

THE EARLY HISTORY OF BLYTHSWOOD

MISSIONARY INSTITUTION

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by Alastair Rodger, B.A. (Cape Town)

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EXTRACT FROM B.D. THESIS, "THE EARLY HISTORY OF
BLYTHSWOOD MISSIONARY INSTITUTION" BY A. RODGER.

The Mfengu, or Fingos, of the Transkei were a mixed group of refugees. Originally driven from Natal during the Mfecane, they moved into the Transkei and then the Ciskei. In the 1860's some were allowed by the Cape government to settle in an area in the Western Transkei which it had recently seized. The majority of those who moved were opposed to mission work and education.

When therefore the government agent for Fingoland, Captain Blyth, and a Free Church of Scotland missionary, Richard Ross, gained the support of a few headmen for an educational Institution in the Transkei, and approached Dr James Stewart of Lovedale to found such an Institution on the lines of Lovedale, they had very slender support. Stewart agreed on condition the Mfengu subscribe £1000 towards the cost. Support for this somewhat startling and, to some, unpalatable request was gained mainly because it was known that the government intended introducing a hut tax which would be far more onerous than the levy which, it was estimated, would be required to find the sum Stewart was asking. Blyth was able to use the agreement to a voluntary levy for an institution to persuade the government to postpone the tax.

The Institution was built on a larger scale than had been planned, for the Mfengu made two subscriptions, each larger than the total requested, and Stewart raised money in Scotland.

From the first Stewart envisaged Blythswood as a fairly small branch Institution, which would concentrate on primary school ("elementary") education and a certain amount of industrial (i.e. technical) instruction, so as to relieve Lovedale of some of its elementary work. The first principal, the Rev. James MacDonald tried to widen the scope of the work considerably. At the same time he mismanaged Blythswood badly. The Presbytery of Kaffraria became involved in the bitter clash between MacDonald and Stewart, as some members tried to use the issue to assert control over Blythswood. This was an expression of a deep division in the Mission over

the status and policies of Lovedale under Stewart.

The Foreign Mission Committee of the Free Church moved MacDonald and appointed John A. Bennie, a teacher from Lovedale, as temporary principal. He did very good work in reorganising the Institution and putting it on a sound educational and administrative basis, but his health would not allow him to stay longer than two years (1881-2). During his time the F.M.C. settled the vexed question of Blythwood's status by removing it from Lovedale's control, but making its principal directly responsible to the Committee, so that the Presbytery could not gain control of the Institution either.

The Rev. James McLaren was the first principal to work independently of Lovedale, but he did not have an entirely smooth course. Criticism of his discipline and administration from Stewart and others and the dissatisfaction of Blyth and the advisory Native Committee over the separation from Lovedale led to an unsuccessful attempt to persuade the F.M.C. to bring Blythwood under Lovedale once more.

McLaren stayed for fifteen years and was able to steer the Institution along the road to full independence and viability. Educational standards were raised, a semi-separate girls' Institution built and many new extramural activities started. Though there was unpleasant friction at times, the staff generally worked hard, both in school and in promoting the spiritual work of the Institution.

Blythwood survived its earlier vicissitudes to become more widely accepted and influential in the community, and though it remained similar in many respects to Lovedale, did develop an identity of its own.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- CL Cory Library, Rhodes University. (Includes Lovedale Collection and Stormont Papers.)
- FH Fort Hare Library, Collection of the Bantu Presbyterian Church.
- SP Stewart Papers.
- MM Missionary Museum manuscripts.
- KE Kaffir Express.
- CE Christian Express.
- BR Blythswood Review.

INTRODUCTION

In 1873 Dr James Stewart, the principal of the Lovedale Missionary Institution of the Free Church of Scotland, received a request from the Transkei to found an Institution there similar to Lovedale. The Institution began in a remarkable way, with the Mfengu of the Transkei contributing nearly two thirds of the £7000 which it cost to build the Institution. The question therefore arises why Blythswood, as the Institution was called, never became nearly as large and highly developed and as well-known in the 19th century as Lovedale. This is one of the main questions to which this thesis attempts to give an answer. It led to an enquiry into what Blythswood had to offer, and how it developed from its opening in 1877 to the end of the first long principalship, that of the Rev. James McLaren, who resigned in 1897. A vital question was obviously what Blythswood's relationship was with Lovedale in this period, and how that relationship affected its development. The answer to this would help to make it clear to what extent Blythswood developed a policy or identity of its own. It was also important to know what the Africans' opinion of Blythswood was, in as far as this could be gauged, and what sort of impact Blythswood made on the community and the region in which it was situated.

Preliminary reading on the founding of the Institution revealed what seemed to be two entirely different accounts of the subscriptions made by the Mfengu and their motives in making them. This necessitated investigations of the history of the Mfengu and of all the primary and secondary material available by which the two accounts could be tested.

Finally the almost complete absence of news of the work of Blythswood and its first principal, the Rev. James MacDonald, during the years 1877 to 1880 in the Christian Express aroused curiosity. The Express, a monthly paper of missionary news and views, published at Lovedale, gave far more coverage to Blythswood in the preceding and following years. In its

obituary of J.A. Bennie, Blythswood's second principal, who died in 1885, there is no mention of MacDonald, but McLaren speaks of Bennie as the man who laid the foundation for the future development of Blythswood. This necessitated a search for information about MacDonald and a comparison of his work with that of Bennie.

My grateful thanks are due to the many people who helped me in various ~~ways~~^{ways} in the preparation of this thesis: to Professor Calvin W. Cook, my supervisor, for his patience and invaluable advice, to the staffs of the Cory Library at Rhodes University, the J.W. Jagger Library at the University of Cape Town, the library of the University of Fort Hare, and the King William's Town Museum, particularly Mr Murray McGregor of the S.A. Missionary Museum, who supplied several of the illustrations; to Miss M.M.K. Stormont and Mrs N. Shute; to Mrs Y. White for her efficient typing; and finally to my wife for drawing the map and helping in many other ways throughout the year.

ILLUSTRATIONS, I

Above, left:

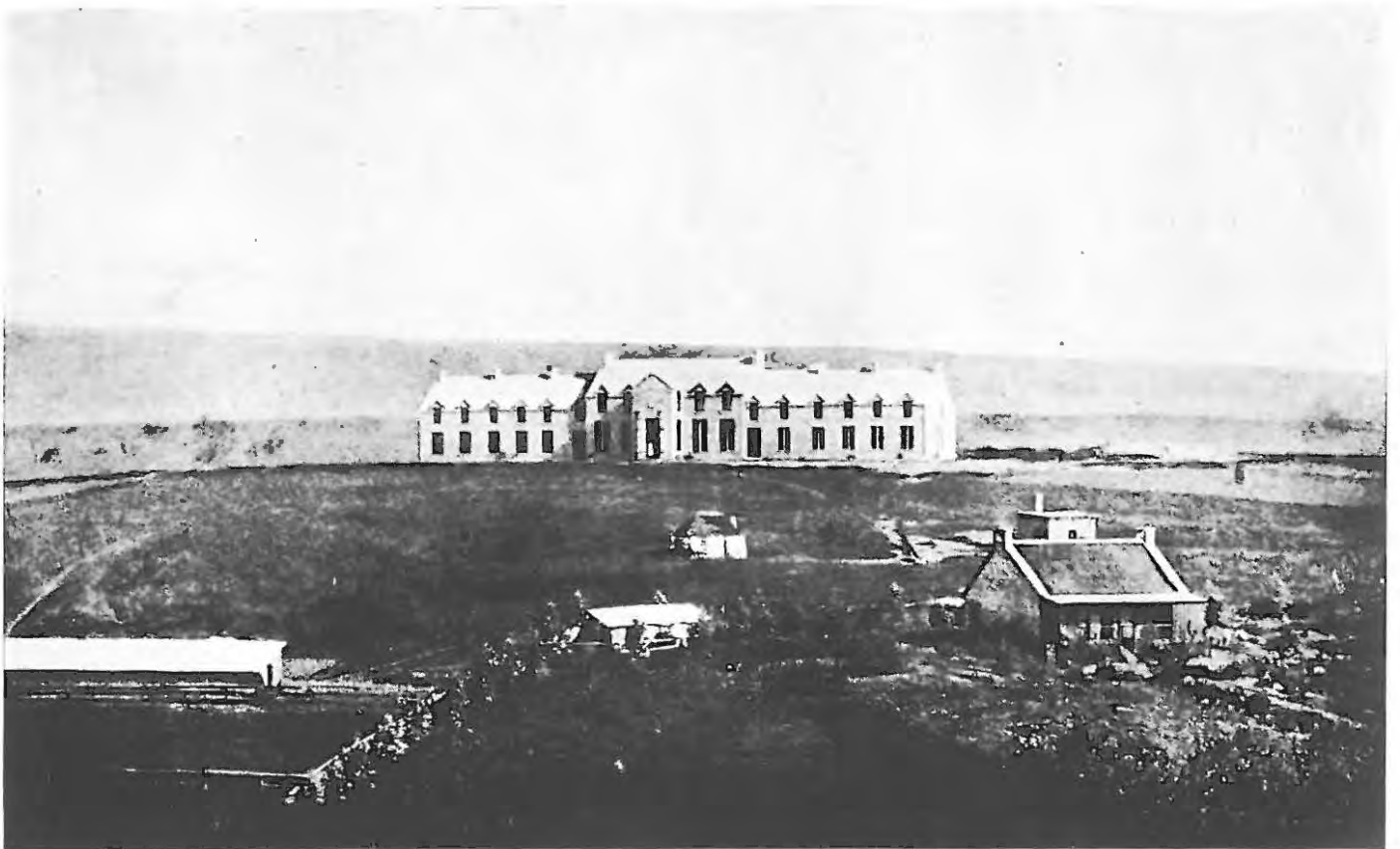
The Rev. James MacDonald

Above, right:

John A. Bennie

Below:

Blythswood Institution in 1877. The dark lines on either side of the building are earthworks built by the soldiers.



