19 August, 1895; Lowe to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 17 October, 1896.
 - (8) The South African Methodist, 10 March, 1894.
 - (9) Reports, 1891, p. 108.
 - (10) MS. 15,220: Lowe to Weavind, dd. 26 February, 1896.

on his farm in 1898, at a time when Boer feeling against the British ran high. ⁽¹⁾ Churches were also built on farms owned by Boers at Kaalfontein and Meyerton. ⁽²⁾

The mine compounds formed the third area of work. Here thousands of Africans, recruited from all over Africa, were housed. In these compounds, a unique method of evangelism was adopted. Two Local Preachers and a band of young Christian men went into the compound as a team. They made their entrance singing, shouting and moving to the rhythm of their song and went round the compound inviting the men to their service. Attracted by this animated group, the miners followed and stayed to hear what they had to say. The service, held in the centre of the compound, was informal; the prayers were extempore and the sermon was interrupted by interjections and bursts of song when the preacher made a telling point. A number of these little groups or Mission Bands set out early every Sunday morning and each visited a number of mine compounds. In this way, they reached a very large number of people. It was estimated, in 1896, that they preached to about 3,500 people every Sunday. ⁽³⁾ There were, at the time, fifty Local Preachers on the Witwatersrand Mission available for this work. ⁽⁴⁾

Drunkenness was the cause of a lot of trouble in the mine compounds, especially on Sundays. Shebeens, where potent intoxicating mixtures were sold, were set up in tin shanties near the compounds, and they were supplied with liquor by unscrupulous merchants. Petitioned by the Methodists ⁽⁵⁾ and others, the Volksraad prohibited the sale of liquor to Africans as from the beginning of 1897 ⁽⁶⁾ and this brought about a slight

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Lowe to Hartley, dd. 17 February, 1898.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Lowe to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 6 December, 1897.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Lowe to Hartley, dd. 25 April, 1896.
 - (4) The South African Methodist, 10 March, 1894.
 - (5) MS. 15,432: Lowe to Hartley, dd. 25 April, 1896; Minute book: Transvaal and Swaziland District, Meeting, 1888, p. 210.
 - (6) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 8 August, 1896; The Methodist Churchman, 3 September, 1896.

improvement.

The fourth area of work was in the African townships in Johannesburg and along the Reef. In this work a building was a great advantage because, with a building, it was not difficult to start a school and gather a congregation. ⁽¹⁾ In 1892, Briscoe produced a scheme to erect buildings at Krugersdorp, Germiston, Langlaagte and Vereenging. An unexpected expense had to be met in 1894, when the Johannesburg African township was moved and the Church had to erect a new building without compensation. ⁽²⁾ George Lowe, who succeeded Briscoe, produced a scheme in 1896, for the erection of four more churches at Jeppestown, Roodepoort, Boksburg and George Goch, and the enlargement of the churches at Albert street and Germiston. Another setback was experienced when the church at Langlaagte was completely destroyed by the explosion of dynamite in the nearby marshalling yards, but the railway company paid compensation. ⁽³⁾ The Boksburg congregation, on their own initiative, but with the knowledge and consent of the Superintendent minister, purchased and renovated a wood-and-iron building. ⁽⁴⁾

Native Assistant Missionaries were stationed at the churches in the main African townships. The first was appointed in 1888 and by 1899 there were four and eight Evangelists. Some of the ministers, who served the Witwatersrand Mission before the end of the century, were John Klassen, Henry Ntsiko, John A. Matlapeng, Stephen Gqosho, E. D. Kumalo, Michael Bowen and Malakia Ruoele. ⁽⁵⁾

Briscoe and Lowe both found the work of the Witwatersrand Mission too vast to superintend properly.

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Lowe to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 21 August, 1896.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Briscoe to Weavind, dd. 14 April, 1892; Briscoe to Weavind, dd. Johannesburg, 26 September, 1892.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Lowe to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 7 July, 1896.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Lowe to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 8 December, 1897.
 - (5) Minutes of the British Conference, 1888 - 1899.

Briscoe suggested that the Mission be divided into five Circuits ⁽¹⁾ and Lowe later suggested that the east Rand be separated and placed under the superintendency of the Reverend Walter T. Goodwin. ⁽²⁾ Nothing came of any of these suggestions, but, in 1898, the Reverend William Eacott was appointed to assist the Superintendent of the Mission. ⁽³⁾

The fifth area of work was among the Coloured people. A separate church for them was included in Briscoe's schemes in 1892, ⁽⁴⁾ but it was never built. In 1897 they were placed in the care of the European Circuit, but nothing was done for them until, in 1898, the Reverend George Lowe of the Witwatersrand Mission provided them with separate facilities for worship in a rented building. They were served by an Evangelist trained at Healdtown. ⁽⁵⁾ Once this work was properly organised it spread along the Reef, like the Witwatersrand Mission, and became known as the Rand Coloured Mission.

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 20 October, 1894.
 - (2) MS. 15,220: Lowe to Goodwin, dd. 13 October, 1897.
 - (3) Minutes of the British Conference, 1898, p. 172.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Briscoe to Weavind, dd. 14 April, 1892.
 - (5) Notices, September, 1898, p. 138: report from George Lowe; MS. 15,220, Lowe to Pescod, dd. 11 November, 1896; Lowe to Edwards, dd. Johannesburg, 16 February, 1898; Lowe to Weavind, dd. 16 April, 1899.

CHAPTER 17
ETHIOPIAN

Racial discrimination, not doctrine was the reason given by Mangena Mokone for his resignation from the Methodist Church in 1892.

Mangena Mokone was born in Sekhukhuneland ⁽¹⁾ in about 1851. His father, a local Chief, was killed at war. Before he was twenty years of age, Mokone went to Natal, where he found employment as a domestic servant in a Christian home. Fascinated by the books he saw there, he wanted to learn how to read and went to a night school in the Aliwal street Methodist Church. Here he was encouraged to attend Sunday services and the Class meetings and was converted. ⁽²⁾

Mokone became a teacher in the Methodist school in Pietermaritzburg and was promoted, within a relatively short space of time, to the position of principal. Here Owen Watkins met him and, impressed with his suitability for the ministry, invited him to the Transvaal and Swaziland District.