ILLUSTRATIONS, IIAbove:

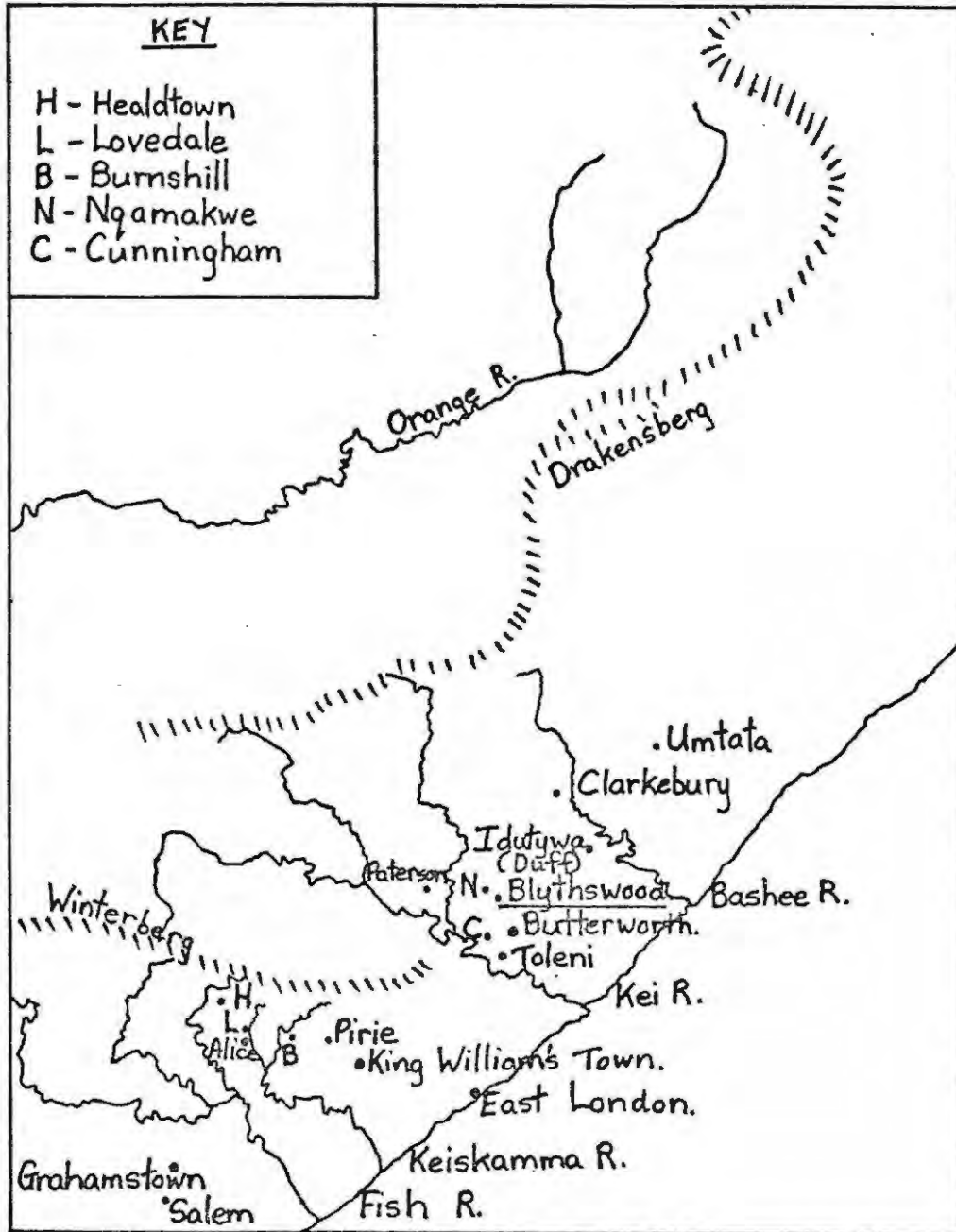
The Institution in the 1890's, with a work party.

Below:

The new educational block, opened in 1893.



MISSION STATIONS AND TOWNS IN THE EASTERN CAPE AND TRANSKEI



CHAPTER I

THE MFENGU MIGRATIONS

The Mfengu, or Fingos are not a single tribe or nation (isizwe), like the Mpondo or the Xhosa, but are the descendants of refugees from various tribes from the Tugela river area which were broken up in the Mfecane. By 1820 they had settled throughout the Transkei and had begun to penetrate the Giskei. Their status in relation to the tribes among which they settled has been a matter of some dispute. Older accounts refer to those who lived among the Gcaleka as slaves, but they had begun to intermarry with the Gcaleka and seem to have enjoyed considerable freedom, though one is left with the impression that the Gcaleka regarded them as inferior in status.¹

The founding of Butterworth by the Wesleyans in Gcaleka territory in 1827 caused a breach between the two groups. The Mfengu, perhaps because of their lower status and their lack of tribal identity, were more responsive than the Gcaleka to the message and the opportunities offered by the missionaries. In the war of 1834-5 Ayliff, the missionary in charge of Butterworth, took the Colonial side and was supported by the Mfengu. After the invasion of the Transkei and the death of Hintsu, chief of the Gcaleka, Ayliff and a large number of Mfengu for their own safety accompanied the soldiers to the Colony. Altogether about 17 000 were settled there after the war. Another invasion in 1852 resulted in the migration of a further 5 000 Mfengu to the Eastern districts of the Colony.

The Mfengu's support of the British Government in the war of 1834-5 and subsequent frontier wars was the cause of lasting ill-feeling between them and the Xhosa tribes. Over the years this alienation was to play a decisive role in their history. As a reward for their services they

1. An example of the older view is provided by J. MacDonald, Light in Africa (London, 1890), 44. The arguments against this view are set out in more detail by T.M. Makiwane in a letter to The South African Outlook, September 1935, and R.H. Davis, Nineteenth Century African Education in the Cape Colony: a Historical Analysis (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1969), 40.

received grants of land in the Ciskei, some of it taken from the Xhosa. They were the first large body of Africans to come into the Colony proper, and considerable efforts were made to evangelize and civilize them.²

The Mfengu prospered in their new areas and as more arrived from the Transkei and elsewhere their "locations" became very overcrowded. After the cattle-killing delusion of 1857 the British Government seized control of the Gcaleka territory to the East of the Kei river. A few years later the Governor of the Cape, Sir Philip Wodehouse, allowed the Gcaleka to reoccupy a third of their territory, while the rest was divided between the Thembu and the Mfengu. The opportunity was given for Mfengu in the Ciskei to move to a belt of very good land, 60 miles by 20, along the Kei river.

In an account written some years ago Brownlee J. Ross recorded that the Fingo chiefs, on receiving this offer, came for advice to his father, the Rev. Richard Ross (1828-1902), who was then minister of the African congregation at Lovedale, the educational institution run by Free Church of Scotland missionaries. His advice was that they should go, but on three conditions.

- (i) A British Commissioner should be set over them as their paramount chief to promote their unity and secure support and protection from the British, in case of war with the Xhosa, who would surround them on three sides.
- (ii) The missionaries of the various Churches now working among them must accompany them and receive grants of land for mission stations.
- (iii) Because a shortage of land would result if they gave up their Ciskei locations, they must insist that the older people stay behind in these areas and only the younger people take the risk of settling in the new territory.

In response to a request from the chiefs Ross went to the Transkei with them and established Cunningham, the first Free Church mission station

2. R.H. Davis, Op.Cit. 41f; 234.

in the Transkei.³

B.J. Ross went on to say that "the majority of the men who had migrated were wild young heathen. They expected that, moving thus into the wilds, British discipline would slacken, Christianity and education weaken, the power of the chiefs and witch doctors grow, and a revival of heathen barbarism follow."⁴

James MacDonald (1847-1918), who was the first principal of Blythswood, maintained that of the Fingos in the Colony only a small minority had had any education and were "active...advocates of progress." The Christians were also very few in number, but enthusiastic. The vast majority of the Fingos were still heathens; contact with Europeans had begun to undermine their traditional beliefs, but put nothing in their place. The more conservative among them disapproved of the tendency of younger people with some education to depart from, and sometimes even reject openly, the traditional beliefs and customs, such as lobola. When the offer of land in the Transkei was made, the conservative headmen were therefore the first to take advantage of it, in the hope that in the new territory they could preserve both their own authority and the traditions of their people.⁵

It seems likely, therefore, that only some of the headmen consulted Richard Ross, and that the aim of the majority of those who moved to Fingoland, as it came to be called, was to get away from White rule and missionary influence, and not to preserve these connections. This view is borne out by the events of the next few years, and has a bearing on the question of Mfengu support for the establishment of a missionary educational institution. The Mfengu began moving in 1865 and Ross established the Cunningham station near Toleni in 1868.

3. R.H.W. Shepherd (ed.), Brownlee J. Ross: His Ancestry and Some Writings (Lovedale, 1948), 31-2.

4. Ibid., 36.

5. J. MacDonald, Op.Cit., 47-9. This view of the motives of many emigrants is supported by D.D. Stormont in BR, June, 1931, 62. Stormont (1862-1931) was principal from 1901 (officially 1904) to 1931, and editor of the Review. The June, 1931 issue is a special one, consisting mostly of articles on the history of Blythswood and its various departments.

Captain Blyth's Schemes

Having settled on good land which had been virtually unused for a number of years, the Mfengu prospered, but, according to Stormont, there was considerable "lawlessness" and a widespread desire to be free of control. There was also a danger of war, both among the Mfengu clans and with the neighbouring Xhosa tribes.⁶

Fingoland was not part of the Colony, but a British Commissioner was stationed among the Mfengu, with his residence at Nqamakwe, 18 miles from Butterworth. The first Commissioner, Capt. Cobb, was succeeded in 1869 by Capt. Matthew Blyth (1836-1889), an ex-officer of the Indian Army. A strict but kindly disciplinarian, he soon earned the name of Umlilo (fire) from the Africans. Blyth was determined to secure the peace and order of the territory and to further the process of civilizing the Mfengu. He therefore launched a number of schemes to keep them usefully occupied. The first major project was the financing and building of a road from the Kei river to the Toleni Heights. Richard Ross helped supervise this work, which took several years to complete. Blyth also organized irrigation schemes and agricultural shows. On the occasion of his transfer to East Griqualand in 1876 the Christian Express paid tribute to his work, pointing out that such schemes were undertaken in addition to his work as government agent, and were evidence of his enthusiasm and dedication. It noted that he had had much support from the missionaries in the area and from some of the Africans, but had not had things all his own way.⁷

Voluntary schemes were the only means Blyth could use in this period, for Fingoland was not annexed until 1879. Nevertheless he acquired considerable authority over the Mfengu - far more than his status would seem to have

6. Ibid; R.H.W. Shepherd (ed.), B.J. Ross..., 36

7. CE, 1/4/1876. The article ends by announcing that the new institution will be called Blythswood Missionary Institution, after Capt. Blyth. The Express was a monthly journal published at Lovedale. It started life as The Kaffir Express in 1873 and was renamed the Christian Express a few years later and the South African Outlook in the 20th century.

warranted. Besides the force of Blyth's personality which was considerable, the disunited and insecure state of the Mfengu may also have contributed to ~~of~~ the willingness of at least some to co-operate in these schemes, the most remarkable of which is the subject of this thesis.

CHAPTER IITHE FOUNDING OF THE INSTITUTIONThe Origin of the Idea

It seems impossible to tell in whose mind the idea first formed of an Institution similar to Lovedale for the Fingos, but an analysis of the sources reveals an interesting grouping.

Reports in the Kaffir Express and the Christian Express and the accounts of James Stewart (1831-1905; principal of Lovedale, 1870-1905), Robert Young and R.H.W. Shepherd all attribute the idea to Blyth.¹ The story that emerges from these sources is that when the road into the Transkei was nearing completion Blyth cast about in his mind for another project for the Fingos. The idea that came to him was that a great educational centre like Lovedale should be established. He put the proposal first to Richard Ross and then to Dr Stewart, saying to the latter that the Fingos supported his suggestion that a "child of Lovedale" as they called it, should be established in Fingoland.

Stormont, on the other hand, ascribes the idea to Ross, as does a newspaper article probably written by Dr Girdwood, who ran a dispensary at Nqamakwe for a number of years, and did all he could for Blythswood.²

MacDonald writes that the origin of the idea is a subject of dispute; Ross, Blyth and Stewart all had a hand in it, but it is not clear what part each played. B.J. Ross says only that the Fingo headmen to whom the idea was put saw that Ross and Blyth were determined to establish the Institution.³

1. KE, 6/9/1873; CE, 1/8/1877; J. Stewart, Dawn in the Dark Continent (Edinburgh, 1903), 196; R. Young, African Wastes Reclaimed (London, 1902), 237; R.H.W. Shepherd, Lovedale, South Africa: the Story of a Century, 1841-1941 (Lovedale, 1940/41), 181.
2. D.D. Stormont, Op.Cit., 62-3; A.M. McGregor, notes from a scrapbook compiled by Girdwood. In conversation with the writer Mr McGregor (principal of Blythswood, 1956-60) said that Girdwood himself wrote many of the press reports preserved in the scrapbook. He also frequently annotated reports containing inaccuracies, which would seem to indicate that he believed the report ascribing the idea to Ross was correct.
3. J. MacDonald, Op.Cit., 46; R.H.W. Shepherd (ed.) B.J. Ross..., 37.

The writers in the first group were all connected in some way with Lovedale and their information is probably all derived ultimately from Stewart. The second group belong to what might be called a local tradition, which ascribes the idea to Ross. It is interesting that two writers who had fairly close connections with the founding of Blythwood are uncertain on this point. It would be tempting to conclude that the accounts derived from Stewart omit to give Ross credit because of the long-standing disagreement and ill-will between Ross and Stewart (of which more later), and that the true version of events was preserved by Girdwood and Stormont. The uncertainty in the accounts of MacDonald and B.J. Ross should make us wary of accepting either version uncritically. This is not the only instance in which an investigation into the history of Blythwood is hampered by dependence on information which is somewhat fragmentary and derives mostly from men involved in the events concerned and in the controversies surrounding them.

Stewart's Response

The first formal request to undertake the founding of an Institution probably reached Stewart at about the end of 1872. Because Lovedale was short of money, and no doubt because Stewart was fully occupied in leading it through a period of rapid expansion, Stewart was, in his own words, "wholly disinclined" to undertake the project. He temporised by saying that they would consider it. (Presumably he meant the Education Board, which was responsible for all the educational work of the Kaffrarian Mission of the Free Church.) Six months later "another letter came, stating that if Lovedale would not take up the work they would try some other mission. This was decisive." The next day Stewart set out for the Transkei.⁴

Doubts about the financing of such a scheme evidently beset him while he was on his way, for he stopped in King William's Town and spent a whole day in thought and prayer. The result was two letters. To Blyth he wrote

4. J. Stewart, Op.Cit., 196-7.

that if the Fingos would contribute £1000 to the undertaking as proof of the sincerity of their desires it would be proceeded with. He wrote to Dr (later Sir) Langham Dale, the Superintendent General of Education, about the project, asking if the Department of Education could make a grant, even though the Transkei was outside the Colony.⁵

At about the same time he submitted an urgent memorandum to the Foreign Missions Committee (F.M.C.) of the Free Church. To secure Lovedale's efficiency and further progress, he wrote, it was necessary to have small stations acting as feeders to the Institution. An empty house at Burnshill (between Lovedale and King William's Town) could be turned into such a branch Institution. Something similar was needed in the Transkei, but the Education Board had resisted for two years attempts to get it to deal with such a proposal. "Now it must be done as a measure of safety to secure the ground and the interests of Lovedale." He envisaged the branch as "a small vocational and industrial school, to bring on lads to a certain stage - thus raise the standard of Lovedale so that instead of 10 or 15 in the Higher Department there may be 100 - or more. ...The Education Board & Mission Council, both, after full consideration officially approve and regard some steps of this sort as unavoidable & necessary."⁶

This underlines the fact that it was the threat of approaching another denomination that galvanized Stewart into action. The memorandum also shows that from the beginning he envisaged the new Institution not as a duplicate of Lovedale, but as a feeder school which would relieve Lovedale of part of the burden of elementary, i.e. primary school, instruction. Controversy was to arise over whether this view was fully accepted and understood by all the parties concerned in the founding of Blythswood.

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5. Letter Book of J. Stewart, SP 4A, 19/5/1873, 20/5/1873; from their contents, as well as their dates these would seem to be the letters Stewart refers to in his book (Op.Cit., 197), but neither reads like a first announcement of his proposal that if the Fingos would raise £1000 he would agree to their request.
 6. Ibid., undated memorandum, evidently written between 20/5 and 25/8/1873. Here again we have evidence that the idea of a branch Institution, and of a Fingo contribution to it (see full text), had been informally discussed for some considerable time. See also CE, 6/9/1873.

The Motives for Mfengu Support

On this question we are faced once again with widely differing views. On the one hand Stewart gives the impression that the Fingos gave not just one, but two very large sums in the period 1873-5 purely out of a desire for education. Stormont, on the other hand, says that the Fingo headmen were persuaded to collect the money because this contribution made possible the postponement of a hut tax which would have been a much heavier burden. A careful examination of various other sources makes it fairly certain that Stormont is right here, though he goes wrong on some of the details. Let us look first at Stewart's account, supplemented by some details from the Kaffir Express.

In July, 1873 Stewart went to Nqamakwe to see what response his proposal had evoked. Finding a small group of headmen gathered at Blyth's house, he put the proposal to them himself. If the Fingo people would contribute £1000 he would establish an Institution on the lines of Lovedale; it would be open to all denominations and serve the whole Fingo people.

A week later, on the 28th, a larger meeting was held, at which Blyth went over the ground again and urged the Africans to agree to the scheme for the sake of their children. Ross also spoke, but Stewart was not present. After consulting among themselves the headmen announced that they accepted the proposal and would collect five shillings from every man. They also agreed to Blyth's proposal that the money be collected within three months and banked in the names of twelve African trustees, the missionaries of the district and Blyth himself. The Rev. J. Sclater was appointed secretary and Ross the treasurer, and a Native Committee was elected.

At a great meeting of Africans and missionaries, held in December in the open veld, £1431, mostly in silver, was counted out on a small deal table. One of the Fingos summed up his countrymen's speeches by saying to Stewart, "There are the stones, now build." Assured by Stewart that he would match their contribution with money raised in Scotland or elsewhere, they went home well satisfied. When the building began to go up their

interest increased and they asked if it could be made larger. The answer was that this could be done if a second subscription were made; and so it came about that a second £1500 was collected.⁷

In an obvious reference to Stewart, Stormont says that the true story of how the money was raised is not as romantic as some descriptions indicate. Blyth communicated the plan to Charles Brownlee, the head of the Department of Native Affairs. He was very enthusiastic about it, but some of the Fingos to whom it was put were far less pleased. They had tried to escape education and civilization by coming to Fingoland, and were taken aback to find themselves being asked to promote progressive forces. Others, however, saw the value of an Institution similar to those in the Eastern Cape. Shortly after Brownlee was informed of the plan, the Under-Secretary for Native Affairs wrote to Blyth that the government intended to impose a hut tax of ten shillings a year on the Transkeian Territories. He urged them to expedite their plan, lest a conflict arise between the voluntary levy and the government tax. It was with this information that Blyth, Ross and Stewart came before the Fingo headmen and got them to agree to a voluntary levy of ten shillings. The first instalment of five shillings would be collected immediately and the second a year later. The shrewder among them realized that if the hut tax could be postponed by this means, they would save five shillings a year for two years.⁸

Stormont goes on to describe the second collection and complicates the issue by muddling it with a third one which was made in 1879, but the first part of his story is borne out, as far as the Fingos' motive is concerned, by various other sources.