Mokone started his probation for the ministry in 1880 and was ordained a Native Assistant Missionary in 1885. ⁽³⁾ He was stationed at Pretoria, where he did splendid work. In March, 1888, he assisted at the Kilnerton institution and, in November of the same year, was transferred to Makapanstad. ⁽⁴⁾ At about this time

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- (1) Notices, March, 1884, p. 63: report from F. T. Nicholson.
(2) Notices, November, 1885, p. 280: letter from G. Weavind, dd. 26 August, 1885.
(3) Minute book: Transvaal and Swaziland District Meetings, 1880, p. 2; 1881, p. 4; 1885, p. 99.
(4) Ibid., March, 1888, p. 155; November, 1888, p. 183.

his wife died of T.B. They had only been married for five years. ⁽¹⁾ In 1891, he was back at Kilnerton where he resigned in November, 1892. He said that he had made up his mind to resign at the beginning of the year, but he did not want to upset Owen Watkins during his illness. ⁽²⁾

The main reason Mokone gave for his resignation was that African ministers were not permitted to attend the District Meeting. ⁽³⁾ The decision to exclude them was taken in 1885. Instead of having them at the meetings, the Chairman would visit them on their stations once a year and their Superintendents would submit reports on their work. ⁽⁴⁾ In 1888, however, a separate District Meeting was planned for the African staff and the first separate meeting was held in November, 1889. ⁽⁵⁾ Mokone objected to this because, he said, the African men had no real voice in the affairs of the District. ⁽³⁾

Other items of discrimination, to which Mokone drew attention, were that African men in the ministry had to work under the direction of European probationer ministers much younger than themselves; that they did not receive the Minutes of the British Conference or the Annual Reports; that they had no pension scheme and no claim on the children's allowances; that their stipend of £60 per annum compared unfavourably with the £160 received by European probationers and the £305 received by European ordained ministers. The very name "Native Assistant Missionaries", he felt, gave them an inferior status. ⁽³⁾

The District Meeting replied to Mokone's objections. Separate meetings, it claimed, were a matter of expediency rather than discrimination. ⁽⁶⁾ The South

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- (1) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Potchefstroom, 15 January, 1885.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 26 November, 1892.
 - (3) Minute book: Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, November, 1892.
 - (4) Ibid., 1885.
 - (5) Ibid., November, 1889.
 - (6) General Summary, Transvaal and Swaziland District, 1892.

African Conference had, it pointed out, discussed the matter at length in 1887 without reaching unanimity.⁽¹⁾ Nevertheless, the District Meeting appointed a sub-committee to consider the matter and a report was received in 1894, but it was decided to continue with separate meetings.⁽²⁾ With regard to the support of the ministry, the District Meeting pointed out that, although the African men had no claim on the special funds, each case of genuine need would be considered on its merits.⁽³⁾ Thus, Mokone was able to ask for assistance for his two little daughters after the death of his wife.⁽⁴⁾

There had been a previous split from the Methodist Church in 1884, which may have had some connection with Mokone's resignation. In that year, Nehemiah Tile left the Methodist Church in Tembuland, gained the support of the Chief, and established a tribal Church. When he recommended a Gaika as his successor, in the person of Jonas Goduka, the Tembu were not impressed. Nehemiah Tile died in 1892 and, in the same year, Mokone resigned and accepted many of the dissatisfied Tembus into his Church.

Mangena Mokone used the name Ethiopian (from Psalm 68 v. 31 and Acts 8 v. 27) for his Church to distinguish it from a purely tribal Church like that of Nehemiah Tile. He envisaged it as an African National Church.

Two other ex-Methodists, J. Tantsi and James Dwane, later joined the Ethiopian Church. At the Conference of the Ethiopian Church in 1896, it was decided that three delegates, including Dwane and Mokone should go to America to investigate the possibility of a union with the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Each delegate, however, had to find his own fare for the journey and,

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- (1) The South African Methodist, 4 May, 1887.
 - (2) Minute book: Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, 1894.
 - (3) Miscellaneous regulations: being an appendix to the General Instructions of the Wesleyan Missionary Committee, 1832.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Mokone to Hartley, dd. Kilnerton, 5 August, 1890.

in the end, only Dwane went.

James Dwane returned as the General Superintendent of the newly-formed African Methodist Episcopal Church for South Africa. Many felt that Mokone, who, after all, was the founder of the Ethiopian Church, should have been given this honour. Consequently, the Church split in 1899. Dwane later joined the Anglican Church as the leader of a newly-formed Order of Ethiopia and Mangena Mokone became the head of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in South Africa. (1)

The effect of the Ethiopian movement on the Methodist church in the Transvaal, so far as its membership was concerned, was noticeable but not disastrous. At Kilnerton, two students resigned and two were expelled. (2) In the Waterberg Mission, the Societies were invited to attend a meeting at which Mokone tried to persuade them to join him. Three members left immediately (3) and a number followed later. (4) At Vereenging, a prominent lay leader in the Church was almost persuaded to leave but wise action and good leadership saved the situation. (5)

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- (1) E. Roux, *Time Longer than Rope*, pp. 77 - 82.
Bengt G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, pp. 39 - 40, 56; Peter Hinchliff, *The Church in South Africa*, pp. 91 - 92; MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 29 August, 1896.
 - (2) General Summary, Transvaal and Swaziland District, 1893.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 6 May, 1893.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Watson to Hartley, dd. Waterberg, 26 July, 1893.
 - (5) MS. 15,220: Lowe to Weavind, dd. Johannesburg, 3 November, 1897.

CHAPTER 18
POLITICS

The official position of the W.M.M.S. with regard to the participation of its missionaries in politics was clearly stated in the standing rules of conduct:

"We cannot omit, without neglecting our duty, to warn you against meddling with political parties ... It is, however, a part of your duty as ministers," the rules went on to state, "to enforce by precept and example a cheerful obedience to lawful authority."

A copy of these rules, signed by the Secretaries of the W.M.M.S. was given to every missionary and the Chairman of each District had to enquire annually at the District Meeting whether they had been observed.

It should be noted that these rules were first issued on 18 December, 1817 ⁽¹⁾ and were, therefore, not written with the South African situation in mind. There were only two missionaries in the country at the time and they had not become involved in politics in such a way as to necessitate the careful drafting of rules of conduct. ⁽²⁾ These rules arose out of the experience of the W.M.M.S. in the West Indies, where many of the Church members were slaves. ⁽³⁾ Here even more specific instructions were given to the missionaries: "... your only business is to promote the moral and religious improvement of the slaves, to whom you may have access, without in the least degree, in public or private, interfering with their civil condition." ⁽¹⁾

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- (1) MS. 15,392: manuscript copy of instruction to missionaries, London, 18 December, 1817.
(2) Minutes of the British Conference, 1817, p. 318.
(3) Reports, 1816, pp. 24 - 27.