The story that emerges from this is that a hut tax for Fingoland had been expected by Blyth and others for some time, but the announcement of its imminent introduction came as a surprise. The news reached the Transkei a

7. J. Stewart, Dawn in a Dark Continent, 197-9; KE, 6/9/1873, 6/1/1874.

8. BR, June, 1931, 62-4.

few days after the meeting of 28th July, and caused great consternation. (This would explain a statement by Stormont that there was considerable opposition from some headmen to the collection of the second half of the voluntary levy). Soon after this Blyth led a deputation of three headmen to see Molteno, the Prime Minister of the Cape, who was on a visit to the frontier. They persuaded him that the taxation scheme should be postponed.⁹ (This postponement was probably what Blyth had previously been hoping to achieve by getting the Fingos to agree to a voluntary levy.)

We have seen that many of the Mfengu were strongly opposed to education when they moved to the Transkei. It is unlikely that their outlook would have changed radically in the interim. "The wilder spirits did not want an Institution even as a free gift," remarks B.J. Ross. In the end the influence of headmen like Veldman Bikitsha, John Mazamisa and Luzipo prevailed, but those who were really in favour of education were in the minority.¹⁰ It is most likely that the agreement to make a levy on the whole population was only reached because it was known that a more onerous hut tax was on the way, but could be delayed by this means. A few years later some people were evidently putting such an interpretation on these events. In the Christian Express Report of the opening of Blythwood in 1877 we find this comment:

"It may somewhat ungraciously be said that they have made money by this, in the shape of hut tax deferred for a year or two. But we question if that was an element which influenced any of the more outstanding men, by whom the others are in great part guided."¹¹

In these circumstances it seems remarkable that the Mfengu should have given so much more than they had been asked for. The answer may be that on the first occasion the headmen wanted to make quite sure of staving off the hut tax and thus made an effort to collect the levy from each man. It may

9. Sclater to Stewart, SP 25 A(i), 5/8/1873; KE, 6/9/1873, 6/1/1874.

10. R.H.W. Shepherd (ed.) B.J. Ross..., 37; J. MacDonald, Op.Cit., 47-9.

11. CE, 1/8/1877.

only have been when the money was put together that it was realized that the aim had been far exceeded. (Late contributions made the total just under £1500.)

R.H. Davis puts the contributions by the Mfengu in the context of a period of tremendous growth in African support for their schools. This came to supplant White efforts as the chief impetus for the expansion of the system. Enrolment in African schools increased from 2,827 in 1865 to 15,568 in 1885. Contributions over and above taxes also increased. In the years after the founding of Blythwood similar large donations were made towards other missionary educational projects. The number of state-aided schools - Black as well as White - increased steadily during this period, and African schools took a bigger share of the Education Department's budget.¹²

S.M. Brock says that with the failure of armed conflict and the undermining of (Xhosa) chiefs' power by the cattle killing episode of 1857, the Africans' attitude towards education changed. In the period from 1860 to 1880 it came to be seen as a desirable means of advancement, of acceptance by Europeans, and often of playing the European at his own game.¹³ The realization of the economic and later of the political advantages to be gained from education were probably a much more powerful factor in this increase in support than interest in Christianity or in education for its own sake.¹⁴

Slow Progress

In 1874 Stewart went to Scotland, primarily to raise money for Lovedale, but also to match the £1500 given by the Mfengu. In the event he also

12. R.H. Davis, *Op.Cit.*, 246-9.

13. S.M. Brock, James Stewart and Lovedale: a Reappraisal of Missionary Attitudes and African Response in the Eastern Cape, South Africa (unpublished thesis submitted for Ph.D., University of Edinburgh, 1974), 20f.

14. Cf. the response of the lakeside Tonga in Nyasaland to the educational efforts of the Livingstonia Mission of the Free Church in the 1880's: Religion in Africa: K.J. McCracken, Livingstonia as an Industrial Mission, 1875-1900: a Study of Commerce and Christianity in Nyasaland, 88-90, (Edinburgh, 1964).

launched the Livingstonia Mission to Nyasaland. Dr Duff, the Convener of the F.M.C., evidently suggested to Stewart that instead of the purely educational Institution hitherto envisaged, he should establish a more comprehensive mission, to be called the Gordon Mission. When this plan was communicated to Blyth, then on leave at his home in Norfolk, he reminded Stewart of the terms of the agreement made with the Fingos and of the formation of the committee of headmen. His main concerns were that the Institution should be undenominational, that Stewart should have overall charge, that the Fingos should have a voice in the management, and that the Institution should be built soon. From what he wrote it is clear that all these points were in the agreement made with the Mfengu headmen the previous July. Blyth emphasized that he and the Fingos were confident that under Stewart's guidance and in the position of a branch of Lovedale the new Institution would prosper. Furthermore if the Fingos were to be raised in civilization they must have a direct interest and voice - under proper guidance - in any undertakings to this end.¹⁵

These letters are interesting, as they indicate that both Blyth's thinking and the agreement with the Mfengu headmen corresponded closely to the concept formed by Stewart before the meeting of July, 1873 of the aims of the Institution and its relationship with Lovedale. They also show Blyth's attitude towards African participation in the schemes he initiated for their benefit. He always tried to obtain the full understanding and consent of their leaders and gave them as much responsibility as he thought they could handle, while retaining some European guidance and control.

Background to the Coming Controversy

The dispute which arose during the next few years over Stewart's insistence that the new Institution should, for some time at any rate, be run on modest lines as a feeder to Lovedale cannot be understood except against the background of the history of the Kaffrarian Mission. Particularly

15. Blyth to Stewart, SP 25 B(i), 6/7/1874 and 4/8/1874.

important were certain changes in organisation and policy which took place in the 1860's.¹⁶

In 1841 missionaries of the Glasgow Missionary Society had founded the Lovedale Seminary to train promising African pupils as teachers and catechists and to give their own children an education. After the Disruption in the Church of Scotland in 1843 almost all the G.M.S. missionaries joined the Free Church of Scotland, and the Presbytery of Kaffraria became a Free Church body. Only two joined the United Presbyterian Church, which was formed soon after. The U.P. mission developed alongside that of the F.C., though on a much smaller scale, and the two missions enjoyed good relations.

Under its first principal, the Rev. William Govan (1804-75), Lovedale was a small, select establishment. His aim was to provide not only a good elementary and secondary schooling, but higher education as well. He believed that the futures of Black and White in South Africa were so closely bound up that Blacks must be trained to compete with Whites as their equals in a mixed society. What this meant in practice was the training of a small Black elite in the hope that they would be accepted and assimilated into the White-dominated Colonial society.

In 1855 Sir George Grey introduced an ambitious scheme for civilizing and Christianizing the Africans in the Colony by means of education and medical services. He was confident that lessons he had learnt in dealing with the Maori in New Zealand could be put to good use in the Cape. Under this scheme, usually called the Grey Plan, "industrial education" was introduced. This consisted of the training of apprentices in various trades, such as carpentry, blacksmithing and printing, in comprehensive schools known as Institutions, which offered both academic and industrial education. Industrial education became an important part of Lovedale's work, broadening its curriculum considerably, but there, as in other Institutions, it brought serious financial problems. The industrial departments were expensive to set

16. This section is based mainly on J.M. Brock, Op.Cit., chapters I-III and R.H.W. Shepherd, Op.Cit., chapters III & IV.

up and could not all pay for themselves by the work done by the apprentices, in spite of government grants. Lovedale was the only Institution which made a reasonable success of industrial education in the 1850's and 1860's. The main reason for this was that it had greater financial resources, apart from government grants, than other Institutions. Another strong point was the good general education received by Lovedale apprentices, which enabled them in later life to handle the business aspects of their trades.

By comparing Lovedale with Salem, the Methodist Institution near Grahamstown, Davis shows how important financing, administration and planning were for the success of an Institution. Educational goals were also very important. The Africans were able to judge fairly well the value of the education offered: if it was inferior it accomplished little and tended to be rejected, but if its goals were high enough it could provide its students with an education they would value.¹⁷ Brock comments,

"Govan's achievement was that he established Lovedale as an educational centre of merit in the eyes of Black and White in the Cape. Lovedale in this period remained an integral part of the Mission as a whole and for the missionaries who worked in other areas to extend the bounds of Free Church missionary activity, Lovedale represented the crown of their achievement in those early decades."¹⁸

Great changes in both the organization of the Kaffrarian Mission and the educational policy of Lovedale resulted from the visits by Stewart in 1863 and the following year by Dr Alexander Duff, a missionary educator whose work in India had been very successful. Duff became convener of the F.M.C. on his return to Scotland and soon persuaded the Committee to introduce changes in Kaffraria, in the light of his experience in India. His policy there had been based on the conviction that Christianity was the centre of all truth. Hence education was central to the missionaries' purpose, and a Christian education was the main weapon in the attack on Hinduism. English was both

17. R.H. Davis, *Op.Cit.*, 230. For the full account of Salem and Lovedale see pp. 224-30.

18. S.M. Brock, *Op.Cit.*, 18.

the medium of instruction and the substitute in the curriculum for the classical languages. He believed that a Western education without religion would destroy the foundations of the good life, and so the study of the Bible formed part of the curriculum. For Duff the ideal educational system would impose a strict intellectual discipline, but also appeal to the heart and conscience.

Stewart, for his part believed that the scale of operations at Lovedale and the type of education offered severely limited the Institution's ability to bring changes in African society. Comparatively few of the African pupils were progressing beyond what today would be called a higher primary level. Instead of concentrating on a superior education for a small number, Lovedale should put its main effort into providing a sound elementary education for larger numbers. Both the standard and the content should be suited to African needs, as he saw them. The primary aim should be to turn out preachers and teachers for the extension of mission work.

It is doubtful whether Stewart agreed with all Duff's ideas, but he was persuaded that changes were necessary. In 1867 he went out to join the Lovedale staff, carrying instructions from the F.M.C. for changes in the aims and methods of the Institution.

A few years earlier the F.M.C. had embodied Duff's proposals for organizational changes in the Kaffrarian Mission in a resolution passed in October, 1864. Confusion and difficulty were said to arise from the fact that all missionary matters devolved on the Presbytery. Responsibilities should therefore be divided as follows:

- (1) the Presbytery should confine itself to purely ecclesiastical matters, such as discipline;
- (2) a Mission Council, consisting only of Europeans, was to be established, so that matters of general policy would be decided by missionaries alone;

- (3) an Education Board would take over Lovedale Seminary affairs and supervise all station schools; Presbytery would have a representative on this Board;
- (4) the finances would be handled by a Financial Board.

All four bodies were to communicate with one another on matters of common interest and with the F.M.C. "on all points requiring the approval or confirmation of the latter."¹⁹

Presbytery deferred the implementation of these instructions until the expected arrival of Dr Stewart. When he came he brought a second F.M.C. minute, dating from November, 1866. The main burden of this was the new educational policy for Lovedale. It followed Duff's ideas on the place of English (though it allowed Greek and Hebrew for African candidates for the ministry). The missionary role of the Institution was seen as its essential function. Provision must be made for training Christian workers of various types.²⁰

The first minute had apparently aroused no opposition at first, although its implementation would mean a considerable reduction in the Presbytery's power and would allow Lovedale to develop independently of the rest of the mission. The 1866 minute, however, caused deep division in the Presbytery. Stewart favoured the proposals, but Govan and the majority of the missionaries were strongly opposed to them. The F.M.C. considered memoranda from Govan and Stewart and decided to adhere to the new policy. Govan was unwilling to implement a policy with which he disagreed so radically, and perhaps recognized that the F.M.C. now regarded Stewart as the key figure in the Institution.

Both Govan himself and his work at Lovedale were highly regarded by his colleagues in the Mission. Moreover they felt personally involved in

19. F.M.C. Minute of 18/10/1864, CL, PR 1355, item IX, no. 1.

20. F.M.C. Minute of 20/11/1886, Ibid., no. 2.

the Institution they had helped to found and oversee. Besides disagreeing with the new policy, most of them resented the removal of Lovedale from their control and felt that Govan had been badly treated.²¹

For the Ross brothers, Bryce (missionary at Pirie, near King William's Town) and Richard, there was probably an additional reason for regret and resentment.²² They had been pupils at Lovedale when the 1846-7 war forced the closure of the Institution. Govan took them to Scotland, along with Tiyo Soga, later a U.P. missionary, and there they completed their schooling and were trained for the ministry. Whatever the reasons, relations between the Rosses and Stewart were strained for many years after Govan's resignation and departure in 1870. A feud grew up in which most of the missionaries and ministers in the Presbytery were ranged against Stewart and his supporters. Several major issues which confronted Presbytery became battle grounds for the two factions.

The division of responsibilities and the separation of the educational and evangelistic functions of the Mission enabled Lovedale, and later Blythwood, to grow in the direction desired by the F.M.C., but would have been difficult to operate, even if harmony had prevailed in the mission. As it was, "this organisational structure intensified the feud and made it impossible to heal the breach. Both sides retreated behind their respective bastions. The Presbytery had no right to discuss the Institution; the Education Board was not supposed to concern itself with mission stations. There was no meeting place in which they could air their grievances openly and honestly. Instead these grievances were referred in private letters to the Secretary of the F.M.C., who could not sympathise with the dissension, yet who was powerless to resolve it...there was a constant referral of all matters to Scotland, and a consequent paralysis of will in South Africa itself."²³

21. R.H.W. Shepherd, Op.Cit., 152-67, gives a full account of this controversy, paying tribute to Govan's work and the way he reacted to the Committee's decision.

22. Point made by A.M. McGregor in conversation with the writer.

23. S.M. Brock, Op.Cit., 34.

All this was illustrated clearly in the long struggle for the control of Blythswood. This cannot be understood except against the background of division in the Presbytery and the rivalry between it and the Education Board. (The Financial Board was dissolved in 1881; thereafter stations appointed their own treasurers and Institution finances came under the control of the principals. On instructions from the F.M.C. the Mission Council was disbanded the following year, and the Presbytery took over its work, except in connection with the Institutions.)

Another factor which encouraged the growth of Institutions, such as Lovedale, was the economic revolution, which began in South Africa in the 1860's with the discovery of diamonds, and greatly increased the demand for artisans and clerical workers. This development reinforced the argument for a broad, practical education as the Institutions' main concern and for the extension of facilities for industrial training. It therefore made Stewart's policy inherently more acceptable to many Whites than Govan's, though even under Stewart Lovedale was subjected to considerable attack, as we shall see later.

The type of education offered at Lovedale and Blythswood and their undenominational, multi-racial character differentiated them from the Mission as a whole. Their great and ever-increasing financial needs could not be met locally, in spite of fees, government grants, income from the industrial departments, and occasional donations. This necessitated large subsidies from the F.M.C., as well as donations canvassed from wealthy individuals in Scotland. The other missionaries were inclined to resent the pouring into Lovedale of so much money which might otherwise have gone into the extension of general mission work.

CHAPTER IIIDISRUPTION, DISHARMONY AND OTHER DIFFICULTIES:MACDONALD'S PRINCIPALSHIP, 1876-80The Building of the Institution

While in Scotland Stewart arranged for the appointment by the F.M.C. of the Rev. James MacDonald (1847-1918) as the first principal of the new Institution. Stewart arrived in South Africa before MacDonald and was soon at the site of the future Blythwood, along with four stonemasons, all Aberdonians, whom he had brought out to build the Institution. The site chosen was a portion of the government reserve surrounding the Commissioner's residence at Nqamakwe. The building was to be about three miles from the house, in a valley with a perennial spring. At a meeting at Blyth's house in July, 1875 Stewart handed over £1500; £500 had come from the F.M.C., and he had raised the rest. He explained why the starting of the work had been so long delayed. In their replies Bikitsha, Mazamisa and others expressed their gratitude for the help given them from Scotland and their willingness to give any further aid that might become necessary while the building was progressing - perhaps indicating that they would collect more money if necessary.¹

MacDonald arrived in August and spent the rest of the year at Lovedale, learning about various aspects of its work. In the new year Stewart took him to the Transkei to see the new site and inspect the work. There was not much to be seen, as the walls were only a few feet high. The masons complained bitterly about the weather, the local population and the isolation from civilization. "They natives are just a when pock puddins who try to get the lend o' ye in a' thing", complained one.² They also had labour troubles, some of which they tried to settle with their fists. The problem of communication was probably acute.

1. KE, 1/8 & 1/9/1875.

2. J. MacDonald, Op.Cit., 37.

Later in the year a second batch of masons arrived from Aberdeen and immediately more problems arose. Two of them turned out not to be stonemasons at all, and there were constant disputes, which added to the difficulty of getting good work done. MacDonald, by his own account, had to watch them closely to ensure that even the simplest piece of work was done satisfactorily. For six months he was constantly on the road between Nqamakwe and Lovedale, a distance of 120 miles, supervising building operations, settling innumerable disputes among the masons and between them and the African labourers, sometimes even ordering the demolition of a badly built section.³

At some time during the two years while the Institution was being built the Mfengu subscribed a second sum of £1500. There is a curious absence of news of it in the Kaffir Express during this period, but in 1879 Stewart is reported as saying that the building was originally designed for 70 pupils, but later he heard that the Fingos were dissatisfied, as they felt the building would be too small for the wants of the district. A second storey was therefore added.⁴ If this is correct the second subscription was not planned from the beginning, as Stormont says. The truth may be that because the amount collected on the first occasion had exceeded the total asked for by Stewart the idea of a second collection had been abandoned, but it was revived when the Mfengu asked for a bigger building.

The Institution was opened on the 25th July, 1877, although the woodwork was far from finished. A crowd of several thousand gathered for the long day of worship, speeches and festivities. The Rev. .J. Mzimba, minister of the Lovedale Congregation, preached at the opening service. Blyth had been transferred to East Griqualand, and his successor, J. Ayliff, took the chair. In his speech he emphasized the benefits flowing from Institutions such as Blythwood and from the other public works the Fingos had undertaken. Remarks like these and exhortations to the Fingos to support Blythwood were made by European speakers on a number of occasions over the next few years,

3. Ibid., 41-3.

4. CE, 1/12/1879; see also pp. 9-10.

probably indicating that there was still a substantial section of the population indifferent or opposed to education.

According to a financial statement read by MacDonald, the Fingos had contributed £3000 towards the cost of the building, £1500 had been brought from Scotland by Dr Stewart, and the F.M.C. had subsequently sent another £700. The total cost was over £7000 and there was thus a debt of some £2000. About £300 in cash and kind was contributed or promised at the meeting, and when the African speakers' turn came several proposed a third levy of five shillings per man to clear the debt.