The missionaries in the Transvaal were, on the whole, careful to observe the rules. Owen Watkins, for example, did not enter the Transvaal while peace negotiations, following the First South African War, were in progress; (1) he purposely avoided visiting Mafeking during the political disturbance there in 1882 (2) and he arranged a personal interview with Paul Kruger to clear the air when a report in the Volksstem construed certain actions on the part of George Weaving as interference in the case of Chief Marishane. (3) There were, however, a number of notable exceptions to the observance of the rules.

GEORGE BLENCOWE.

The W.M.M.S. had asked George Blencowe to withdraw from the Trial Mission in 1877 because of his outspoken criticism of the Boers in the Transvaal.

After his return to England, Blencowe continued to take part in Transvaal politics. He wrote a lengthy letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on 24 May, 1880 complaining about the hut tax imposed on Africans in the northern Transvaal and urging that they should be given independence like the Swazi. (4)

A copy of Blencowe's letter was sent to the Governor of Natal for investigation. He consulted the Administrator of the Transvaal and the Superintendent of the Berlin Missionary Society and replied that Blencowe "had not the special knowledge and wide experience necessary for the kind of statements he had made." (5) Nevertheless, as a result of Blencowe's letter the Secretary for the Colonies recognised the need for "a proper survey of the Transvaal as a necessary preliminary to a satisfactory dealing with the Native Question". (6)

(1) MS. 15,247: Watkins' journal of a visit to Swaziland, 26 July - 3 September, 1881.

(2) MS. 15,243: Watkins to Kilner, dd. Pretoria, 28 April, 1882.

(3) MS. 15,243: Watkins to Kilner, dd. Pretoria, 6 November, 1882.

(4) MS. 15,473: Blencowe to Secretary of State for the Colonies, dd. 24 May, 1880; C-2740, p. 5.

(5) C-2740, p. 88: Sir G. Pomeroy Colley to the Earl of Kimberley, dd. Pietermaritzburg, 8 October, 1880.

(6) Ibid., p. 98: Earl of Kimberley to Colley, dd. Downing Street, 6 December, 1880.

ROOIGROND.

The Reverend C. S. Franklin, a young minister stationed at Mafeking, became involved in the war of June - August, 1884, ⁽¹⁾ between the Rolong and the Boers over the ownership of a small but valuable piece of land under irrigation called Rooigrond. ⁽²⁾

The Rolong Chief, Montshiwa had made a treaty with the British and Franklin had signed the document as a witness. ⁽³⁾ When hostilities commenced, Montshiwa asked Franklin, in the absence of the Assistant Commissioner, to send dispatches to the Deputy Commissioner of Bechuana-land, the Reverend John MacKenzie. ⁽⁴⁾ Franklin wrote three dispatches. In the first, dated 13 June, 1884, he reported that shooting had started while the Boers were reaping the lands. ⁽⁵⁾ In the second, dated 14 June, 1884, he reported an interview, which had taken place between himself and Gey van Pittius. "I attempted to speak but Gey shut me up as 'sommer a sendeling.'" Franklin asked for "40 to 50 police" to protect Montshiwa so that he could reap the lands. ⁽⁶⁾ In the third, dated 20 June, 1884, he reported that the Boers had attacked Montshiwa while he was reaping. He requested a supply of ammunition for the Rolong and repeated the request for police protection. ⁽⁷⁾

Franklin was led to believe that his dispatches had fallen into the hands of the Boers and, knowing how adversely this might affect the Church in the Transvaal, he immediately resigned from the W.M.M.S. ⁽⁸⁾ "This", he wrote to Weavind "Will place you in a position, if

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- (1) C-4194, p. 51, Secretary and Acting British Resident to Imperial Secretary, dd. Pretoria, 24 June, 1884, telegraphic; C-4213, p. 93. Agreement of peace, etc.
 - (2) C-4194, p. 37, The Reverend John Mackenzie, Deputy Commissioner to the Right Honourable Sir Hercules Robinson, High Commissioner, dd. Mafeking, 30 May, 1884
 - (3) C-4194, p. 44, enclosure "E", dd. Mafeking, 22 May, 1884
 - (4) MS. 15,143, Franklin to Kilner, dd. Vryburg, 28 July, 1884.
 - (5) MS. 15,143, Franklin to Mackenzie, Deputy Commissioner, dd. Mafeking, 13 June, 1884.
 - (6) MS. 15,143, Franklin to Mackenzie, Deputy Commissioner, dd. Mafeking, 14 June, 1884.
 - (7) MS. 15,143, Franklin to Mackenzie, Deputy Commissioner, dd. Mafeking, 20 June, 1884.
 - (8) MS. 15,143, Franklin to Weavind, dd. Taungs, 25 June, 1884.

you think fit, to say and to publish, that I have no connection with the Missionary Society."

Meanwhile, news of Franklin's activities had reached Potchefstroom and an account of the meeting with Gey van Pittius appeared in the local newspaper. ⁽¹⁾ Weavind, upset by this unpleasant publicity, accepted Franklin's resignation and was relieved to be in a position to say that he no longer had any connection with the W.M.M.S. ⁽²⁾

Watkins, who was away at the time, made a thorough investigation of the whole incident on his return and concluded: "Franklin allowed himself to become a political missionary in the fullest sense of the term." It was a hard blow to Watkins because he had been instrumental in Franklin's candidature for the ministry. ⁽³⁾ Franklin had to leave the District but he was given an appointment by the South African Conference at Somerset East. ⁽⁴⁾

On the merits of the case, Franklin wrote, "I have done no wrong and what I did was simply for the preservation and protection of the lives of the people of Mafeking". ⁽⁵⁾ Weavind, in spite of his general sympathy and friendship with the Boers, regarded the Boer attack on Montshiwa as completely unjust. He told Kilner that, if he had been in Franklin's position, he would have "done the same thing". ⁽⁶⁾ Weavind's statement as to the injustice of the war is supported by the fact that the Transvaal Government issued a proclamation forbidding its burghers to take part in it. ⁽⁷⁾

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- (1) De Potchefstroomer, 18 June, 1884.
 - (2) MS. 15,143: Weavind to Franklin, dd. Potchefstroom, 16 July, 1884; 27 August, 1884; 8 October, 1884.
 - (3) MS. 15,262: Watkins to Kilner, dd. Potchefstroom, 31 December, 1884.
 - (4) Minutes of the South African Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, 1885, p. 124.
 - (5) MS. 15,143: Franklin to Weavind, dd. Taungs, 25 June, 1884.
 - (6) MS. 15,262: Weavind to Kilner, dd. Potchefstroom, 30 July, 1884.
 - (7) C-4194, p. 34. Sir Hercules Robinson to the Earl of Derby, dd. 26 June, 1884.

Rooigrond was still a bone of contention a year later. The Rolong claimed it. The Boers claimed it. And the British did not know what to do about it. In desperation, Sir Charles Warren offered it to Watkins for the use of the Church but he declined the offer. Mackenzie tried to persuade him to change his mind but he failed in the attempt. It then appeared that Warren wished to have the whole incident forgotten and Watkins obliged by having his letter, in which he had refused the offer, returned to him. Watkins had made it clear in that letter that the offer had come from Sir Charles Warren. Warren had hoped to use the Church to solve his problem but Watkins refused to allow the Church to become involved.⁽¹⁾

MONTSHIWA'S COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE BRITISH.

Watkins did, however, allow the Church to become thoroughly involved in Montshiwa's complaints against the British in 1886. Montshiwa complained that the European town of Mafeking was too close to his "stadt"; that animals belonging to Europeans got into his lands; that liquor was being sold to his people; that members of the Bechuanaland Border Police raped Rolong women and that farms were being given to the Freebooters.⁽²⁾ Watkins laid these complaints before the Administrator, Sir Sidney Shippard; he attended a meeting between the Rolongs and the Administrator to discuss them and he reported them to the Missionary Committee.⁽³⁾

The Missionary Committee sent a copy of Watkin's report to the Secretary of State for the Colonies⁽⁴⁾ and an investigation was called for.⁽⁵⁾ The Administrator's report, following on this investigation, denied all the charges. It was supported by the Anglican minister at

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- (1) MS. 15,244: Watkins to Kilner, dd. Potchefstroom, 30 June, 1885; MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Mafeking, 2 June, 1885; 3 June, 1885.
 - (2) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Mafeking, 5 May, 1886.
 - (3) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Zeerust, 19 May, 1886.
 - (4) Notices, September, 1886, p. 218: minutes of General Committee, 16 July, 1886.
 - (5) C-4890, p. 22, Edward Stanhope to Sir Hercules Robinson, dd. Downing St., 11 August, 1886.

Mafeking ⁽¹⁾ and by Captain J. Levenson, R. E., of a land commission, which had recently completed work in this area. ⁽²⁾ A lengthy but inconclusive correspondence followed between the W.M.M.S. and the Colonial Office. ⁽³⁾

Meanwhile a newspaper report on the charges reached Mafeking and the European townspeople were up in arms. A Public Indignation Meeting was held at which the charges were denied. ⁽⁴⁾ The local Methodist minister tried to present evidence in support of the charges but he was silenced on a technical point. ⁽⁵⁾

The affair of Montshiwa's complaints against the English reveals two facts :

- (i) The W.M.M.S., as a body, was prepared to take part in politics to the full although it warned its individual missionaries against such action.
- (ii) Watkins was prepared to attack the British Government but not the Boer Government. He assisted Montshiwa against the British but refused to assist Marishane against the Boers. ⁽⁶⁾ He acted in Bechuanaland

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- (1) C-4956, pp. 68 -- 74, 81, Sir Hercules Robinson, Governor and High Commissioner, to the Right Honourable Edward Stanhope, dd. Cape Town, 13 October, 1886.
 - (2) C-4890, p. 26. Captain J. Levenson, R. E. to Colonial Office, dd. South Kensington, 18 August, 1886.
 - (3) C-5070, pp. 3 - 13, Wesleyan Missionary Society to Colonial Office, dd. London, 9 February, 1887; C-5070, p. 24, Colonial Office to Wesleyan Missionary Society, dd. Downing Street, 3 March, 1887; C-5070, p. 40, Wesleyan Missionary Society to Colonial Office, dd. London, 12 March, 1887; C-5070, p. 62, Colonial Office to Wesleyan Missionary Society, dd. Downing St., 31 March, 1887; C-5070, p. 84, Wesleyan Missionary Society to Colonial Office, dd. London, 16 May, 1887; C-5237, p. 28, Wesleyan Missionary Society to Colonial Office, dd. Bishopsgate, 11 July, 1887.
 - (4) Diamond Fields Advertiser, 25 January, 1887.
 - (5) C-5070, p. 24, Resident Magistrate to Appelbe, dd. Mafeking, 17 January, 1887.
 - (6) MS. 15,240: Watkins to his wife, dd. Marishane's tribe, 14 September, 1885.

but not in the Transvaal. Weavind believed that all the Methodist missionaries would have been "turned out of the country" if Watkins had been dealing with the Boer Government. (1) In England, however, the whole force of the Evangelical movement was behind the missionaries in their championing of the African people. (2) Weavind himself supported Montshiwa, later, in a petition against the annexation of Bechuana-land to the Cape. (3)

MALABOCH AND THE SECOND ANGLO-BOER WAR.

In 1894, the Transvaal Government waged war against Malaboch in the Blouberg mountains of the northern Transvaal. (4) Uitlanders, who were not citizens of the Transvaal Republic, were commandeered for active service. A public meeting was held in the Saint Andrews Presbyterian Church hall in Pretoria and an "Uitlander Defence Committee" was formed to provide protection and financial support to those who refused to obey the order. Uitlander opposition to the Transvaal Government was united. (5) The Reverend W. J. Underwood and the Reverend C. F. Woofenden, Methodist ministers, attended this meeting and gave it their full support. (6)

George Weavind, on the other hand, supported the Transvaal Government. He, personally, tried to persuade Malaboch to submit but was unsuccessful. (7) He supplied

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- (1) MS. 15,263: Weavind to the President of the S.A. Conference, dd. 1 April, 1887.
 - (2) W. M. McMillan, *The Cape Colour Question*, p. 49.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: The Under-Secretary of State to the Wesleyan Missionary Society, dd. Downing Street, 21 June, 1895; Appelbe to Wesleyan Missionary Society, dd. Mafeking, 7 May, 1895; Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 18 May, 1895.
 - (4) Colin Rae, *Malaboch*.
 - (5) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 23 June, 1894.
 - (6) MS. 15,432: Underwood to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 23 June, 1894; *The Standard and Diggers News*, 23 May, 1894.
 - (7) *The South African Methodist*, 28 July, 1894.

ten African men from Kilnerton in response to the commandeering order. He provided them with a wagon and food-supplies and held a farewell service for them in the church at Kilnerton. ⁽¹⁾ He did this in spite of the fact that there were four Evangelists and forty-nine members of the Methodist Church in Malaboch's tribe. Weavind, unlike his colleagues, who were Uitlanders, was a burgher (citizen) of the Transvaal Republic. ⁽²⁾

After the Malaboch war, many of the Uitlanders felt that the methods used to subdue the Chief had been unjust and they objected to the "apprenticeship" of the captives as farm labourers. To give expression to these feelings, a public meeting was held in the President Street Methodist Church, Johannesburg, on a Sunday evening after the service. The Reverend R. F. Appelbe was in the chair and he was supported by ministers of other English-speaking Churches. The following resolution was adopted unanimously:

"The Meeting, representing several Churches in Johannesburg, condemns the recent war with Malaboch as unjustifiable, deploras the unnecessary cruelties practised in subduing him and urges upon the government the duty of at once liberating all the women and children of Malaboch's tribe now held as slaves ... " ⁽³⁾

A copy of the resolution was sent to the Transvaal Government and, at the same time, copies were sent to the British Consul in Pretoria, the Aborigines Protection Society and all Missionary Societies in England. ⁽⁴⁾

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 26 May, 1894.
 - (2) MS. 15,432; Underwood to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 23 June, 1894.
 - (3) The Star, 25 August, 1894.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Appelbe to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 24 August, 1894.