The Institution was built of local sandstone which had appeared to be very suitable for building, but soon crumbled with weathering, causing considerable concern and expense in the years to come. The building measured 200 feet by 40. The lower storey was occupied by a hall, several classrooms and dormitories and the principal's quarters, and the upper by more dormitories. When completed the Institution was expected to have room for 120 African and 30 European boarders.⁵

The War of 1877-9

Before the opening of Blythswood there had been signs of tension and restlessness in the Transkei. Relations between the Mfengu and the Gcaleka were particularly strained. The causes of the war are too complex to detail here, but it is probably not unfair to trace it chiefly to the government's resettlement schemes of the 1850's and 1860's, which had involved the dispossession of the Gcalekas. "The Galeka chafed that the Fingo dog should be prospering on the country where he had been wont to live luxuriously, and he murmured discontent against what he called the favouritism of the British Government."⁶

Blythswood opened with 20 pupils, and the number soon increased to 36, but after about a month the pupils had to be sent home. All attempts to

5. Report in the Cape Mercury, quoted by J. MacDonald, Op.Cit., 51-2. See also CE, 1/8/1877.

6. J.A. Chalmers, CE, 1/11/1879. Chalmers was a U.P. missionary.

reconcile the Mfengu and the Gcaleka had failed, and fighting had broken out. It had been decided to make Blythswood a fortified centre of refuge for Whites. Conditions in the building were very overcrowded and uncomfortable, and MacDonald and the English officer in charge were constantly settling quarrels between families jealous of their territory.

In December MacDonald left for Scotland, intending to get married and stay for two months. In the end he had to wait for ten before he considered it feasible to return to the Transkei.

The Dispute About Blythswood's Role and its Relation to Lovedale

Even before the opening of Blythswood MacDonald began attempts to extend its activities far beyond the range envisaged by Stewart and Blyth. In May, 1877 he applied to the F.M.C. for a grant of £1000 to build a girls' school. He stressed the influence of Christian women in African society, the distance of Blythswood from Lovedale and the danger that another denomination would act if the Free Church did not. The present Cape government was willing to make grants for salaries and other needs. Once made, these grants would be safe, even after a change of government.⁷ (In fact such grants were liable to be cut in periods of financial stringency, as Blythswood found to its cost in 1886.⁸) MacDonald was also keen to have several industrial departments. (Only carpentry had been planned for the early stages.)

At this time Stewart was in Nyasaland, superintending the new Livingstonia Mission. The Education Board, which seems to have been composed almost entirely of Lovedale staff members, tried to check MacDonald, and kept Stewart informed of developments. He was concerned lest MacDonald's plans should land Lovedale and Stewart himself in difficulties, and he was convinced some members of the Presbytery were encouraging MacDonald to develop Blythswood independently of Lovedale instead of keeping it as a branch for

7. MacDonald to W. Keddie, SP 25A(ii), 21/5/1877.

8. Blythswood Report, CE, 1/2/1888.

some years at least. He resolved to tell MacDonald to abide by the original agreement.⁹

The following year (1878) he procured the agreement of the Education Board to a memorandum setting out his views on Blythswood and sent it to the F.M.C. He argued that to allow Blythswood to develop to a point where it duplicated Lovedale's facilities and courses would be to create an unhealthy rivalry and put such a strain on Mission finances that neither Institution would be able to extend and improve Native education efficiently. Blythswood and Lovedale would form parts of one efficient system if Lovedale could be relieved of the burden of large numbers of elementary school pupils. Blythswood should therefore offer a three-year course, ending with Std IV, and competent pupils who wished to go further could proceed to Lovedale. The depressed state of the Colony's economy and the high cost of setting up a complete industrial section made it inexpedient and financially dangerous to attempt any more at present than the continuation of the small carpentry department. For the present two European teachers and two or more African assistants should be sufficient for the needs of the Institution. (Presumably this does not include the carpentry instructor. A second European teacher, W.P. Brunton, had arrived at the beginning of the year, destined for Blythswood.) The proposed girls' school was also highly inexpedient at present, Stewart thought. As far as finances were concerned, some control by the Education Board was unavoidable.¹⁰

The Presbytery of Kaffraria now entered the lists in a battle which went on intermittently for the next five years, and flared up twice more during Stewart's lifetime. The opposition to Stewart's plans was instigated chiefly by the Rosses and by Mzimba, who was Presbytery's representative on the Education Board. The Transkei missionaries wanted more say in Blythswood affairs and sought to keep Lovedale, and especially Stewart, out of them.

9. Stewart to his wife, 24/12/1877, Stewart Collection, Rhodesian Archives, 13/3/1, quoted in S.M. Brock, *Op.Cit.*, 80.

10. Memorandum on the Relation of Blythswood to Lovedale, SP 25A(iv), printed memorandum from the F.M.C., item VI.

A group in the Presbytery therefore tried to separate Blythwood from Lovedale, and supported MacDonald's plans, but they found it increasingly difficult to defend him, because he mismanaged Blythwood so badly.¹¹

Their first step was to protest to the F.M.C. about the Education Board's acceptance of Stewart's memorandum. They were clearly conscious that they were dealing with a matter which was outside their jurisdiction. The essence of their argument was contained in a Presbytery minute:

"The Presbytery, without presuming to interfere with the work of the Education Board, deem it their duty to state their conviction that these regulations, if carried out, will damage the Blythwood Institution in the estimation of the Government, the Colony, and the natives, and disappoint the expectations of all the sections of the community; further, that they will damage the mission in the eyes of the country, as the proposed limitations are not in harmony with the character it has borne during the whole of its history."¹²

Charles Brownlee, now a Permanent Secretary in the Department of Native Affairs and a Presbytery elder, sent a supporting memorandum with the minute. He emphasized that what the Fingos wanted was an Institution within reach of them which would yield the same benefits as Lovedale. If there was to be any hope of this condition's being fulfilled, Blythwood pupils must be able to go beyond Std IV, and qualify for the government's elementary examination. Those who wanted to go further than that could go on to Lovedale. In this way there would be no possibility of competition between the two Institutions. Setting a limit of Std IV, on the other hand, would put Blythwood on a lower level than many existing schools.

In a covering letter the Rev. J.D. Don, the minister of the White congregation in King William's Town, emphasized the bad impression the new measures would create. It would be said that they benefited Lovedale at

11. S.M. Brock, Op.Cit., 81, 352 f.

12. Minute of the Presbytery of Kaffraria on the Relation of Lovedale and Blythwood, 3/7/1878, SP 25A(iv), printed memorandum, item VII.

the expense of the rest of the country, and that the Free Church was not acting bona fide towards Fingoland.¹³

Obviously stung by these references to the Education Board and Lovedale and indirectly to himself, Stewart sent the F.M.C. a vehement and detailed reply to these three documents. There was no breach of faith, he argued, since Blythswood was actually built on a bigger scale than originally intended. If it could pass 50% of its pupils through Std IV it would do better than most frontier schools, Lovedale included.

In discussing the financial implications of a girls' school Stewart hinted strongly that the arguments raised really served to disguise an attack on Lovedale. He made the charge more explicit in dealing with Don's letter:

"He is not, I think, to be blamed, as he is simply passing through that stage of misinformation as to Lovedale and its doings through which all newly arrived men since 1870 have passed, from having had very peculiar views and opinions placed before them. Some have passed through this and emerged on the opposite side, very much to their own comfort, and greatly to their own astonishment.

There is nothing [he continues] in this reference of the Presbytery either new or surprising. It is entirely consistent with the course which has been steadily pursued towards Lovedale for the last twelve years."

The Presbytery's proposals would inevitably lead to rivalry between the two Institutions, he argued. He concluded with the two most compelling arguments against the Presbytery's case: together with the existing debt the cost of building a girls' school and setting up two more industrial departments would be between £5300 and £6300; secondly while Presbytery might express an opinion, it had no authority in the matter.¹⁴

13. Statement by the Hon. C. Brownlee, 9/7/1878, and Letter from Rev. J.D. Don, 10/7/1878, SP, Ibid.

14. Reply to the Minute of the Presbytery.....(n.d.) CL, PR 1355, printed memorandum, item VIII (following on from item VII above).

The F.M.C. on the whole upheld Stewart's view, though they dismissed the concern about rivalry, perhaps unrealistically. In an implied rebuke they called Presbytery's attention to the 1864 minute, which had laid down the remit of each Court or Board in the Mission.¹⁵

The Presbytery did not give up. This reply elicited two more memoranda, one from Brownlee and the other from Don and Ross (probably Richard).¹⁶ There is a gap in the Presbytery minutes, but it seems that the F.M.C. did not change its mind.

Not surprisingly, Blyth supported Stewart's views on Blythswood. He expressed the greatest confidence in Stewart and support for the "liberal spirit" in which the work at Lovedale was carried on. If the plan proposed by certain members of Presbytery were carried out, Blythswood would lose its intended undenominational character, and cause the Fingos to regret that it was ever started.¹⁷

One is inclined to wonder whether Stewart to some extent brought his troubles over Blythswood on himself. The Mfengu gave more than they had promised, and he in turn promised to match their gift. Subsequently there was another subscription by the Mfengu and another gift from the F.M.C. Did Stewart, once he had embarked on the project, allow his enthusiasm to run away with him? Was he unable to resist doing things on a larger scale than anyone else? It may be that the plans for Livingstonia gave him a sense of missionary empire-building, which changed his ideas on the scale of Blythswood. Certainly Shepherd calls him "a missionary imperialist, hoping to unite Lovedale, Livingstonia, Blantyre and Blythswood in a federation, the controlling centre of which was to be the first-mentioned." Through its higher classes Lovedale would act as training college, university and divinity hall for the other centres.

15. S.M. Brock, Op.Cit., 82-3, referring to F.M.C. minutes of 19/11/1878.

16. Minutes of the Free Church Presbytery of Kaffraria, 1875-89, CL, MS 9041, 1/5/1879.

17. Blyth to Stewart, SP 25B(i), 8/1/1879.

In fact each centre to a large extent went its own way, though Stewart fought to prevent what he considered a waste of money and energy. We can see this in his repeated attempts to limit the scope of Blythswood's activities. K.J. McCracken refers to a long-drawn out battle between Stewart and Robert Laws and their followers for control of Livingstonia.¹⁸

On the other hand Stewart may simply have reasoned that if Blythswood were to offer industrial education as well as ordinary schooling it would need to operate on a fairly large scale. Because industrial education was so expensive to provide, one fair-sized department would have a far better chance of paying for itself than several with only a few pupils in each.