Such a meeting could not have been held in a Methodist church on a Sunday evening unless there was very strong feeling among the Methodist people against the action of the Transvaal Government. ⁽¹⁾ Even Weavind, who supported the Government, was in sympathy with the objection to the methods used to subdue Malaboch and the "apprenticeship" of the captives. ⁽²⁾ But he objected strongly to the appeal made by the meeting to forces outside the Republic.

This appeal, Weavind felt, only served to increase anti-Boer feeling in England: "... public feeling in England has been influenced by every conceivable device in which my brethren have taken part." ⁽³⁾ Weavind felt that Uitlander grievances were being accepted quite uncritically in England. ⁽⁴⁾

Relationships between the Uitlanders and the Transvaal Government deteriorated rapidly. The Jameson Raid, at the beginning of 1896, shattered Weavind's confidence in British rule and filled him with bitter shame and humiliation in the presence of his Boer friends and relations. ⁽⁵⁾ Appelbe, on the other hand was in sympathy with the objects of the Reform Committee in Johannesburg and wrote to Weavind before the Raid: "I hope the revolution will be bloodless". ⁽⁶⁾

The majority of the English-speaking Christians in Natal after the outbreak of the second Anglo-Boer war, were in sympathy with the British cause. The Durban Council of Churches, representing thirty congregations, issued a statement which completely justified the British cause of "freedom, .i. just and honest government and the honour of the British name". ⁽⁷⁾

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- (1) The South African Methodist, 25 August, 1894.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. 25 August, 1894.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 10 September, 1899.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 16 February, 1896.
 - (5) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 11 January, 1896; 18 January, 1896.
 - (6) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 15 March, 1896.
 - (7) The Methodist Churchman, 14 December, 1899, p. 308.

CHAPTER 19

WAR

Within a few weeks of a state of war being declared between the Transvaal and Great Britain on 11 October, 1899 ⁽¹⁾ only seven out of twenty-nine European missionaries remained in the Transvaal. ⁽²⁾ Each man was allowed to decide for himself whether to go or stay. ⁽³⁾ Those who remained had to take an oath of loyalty to the Transvaal Government and were issued with permits. ⁽⁴⁾ Those who left did so either because they were refused permits, ⁽⁵⁾ or because they would not take the oath, ⁽⁶⁾ or because their congregations were so depleted that it was not worth staying. Three-quarters of the European population on the Reef left in crowded trains for Natal and the Cape Province ⁽⁷⁾ and parties of up to 8,000 African miners set out on foot for their homes. ⁽⁸⁾ The effect of the war was to completely disrupt the normal life of the Church.

Only a few of the missionaries who left the Transvaal found employment as Chaplains to the British forces, or in supply-work for the South African Conference. ⁽⁹⁾ The majority were supported, during the war, out of the funds of the W.M.M.S. They did useful work, however, in caring for the large number of refugees from the Transvaal, particularly at Durban. ⁽¹⁰⁾

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- (1) Staats Courant, 11 October, 1899.
(2) Minute book: Transvaal and Swaziland District Meeting, January, 1899; February, 1900; February, 1901.
(3) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 5 June, 1899.
(4) J. C. Roos, Johannesburg en die Tweede Vryheids Oorlog, p. 8.
(5) MS. 15,432: Carter to Hartley, dd. Durban, 27 October, 1899; letter signed by Crewdson, Bottrill, Eacott, Davies, dd. Cape Town, 31 October, 1899.
(6) MS. 15,432: Lowe to Hartley, dd. Durban, 16 Oct. 1899.
(7) J. C. Roos, op. cit., pp. 1 - 7.
(8) Ibid, p. 31.
(9) MS. 15,432: Lowe to Hartley, dd. Durban, 24 Nov. 1899.
(10) MS. 15,432: Rogers to Hartley, dd. Durban, 7 October, 1899, Notices, January, 1900, p. 21: report, undated.

The Reverend George Lowe was elected Chairman of an un-denominational Relief Committee in Durban. ⁽¹⁾ They met trains, kept a register of names and addresses, forwarded mail, issued clothing and assisted in many other ways. ⁽²⁾ Lowe was also in charge of all the Methodist Missionaries outside of the Transvaal. He kept in touch with them, paid their stipends and sent reports to the Missionary Committee. ⁽³⁾

In the Transvaal, only a few churches were kept open. The Johannesburg churches, President Street, Fordsburg, Vrededorp, and two for the African people were served by the Reverend J. S. Morris and a team of Local Preachers. ⁽⁴⁾ The congregations were very small. President Street, which seated 600, had only forty to fifty people to a service. ⁽⁵⁾ Morris started a school for the children of the few English-speaking people who remained. Seventy-two children attended ⁽⁶⁾ and a full-time teacher was appointed. ⁽⁷⁾

The Pretoria church was kept open by the Reverend H. W. Goodwin. He was appointed chaplain to the British prisoners of war and, for doing this work, he later received an official letter of thanks from Lord Roberts. ⁽⁸⁾

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- (1) The Methodist Churchman, 30 November, 1899, p. 276.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Lowe to Hartley, dd. Durban, 10 November, 1899; Carter to Hartley, dd. Durban, 8 March, 1900.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Lowe to Hartley, dd. Durban, 20 October, 1899.
 - (4) The Methodist Churchman, 28 December, 1899, p. 340; Notices, January, 1900, p. 8: letter from J. S. Morris, dd. Johannesburg, 23 November, 1899.
 - (5) MS. 15,432: Morris to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 2 October, 1899.
 - (6) MS. 15,432: Morris to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 6 January, 1900.
 - (7) MS. 15,432: Morris to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 24 February, 1900.
 - (8) MS. 15,432: Goodwin to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 16 July, 1900.

The Reverend George Weavind administered the District from Pretoria. He cared for the African Churches, protected Church property and maintained what contact was possible with the Missionary Committee in London. He visited Barberton, Klerksdorp and Pietersburg on Church business and went to Johannesburg several times during the war. ⁽¹⁾

Because of his close association with some of the young men in the Boer Commandos, Weavind was given permission to visit them at Colenso and Ladysmith. ⁽²⁾ On the eve of the Boer assault on Ladysmith on 5 January, 1900, Weavind took part in a service behind the Boer lines using the English language. The next day he experienced the bitter sorrow of seeing the dead bodies of some of the young men, whom he had baptised and taught in his Sunday School, brought back from the scene of battle. ⁽³⁾ Weavind's own sons, Cornelis Robert, George Henry and Thomas Edmund served the Boer cause in non-combatant work. Two were in the ambulance corps and one was with communications. ⁽⁴⁾

There was no doubt on which side Weavind's sympathies lay and this placed him in a difficult position as head of a Church whose members were predominantly pro-British. If he associated too freely with the English, his loyalty to the Boer cause became suspect and, if he disregarded the English, he was charged with neglecting his work.

An anonymous letter appeared in the Methodist Recorder, a British Conference publication, charging Weavind with neglect of his duties. ⁽⁵⁾ The Reverend George Lowe regarded this letter as an attempt to stab the Chairman in the back. He knew the measure of the person from whom this kind of thing emanated. "If a man does not go

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 1 November, 1900; 7 November, 1900.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 19 October, 1899.
 - (3) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 7 November, 1900.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 2 January, 1900.
 - (5) MS. 15,432: Lowe to Hartley, dd. Durban, 26 October, 1900.

the full length with them in their hatred of all that is Boer, they think no treatment too mean for him." (1)

Weavind wrote to the Committee saying that he had done his work to the best of his ability, and was entitled to his own political persuasions, just as the other men were. (2) Watkin's son, the Reverend Owen Spencer Watkins, was after all, chaplain to the British forces in Ladysmith during the siege. (3) Feeling, nevertheless, ran so high among some of the laymen in Pretoria that there was talk among them of having Weavind put out of his job. The minister of the Pretoria church, the Reverend Henry Goodwin, sympathised with their point of view but not with the talk of getting rid of the Chairman. (4)

The war dragged on much longer than anyone had expected. Not until March, 1901 were the ministers in Natal and the Cape allowed to return. They came in small numbers at first (5) and many of them found that their churches and houses had been broken into, looted and damaged. (6) The damage in the Mafeking Circuit alone was estimated at about £900. (7)

One of the first to return was the Reverend George Lowe. He was appointed Acting Chairman and Weavind took his furlough in England. (8) The immediate task which lay before the Transvaal and Swaziland District after the war was one of reconstruction.

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- (1) MS. 15,432: Lowe to Hartley, dd. Durban, 26 October, 1900.
 - (2) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 1 November, 1900; 7 November, 1900.
 - (3) MS. 15,307: Report from Owen S. Watkins, Chaplain to the Wesleyan Troops, 28 January, 1900-4, March, 1900.
 - (4) MS. 15,432: Goodwin to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 17 October, 1900.
 - (5) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Cape Town, 12 March, 1901; Lowe to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 22 March, 1901.
 - (6) MS. 15,432: Lowe to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 15 March, 1901.
 - (7) MS. 15,432: Briscoe to Secretary, dd. Mafeking, 13 July, 1900.
 - (8) MS. 15,432: Weavind to Hartley, dd. Pretoria, 8 February, 1901; Lowe to Hartley, dd. Johannesburg, 22 February, 1901; 29 March, 1901.

CONCLUSION

Pioneer missionary work was undertaken by the W.M.M.S. in the territory between the Vaal and the Zambesi during the nineteenth century.

Makwassie was the first Christian mission among the Seleka-Rolong and it is of special interest because of the contact with the Difaqane, the gathering of large numbers of people at the missions at Platberg and Boetsap, the subsequent migration of about 12,000 people to the Caledon and the return of some of them to the Molopo. A more detailed study of the relationships between the Methodist Church and the Rolong should be undertaken as a separate subject of research.

Threlfall's mission to Delagoa Bay, although short-lived, provided useful information for the shaping of missionary policy in Africa. At that time, it was thought that Africa might be penetrated from the east coast, but, when Threlfall had to abandon his mission because of malaria, it became clear that the route would have to be over-land from the south. Threlfall's courage and his subsequent martyrdom provided a lesson in missionary vocation.

Allison's mission to Swaziland was dependent on the goodwill of the Swazi Chief. First, Chief Raputse urged the missionaries to come to his territory and then, when they sheltered the fugitive Malambule, Chief Mswazi ordered them out of the territory. Many of Allison's converts followed him to Natal and one of them later re-opened the mission to the Swazi. Although this was almost forty years later, the Swazi were still suspicious of the Methodists and would not give them land for a mission. These fears, however, were allayed by the presence of the mission at Mahamba on the border and, before the turn of the century, the mission moved into Swazi territory. Daniel Msimang so far won the confidence of the Swazi that

he was invited to preach at the Royal Kraal of the Queen Mother.

The African Pioneers are a unique feature of this history. The pattern common to all of them was that they were born in the Transvaal, went to Natal, the Cape and the O.F.S. for various reasons, where they were converted at Methodist missions and, after a period of instruction, returned to their own people to preach and teach. They did this work without recognition or reward from the W.M.M.S. Nevertheless, they regarded themselves as Methodists and, rather than set up independent churches or join any other missionary society, they waited for the accredited agents of the W.M.M.S. Although many of them faced persecution and hardship, they were remarkably successful in their work. David Magata founded the mission at Potchefstroom, Molema, with little support from the missionaries at Thaba Nchu, held together a congregation of 1,500 on the Molopo; Klaas Olifant, Hans Aapjie and Samuel Mathabathe provided the outline of a "chain" of missions to the north from Pretoria and Robert Nedvu Mashaba established the mission in Delagoa Bay. Daniel Msimang might well be added to the list of African Pioneers because he conducted the Swaziland mission virtually on his own.

The missionary work to the north of the Vaal owed its existence to the missionary Districts of the W.M.M.S. in the south. The missions at Makwassie, Delagoa Bay and Swaziland were undertaken from established missions in the south; the African pioneers were converted and trained south of the Vaal and the Trial Mission and the new District were pioneered from Natal. Nevertheless, the Transvaal and Swaziland District did not join the other South African Districts in the South African Conference. The reason for this was that the goal of the Transvaal and Swaziland District was to extend the mission to the Zambesi and it required, for this purpose, the support of the more powerful British Conference.