MacDonald Comes Under Fire

Even before Blythswood opened MacDonald's work, or lack of it, began to be criticised. By the time Stewart left for Livingstonia in 1876 MacDonald's conduct and his management of the building operations in the Transkei were giving Stewart and others cause for concern. At the beginning of 1877 the Rev. John Buchanan, the acting head of Lovedale, wrote an earnest, carefully phrased letter, reproaching MacDonald for leaving the building operations unsupervised and not sending all the masons to Lovedale by Christmas, as he had promised. He went on to warn MacDonald of the danger "of frittering yourself away in a thousand little impulses, instead of giving yourself as a man of God to a determined course of study and of action." Finally he urged him to return to the Transkei from Stellenbosch, where he was staying. MacDonald evidently did so shortly afterwards.¹⁹

Later in the year Stewart became alarmed at the news of MacDonald's attempts to start new departments almost immediately and secure more assistants (part of whose salaries, at least, would have to be paid by the Mission), and of the expenses he was running up. (See p. 23). MacDonald replied to Stewart's objections (evidently conveyed to him by Buchanan) in a somewhat

18. R.H.W. Shepherd, Op.Cit., 187-8; Religion in Africa, K.J. McCracken, Op.Cit., 94.

19. Buchanan to MacDonald, SP 25A(ii), 2/1/1877; MacDonald to Stewart, SP 25B(ii), 15/1/1877.

aggrieved tone. His efforts to start other industrial departments were in line with the decision of the Education Board, as he remembered it. His only assistant, Thomas Brown, would be fully occupied for another nine months in finishing the woodwork of the building. The work of teaching, preaching and administration was too heavy for one man, and he needed additional assistance. (This was written shortly after Blythswood opened. Brunton apparently arrived after the war had forced the closure of the Institution.) His spending so far had only been on necessities. Since Blythswood was to all intents and purposes part of Lovedale the Board should take up the question of Blythswood's debt (now about £1700).²⁰

The attacks on MacDonald's administration continued while he was in Scotland. He was reproached for presenting to the finance committee of the F.M.C. unaudited and incomplete accounts of the Blythswood building.²¹ Evidently aware that his management and his role in the dispute over Blythswood were going to come under the scrutiny of the F.M.C. he tried to defend himself. Saying that he hesitated to give a full statement of his views unasked, he went on, "I may say however that in all I have done, down to petty details, I have had the cordial approval of all the missionaries in the field at the time, and that I consider the idea of parent Institution and branch has been carried out so far as it is desirable that should be done." Soon afterwards he sent a statement on Blythswood, "But I am in such ignorance - so utterly in the dark - as to what questions are to be brought up that I do not know if one word of it is to the point or not."²² These and other statements indicate that his main quarrel was with Stewart, and that disenchantment with him was spreading. In spite of his protestations it is pretty clear that he knew which issues were before the F.M.C.

In February, 1879 Blythswood reopened, and soon it had 45 boarders. From the beginning the pupils included girls, but it is not clear when they

20. MacDonald to Buchanan, SP 25B(iv), 23/8/1877.

21. J.M. Mitchell to MacDonald, SP 25A(ii), 23/1/1878.

22. MacDonald to Mitchell, SP 25A(ii), 14/6 & 8/7/1878.

began to be received as boarders. Brunton joined Brown and MacDonald on the staff. In spite of an unsettled feeling among the Mfengu, probably due to the Zulu war, Blythwood was able to settle down reasonably well to its work. In June the following year Charles Clark, the School Inspector for the Transkei, gave a very favourable report. Considering the recent opening and the difficulties the Institution had had to contend with, the standard of its work was very satisfactory. The discipline and organization of the classes were excellent. Outside orders were keeping the thirteen carpentry apprentices very busy, and they had also won prizes for furniture exhibited at the Transkei Agricultural Show. Under Mrs MacDonald's supervision the Sewing School was also producing good work. MacDonald himself paid tribute to Brown's energy and perseverance and noted that at the end of his first financial year he was able to show a nett. profit of £163, an unusual feat for a newly established industrial department.²³

MacDonald followed the Lovedale practice of making all the boys do two hours' outdoor work in the afternoon. There was a great deal to do, first in clearing up the mess and levelling the earthworks left by the military, and then in laying out the grounds and digging a new water furrow to assure the Institution of a permanent supply. No doubt the manual labour requirement was as unpopular at Blythwood as at Lovedale,²⁴ but later principals persisted with it, probably in the belief that, besides its obvious usefulness for the Institution, it was an important part of the character training of the pupils, and part of the civilizing process. James McLaren, the principal from 1883 to 1897, believed civilization came to a people mostly through work done by them with their own hands, such as building a house or a water furrow, or planting a garden. Consequently he saw the field and garden work done by the schoolboys and the domestic work done by the girls as important parts of the work of a missionary Institution.²⁵

23. J. MacDonald, Light in Africa, 80 f. He quotes most of Clark's report.

24. Lovedale Report for 1883, CE, 1/1/1884.

25. J. McLaren, Missionary Objects in Africa, CE, 1/5/1883; Blythwood Report for 1887, CE, 1/2/1888.

In spite of the apparently promising start to the work, problems began to build up in 1879. MacDonald continued to disclaim responsibility for the debt and the creditors began pressing for their money. The number of pupils began to fall, indicating dissatisfaction among the parents. Stewart decided to intervene.

A great meeting was organized in November. Five hundred Mfengu headmen and others attended and were addressed by Stewart and Blyth, who had returned to the Transkei as Chief Magistrate. Significantly Blyth said that the spirit which had animated the Fingos when they began this project had departed, and he hoped they would recapture it. This was meant to be their Institution, through which they could advance their interests and those of their children and countrymen. Christianity and a Christian education were essential for the true exaltation of a people. Stewart emphasized that the Institution was for the education of all in Fingoland, and stressed the value of education. It would seem from these speeches that Blythswood still had the support of only a section of the people, and that Blyth and Stewart felt it was in danger of losing even that.

Stewart proposed "a committee of twelve to fourteen headmen to be associated with the missionaries in the management of the place. You can choose these men today - four from the Butterworth district, four from Nqamakwe and four from the Tsomo." He saw this as an advisory committee which, among other things, could assist MacDonald in the maintenance of discipline.

After paying tribute to the work done at Blythswood during his absence by Richard Ross, Stewart appealed to the Mfengu to clear the debt; he could ask for no more money in Scotland for the present. The headmen consulted and informed him that they would organize another voluntary levy of five shillings.²⁶

At a meeting in January, 1880 about £1100 was handed over, and this was later made up to about £1600. Stewart said that this effort showed what

26. CE, 1/12/1879.

the Native people could achieve under a wise and good administration. Though some people unfortunately said that the Natives were unimprovable he believed there was no limit to the improvement possible for men of any colour. He described the duties of the Native Committee in more detail: it should visit the Institution, make suggestions, advise and aid in cases of discipline, place the Institution in the hearts and minds of the people, and help in any other way within the limits of the original memorandum drawn up as the constitution of Blythwood. Some people had expressed alarm at the formation of the Committee, but he and Blyth were confident it would give "wise counsel and judicious help." He emphasized at length the importance of encouraging Africans who had progressed to a certain stage to take responsibility and share in the task of uplifting their people, and so relieve the British people of the burden. Missionaries were only doing their work if they were training Africans to take over from them.²⁷

Stewart's references to discipline are probably an indication that MacDonald's efforts in this direction had not been very successful. His stress on the value of the Native Committee and description of its duties indicate what became clear not very long after - that MacDonald was unwilling to allow the headmen any say in the running of the Institution, and that communication between them generally was poor. The speech is also an interesting reflection of Stewart's views on the advancement of the African people and their assumption of responsibility. (See Chapter IV.)

Though there was no open quarrel at the time, MacDonald evidently resented Stewart's tendency to sweep in and take over. In January, 1880, only a few days before the meeting described above, he placed before the Presbytery a petition "representing that the mode in which the supervision of Blythwood was carried out by Dr Stewart as representative of the Education Board affected injuriously his status and rights as a member of Presbytery; complaining of the appointment of a local committee with power to interfere in the management of the Institution, and praying the Presbytery

27. CE, 1/2/1880.

to recommend to the F.M. Committee his transference to another sphere within the mission. Also a protest and appeal against the Constitution of the said Committee." Very lengthy debate followed; in the end MacDonald was granted leave to withdraw his petition, protest and appeal.²⁸

Feelings had obviously become heated, for at the next meeting there was an unedifying wrangle over an allegation by Stewart that MacDonald's action had not been seriously meant. It is difficult to avoid the impression that MacDonald resented Stewart's assertion of authority, rather than his decision to take action about the debt or his determination to limit Blythswood's activities. Once again MacDonald asked to be transferred, on the grounds of his wife's health, his personal disagreement with Stewart on many points and the need for cordial relations between Blythswood and Lovedale. The Presbytery avoided an outright condemnation of MacDonald, but found that his relations with Stewart and the Education Board and with Blyth and the Native Committee had become so strained that it seemed best to recommend to the F.M.C. that he be transferred. They gave their general support to Stewart's views on the management of Blythswood.²⁹ At both these meetings Lovedale was well represented, and this no doubt accounts for the outcome.