Owen Watkins' plan to build three "chains" of missions to the Zambesi from Mafeking, Pretoria and Swaziland united all his supporters in the common aim of advancing on the interior to win Africa for Christ. The idea of having "chains" of missions was already accepted by

Methodists. William Shaw had succeeded with this method in the eastern Cape.

Watkins' plan did not work out exactly as he had anticipated. The chains in the west and the east were never completed. What took place in the west was a general development of missions at the towns of the western Transvaal with Potchefstroom as the centre rather than the growth of a line of missions to the north from Mafeking. Much the same, on a smaller scale, happened in the eastern Transvaal and Swaziland. It was only in the centre that there was any resemblance of a "chain" of missions and the most northerly station was at Pietersburg, 125 miles south of the Limpopo and about 700 miles south of the Zambesi. Instead of continuing the "chain" to the north of Pietersburg, Watkins' idea, in 1886, was to make the next stop the Zambesi. The W.M.M.S. was not able to finance this scheme and Watkins had to wait until the British South Africa Company provided financial support in 1891. With this assistance, Owen Watkins pioneered the mission to Mashonaland, later known as the Rhodesia District. The Transvaal and Swaziland District continued to support this new District with manpower and administrative assistance until the turn of the century.

Without Watkins' vision and his plan, however, it is doubtful whether there would have been much missionary expansion in the territory between the Vaal and the Zambesi. The Trial Mission was formed with a view to ascertaining whether it would be possible to occupy this territory and the report of this mission, which included George Weavind, was that the territory was so occupied by the Berlin and the Hermannsburg missions that there was no room left for other missionary societies. Watkins challenged this view. He discovered the African pioneers, who had already established Methodist Societies, and he found other people without missionaries.

In spite of his earlier views, George Weavind gave his full support to Watkins' plan for the District. By taking over some of the duties of the Chairman, he set Owen Watkins free to pursue his wagon policy. Watkins

travelled thousands of miles by wagon, organising the scattered Methodist Societies and placing missionaries in strategic positions, while Weavind attended to the administrative work.

These two men built up a great friendship and shared the duties of the Chairman in spite of differences of temperament. Watkins was affable, out-going and liberal in his views. Weavind was a man of simple piety, introspective and conservative. He was unique among his brethren in that he had married a Boer girl and became a burgher (citizen) of the Transvaal Republic.

A mission by Africans to Africans was what Watkins envisaged as his plan for the Transvaal and Swaziland District. White missionaries were expected to confine their activities to administration, organization and training. The aim was to build up a strong African ministry. That this was accomplished is proved by the fact that, out of 115 paid workers in the District in 1899, there were only 28 white missionaries. There were seventeen African Ministers and seventy Evangelists and teachers. ⁽¹⁾

The Methodist system of Classes, Societies, Circuits and Local Preachers made provision for the extensive use of the laity. Every convert was placed in a Class of about twelve members under the leadership of a Class Leader. The Class met weekly for fellowship, instruction and prayer. A number of these Classes formed the local Society (congregation) which was governed by the Leaders' Meeting consisting mostly of the Class Leaders. Society Stewards were appointed as the executive officers of the Leaders' Meeting so that the leadership of the local congregation was placed in the hands of the laity. A number of Societies were grouped together into a Circuit and, when a minister was appointed, he was appointed to the Circuit to serve all the Societies. He met all the Leaders at the

(1) Minutes of the British Conference, 1899, pp. 164-168.

Circuit Quarterly Meeting and he also met them as he travelled round to the Societies. Usually a Circuit consisted of at least thirteen Societies, so the minister was only able to visit each Society on one Sunday in a quarter to administer the Sacraments. All the other Sunday Services were conducted by the Circuit Local Preachers.

The first call on the time of a minister was to train and use his Leaders and Local Preachers effectively. Thus, when Underwood arrived at Mahamba he did not himself go out and visit the heathen kraals, but gathered a team of Local Preachers, trained them and supervised their work. The same pattern is clearly seen in the ministry of George Lowe, the first Circuit minister stationed in the Good Hope Mission. The training and use of African people both as laymen and as paid agents was the back-bone of W.M.M.S. policy in the Transvaal and Swaziland District.

Education was an essential part of this policy. Thus, a day school was established at each station and in these schools thousands of African children and adults learnt to read and write. The Kilnerton Training Institution provided the teachers for these schools.

The phenomenal growth of the Church in the Transvaal and Swaziland District was due not only to the fact that it offered a gospel of salvation but also to the fact that it offered enlightenment to a people whose desire for knowledge had been awakened by the advent of the white man. The importance attached to the educational programme of a mission station is evident in the fact that Uitkyk Mission was popularly known as "Schoolplaats" (school farm). Where there was no school, the people clamoured for one to be started. Montshiwa wanted a white missionary, not because he thought they were any better than Africans, but because he wanted someone who could teach his people.

Although gold had brought about an increase of missionary work at places like Barberton, Pilgrim's Rest and Klerksdorp, it was the development of the Witwatersrand gold fields that introduced what can be called a new frontier

for pioneer missionary work in the Transvaal.

When Owen Watkins made his plans for his District, he never imagined that this frontier would suddenly appear on the bare veld between Pretoria and Heidelberg. Whereas he had anticipated that the greatest sphere of missionary work lay to the north, he had to acknowledge that the Witwatersrand was the most important sphere of missionary work in South Africa. Due to his illness, after the journey to Mashonaland, however, Watkins was unable to participate in this development. It was undertaken by George Weavind, William Hudson and others.

Many of the white people, who flocked to the mines, were already members of the Church. The main task, therefore, was to gather them into Societies and to erect church buildings. This was not the case with the African people who came to the mines. Most of them were heathen. The Church was suddenly confronted with a situation where it did not have to go out to heathen kraals but had to make up its mind how to use the opportunities presented to it by the gold mines.

The Church adapted its methods and used its resources remarkably well to meet the demands of the new frontier. The Methodist system, which provided for the extensive use of the laity, proved most effective. A team of a dozen Local Preachers visited the white people in the mining camps and founded new Societies. Later, churches were built by the local people and ministers were appointed. A team of no less than fifty African Local Preachers visited the mine compounds in pairs accompanied by mission bands of young men. The type of service conducted was adapted to the needs of the miners. Converts were placed in the care of Class Leaders. In the compound work there was no need for a church building but in the African townships a building was essential. With a building, it was possible to start a school and gather a congregation.

The European work along the Reef was divided into smaller Circuits as it expanded but the African work was retained as a unit so that all the sections might benefit from having a white missionary while giving African

ministers a measure of leadership among their own people. Work among the Coloured people was in its infancy and there was no work among the Indian people as there was in Pretoria, where the Church secured the services of a Christian teacher from India.

The separatist Ethiopian Church, founded by Mangena Mokone after his resignation from the Methodist Church did not gain a large following from the Methodists. His resignation, however, drew attention to practices based on racial difference within the Methodist Church. The worst of these was the decision taken in 1885 to prevent African ministers from attending the District Meeting. They were not satisfied with the decision and, to meet them half-way, a separate District Meeting was instituted for them under the Chairman of the District, accompanied by white representatives from the District Meeting. Mokone resigned in protest against these separate meetings, among other things.

Although separation on the level of the District meetings raised objections, there were no objections to separation on the Circuit level and this was, in fact, the greater and more complete separation. In country towns such as Bloemhof and Barberton, Mafeking and Heidelberg, there were separate Circuits and separate buildings for the racial groups. On the Witwatersrand Mission, separate facilities were provided for the Coloureds. In Pretoria, separate facilities were provided for Indians. The Circuit system lent itself to separate development of the races. Although there might only be one white missionary in the area, he would be the Superintendent of separate Circuits for the different racial groups. Never were they all included in one Circuit.

The fact was that the white missionaries, many of whom arrived from England with a definite bias toward integration, found it difficult to mix socially with African people. Olverton was regarded as a lonely station not because there was a shortage of African people, but because there was no European town in the vicinity where the missionary might find white company. Although Boers attended services conducted by African preachers at Mahamba and at Hartbeesfontein, these occasions were rare

and exceptional.

Arising out of experience in the West Indies, the W.M.M.S. gave strict instructions to its missionaries not to interfere in politics. Two men were asked to leave because they disobeyed this instruction. George Blencowe, the leader of the Trial Mission was relieved of his position because of his outspoken criticism of the Boers and C. S. Franklin's resignation was readily accepted.

On the whole, the missionaries avoided interference in politics but, when pressed by circumstances, they did not regard the instructions of the W.M.M.S. as completely binding. Weavind, a burgher of the Transvaal, supported his Government in the war against Malaboch by providing African men, a wagon and food-supplies from Kilnerton farm. At the same time, Underwood and Appelbe took part in public meetings which opposed the action of the Transvaal against Malaboch. Owen Watkins supported Montshiwa in his complaints against the British and raised such indignation among the townspeople of Mafeking that a public meeting was held in protest. The W.M.M.S. supported Watkins and took up the matter with the Colonial Office. The political position of the Methodist Church was what may be called bipartite. People of the same Church took different sides over political issues.

The war, in 1899, completely disrupted the normal life of the Church. Thousands of people left the Transvaal and congregations were so depleted that many ministers left as well. The majority of the ministers who left, went to Durban, where they assisted the refugees from the Transvaal.

The contribution to African literature was not very large and was mainly to supply the immediate needs of school and Church. The first Tswana reader was produced in 1826 and several more school books were printed at Platberg. Allison produced portions of the gospels in Swazi in 1846. ⁽¹⁾ Towards the end of the century, Alfred Spring Sharp produced more school books in Tswana

(1) D.S.A.B., vol. 1., pp. 11 - 12.

and, at about the same time, Robert Ndevu Mashaba had a number of school books printed and prepared 100 hymns in Shona for use in public worship.

The itinerant system of moving ministers from one station to another on an average of every three years provided for mobility and gave each man a broad vision of the different kinds of work in the District. The ministers adapted themselves well to their new stations each time they moved. Underwood worked successfully at such diverse appointments as Pretoria, Mahamba and Barberton. Owen Watkins, having spent most of his first nine years in the District travelling, settled down very well to the task of teaching at the Kilnerton Training Institution in 1889. Men were moved from purely African work like Mafeking to purely European work like the Johannesburg Circuits and adapted themselves adequately to the change.

There were, however, a few exceptions where men stayed at one appointment for much longer. There is evidence that these men were able to offer a ministry at a much greater depth. Weavind was able to minister to Boers more successfully than any other Methodist minister because he learnt to know them during his first nine years at Pretoria. Alfred Spring Sharp, who was at Mafeking for seven years, was one of the few men who made any significant contribution to the literature of the African people.

The fact that there was no difference between a "minister" to the European people and a "missionary" to the African people prevented many from specialising in a particular work and left the way open for white ministers to return to European Circuits once African ministers were able to replace them.

The Ecumenical Movement had not yet come into being in the nineteenth century. Apart from the occasional acceptance of the principle of comity, whereby one missionary society might agree to stay out of a tribe or an area where another had already started work, each society worked independently and often in conflict with another society.

Examples of the acceptance of the principle of comity by the Methodists are rare. Broadbent and Hodgson crossed the Harts and travelled to the east to avoid interference in the work of the L.M.S. at Griquatown and Kuruman and the Methodists withdrew from Springs when they discovered that the Presbyterians had started work there. If, however, the Methodists had accepted the principle of comity wherever they were urged to do so, there would have been no Methodist activity in the greater part of the Transvaal, which was claimed by the Berlin and the Hermannsburg societies; they would have had to withdraw from Delagoa Bay, which was claimed by the Swiss Mission and they would have had to abandon their pioneer work in Mashonaland, because all the Chiefs, with the exception of one, were claimed by Bishop Knight-Bruce for the Anglicans. Conflict, rather than co-operation or comity, was common between the Anglicans and Methodists particularly in the small country towns such as Bloemhof and Ermelo.

There was more co-operation between the Dutch Reformed Church and the Methodists than between the Anglicans and the Methodists, probably because they did not enter into such close competition. Archbell baptised the children of the Voortrekkers at Thaba Nchu; Abraham Faure kept Broadbent in his own home at Graaff-Reinet for six months without charge; Stephanus Hofmeyer administered the Sacrament of Holy Communion to Samuel Mathabathe's converts but respected their wish to remain Methodists and George Weavind conducted services in Dutch for the members of the Dutch Reformed Church in Ventersdorp when they were without a minister.

The pioneer missionary work undertaken by the W.M.M.S. in the territory between the Vaal and the Zambesi in the nineteenth century was part of a world-wide movement. As such, it gained impetus from a world vision. The pioneer work of the early missions was part of a larger vision of plans to win the whole of Africa for Christ and it was hoped, from Delagoa Bay to reach Madagascar. Moreover, it derived not only money and manpower from this movement but also experience in missionary work. The ideas imparted by Kilner were vital to the success of the Transvaal and Swaziland District.

Attempts have been made recently ⁽¹⁾ to discredit the work of the missionaries but all the evidence in this history indicates that they were men of absolute integrity who were motivated in the work they did for Africa by the love of Christ.

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Article on Broadbent and Hodgson by
L. A. Hewson.

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LOWE, Rev. George

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MS. 15,692

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