Between the two Presbytery meetings Stewart composed a stinging denunciation of MacDonald's management of Blythswood and of his conduct towards those with whom he was supposed to co-operate, coupled with a defence of his own actions and feelings. This was evidently addressed to the Education Board. Among many other charges, mostly familiar, he accused MacDonald of misrepresenting the position at Blythswood both in his returns to the F.M.C. and in his protest to the Presbytery.³⁰ In June the Education Board, which had already recommended MacDonald's transfer, adopted a statement by W.J.B. Moir, then on the staff of Lovedale. In general it bore out previous

28. Minutes of the Presbytery of Kaffraria, CL, MS 9041, 7/1/1880.

29. Ibid., 7 & 8/4/1880.

30. SP 25A(iv) From internal evidence it seems fairly certain that this paper was written in March, 1880.

complaints from Stewart and the F.M.C. about MacDonald's management and attitude, adding that he had not kept the Board properly informed about what was happening at Blythswood, or sent any reports of its work. Discipline, organization, cleanliness and even the cooking were so poor that a fresh start under a new principal was the only solution. Though MacDonald might not have been suited to or fit for the job, they were not convinced he had done his best.³¹

The F.M.C. decided to transfer MacDonald to the Idutywa mission station, but this was not the end of the saga, as we shall see later. The picture of his work and his character which emerges from all the available sources, except his own book, is very unfavourable. He seems to have been a headstrong, somewhat arrogant man, inclined to be autocratic, yet careless of practicalities. He was energetic but apparently rather unscrupulous, in giving various people both a good impression of his work and his version of the dispute with Stewart. He was accused not only of carelessness but of dishonesty in money matters by his successor, J.A. Bennie. (See chapter V). That there was a serious failure in personal relations with Stewart, Blyth and others cannot be doubted, but it would be unwise to lay all the blame at MacDonald's door. Stewart was not the easiest man to work with, and in this case he is open to charges of intolerance and autocratic behaviour. His nervous, intense temperament, his ambition and his very definite views on the role of Blythswood made it difficult for him to tolerate differences of opinion in one whom he considered his subordinate.

In mitigation of the charges against MacDonald it should be remembered that he made some effort to clear up and improve the grounds of Blythswood after the war, though much remained to be done. The second half of 1880 was a very disturbed time in the Transkei, with the Thembu taking arms against the government and making raids into Mfengu territory. This may help to account for the signs of neglect of grounds and buildings which Bennie found. MacDonald's refusal to work with the Native Committee may have arisen out

31. Ibid., 18/6/1880.

of a feeling that it had been imposed on him by Stewart, and that his own judgement was not trusted. Certainly his book does not seem to indicate a low opinion of Africans generally. He takes issue, for instance, with the common contention that the men in tribal society were incurably lazy and did virtually no work. He took a great interest in African customs and religion, and describes these at some length and, on the whole without condemnation, in his book.³²

His own account gives no hint of the controversy over the status and curriculum of Blythswood, and glosses over the real reason for his leaving. His lengthy quotation of Clark's report gives a good impression of his work, but he does not attack his critics. Perhaps this is a tacit admission that the less said about their charges the better.

From MacDonald's earliest days at Blythswood Ross would have been one of the few Europeans with whom he had regular contact, and he may have played an important part in forming MacDonald's attitude to Stewart and his ambitions for Blythswood. The two were close friends and allies for a time, but eventually even Ross became disillusioned with him.³³

MacDonald was young when he began his work - he turned 30 the year Blythswood opened - but so were many other missionaries and teachers who came out to responsible jobs. It seems fairly certain that he was temperamentally and in other ways unsuited to the difficult task of starting an Institution in the isolated situation of Blythswood. Once there he made errors of judgement which he was not willing to admit and became embroiled in intrigues and personal disputes. These distracted him from his main purpose and in other ways did great harm to the Institution. In general MacDonald failed dismally to meet the high standards of administration and planning required for running an Institution.

32. J. MacDonald, Op.Cit., chapter IX.

33. R. Ross to B. Ross, 25/6/1886, CL, MS 8038.

CHAPTER IVDALE'S EDUCATION POLICY AND THE MISSIONARIES' GOALS

In 1878 Stewart obtained Dale's support in his fight to prevent the rapid expansion of Blythwood's facilities. The letter Dale wrote gives a fairly good reflection of his policy towards African education. He thought Lovedale should serve as a Native "University" to which any Institution might send pupils who had passed Std. IV to complete their education, "literary, scientific or industrial." Because the money available for education grants was very limited and jealously watched, state aid should be kept as free as possible "for the extension of rudimentary instruction amongst all; and though a high institution is necessary for the completion of the system, a multiplication of such institutions would to such an extent absorb the available grants as to hinder the gradual and general uplifting of the native races. What is required at Blythwood is the provision for thorough elementary training, and the gradual development of carpentry and smiths' work is advisable to meet local needs."¹

Dale's primary aim was to give a large number of African children an elementary education, going as far as Std IV if possible, but at least to Std II, so as to achieve basic literacy. (There were no sub-standards at this time.) Early in his period of office he had more or less crippled the Grey Plan by greatly reducing the spending on African education, but by the 1870's he too was stressing the need for industrial education. Davis attributes this change of attitude to a consciousness of the labour shortage which had resulted from the diamond boom. He also maintains that whereas the early missionaries had drawn up their vocational programmes mainly for the Africans' benefit, with conversion as the goal, Dale and his contemporaries

1. Dale to Stewart, SP 25A(i), 11/10/1878. This letter appears as a printed pamphlet in the Lovedale Collection (GL, PR 1360), which suggests strongly that it was circulated by Stewart to the F.M.C. members, and possibly others. (The F.M.C. was a very large committee.)

thought primarily of the colonists' welfare. Dale's programme was designed to buttress the existing Colonial social structure. This, he argues, is shown in the general objectives of the Education Department, as set out by Dale in 1876:

- (1) "To promote day-school instruction of an elementary character among all children of whatever race, European or Native.
- (2) To give industrial training to a limited number of Native lads and girls resident in Training Institutions with the view of becoming Teachers, Artisans or Domestic Servants.
- (3) To provide superior instruction for those pupils in the Colleges and first-class Public Schools who are preparing for the University Examinations."²

Cape missionary educators, according to Davis, generally agreed with Dale's objectives, since they fitted in generally with their own changing attitudes towards Africans. He sees these attitudes as becoming increasingly racialistic after the middle of the 19th century, especially among the younger missionaries coming out. Belief in the cultural superiority gave way to a belief in their racial superiority over Africans.³ This reinforced a trend, noticeable from the 1850's, towards educating Africans for a supposedly naturally lower position in society. He cites the changes in Lovedale's policy after Stewart's arrival as an example.

It is true that after the passing of the Education Act in 1865 financial support for White education was built up to a much higher level than that for Black education.⁴ This trend became more pronounced once

2. Report of the S.G.E. for 1876, G.2-'77, quoted in R.H. Davis, Op.Cit., 244. For Davis's discussion of Dale's policies see 234ff.

3. Ibid., 172ff.

4. Ibid., 241 : government grants for African and Coloured education, once established in terms of the 1865 Act, remained static for the rest of the century. For White schools, on the other hand "the Act's aid provisions were a major advance over previous government support, and after 1865 the government steadily increased both the categories and the scale of appropriations." A number of examples follow.

control of education had passed from British officials to the Cape Parliament after the granting of responsible government in 1872. The size of the education budget was thus outside Dale's control. Davis does not mention any objections by Dale to this discriminatory policy, but at Lovedale, at least, Dale was regarded as a friend and ally in the cause of African education.⁵ Then, as now, education was a political subject, and African education was a particularly sensitive issue.

There was widespread prejudice in the Colony against missionary educators and the educated and semi-educated Africans who were the products of their schools. Certain newspapers and members of parliament were harsh in their criticism of what was being done at Lovedale, in particular. Its education was frequently criticized for being of too high an academic standard, and not practical enough. It was said to educate Africans to such a level as would make them unwilling to enter the labour market. Always in the background of such criticisms was the assumption that anything more than the most elementary education gave an African ideas above his station.⁶ With the development of industrial education, complaints about bookish education gave way to claims that White-owned businesses were being threatened by the industrial departments of the Institutions and that the Black artisans they were producing would keep Europeans out of jobs. Most of these criticisms and fears were highly exaggerated, but were real enough to those who made them.⁷

Time after time the Christian Express defended Lovedale and mission education generally against these criticisms. The Express argued not only that education was necessary for the civilization and uplifting of the

5. R.H.W. Shepherd, Op.Cit., 239, 243.

6. In June, 1876, for example, the Port Elizabeth Telegraph published an article lamenting the difficulty of obtaining an adequate or suitable labour supply in the town and the impertinence of well-paid servants there. The trouble was ascribed largely to "the high pressure rate at which the native servant girls are being educated at various institutions." The following year it attacked Lovedale's course of education, saying that it was too academic and included unsuitable subjects like Geometry and the Classics. (CE, 1/7/1876, 1/3/1877; see also CE, 1/1 & 1/2/1884; R.H.W. Shepherd, Op.Cit. 441 ff.)

7. CE, 1/3 & 2/5/1887.

Africans, but that this process would benefit Europeans far more in the long run than a policy of neglect or of limiting education to bare literacy. In reply to criticisms about its course of education and the complaint that educated Africans were unable or unwilling to do a useful job of work, the "practical" side of Lovedale's education was stressed. Since by "usefulness" critics often meant the willingness to tackle menial or distasteful jobs, the defence missionary writers offered often seemed to share the critics' assumptions about the lowly place Africans should occupy in society. They felt compelled to show that the education they offered did make useful citizens out of the Africans, and that educating and training them was necessary for the security and prosperity of the whole country.⁸ At the same time they were men of their own time: they did not question the belief that their culture was superior to that of the Africans - or rather that they were civilized and the tribal Africans were not. They did not always distinguish between civilization and culture, and often expected their charges to adopt many customs and ideas which they simply considered part of a civilized way of life, rather than of a distinctive culture.⁹

Some missionaries may have believed Africans belonged in an inferior position in society, but this was not true of those at Lovedale, if the Christian Express is anything to go by. Stewart's speech at Blythswood in January, 1880 (See pp. 31f.) and his long paper read to the Lovedale Literary

8. See references in notes 6 and 7; also S.M. Brock, Op.Cit., 123-30, especially 129, where she sums up the dilemma of Lovedale, which was the dilemma of any successful African Institution: "The more successful Lovedale was in producing intelligent, educated, civilised artisans or professional men, the more the Colonists feared the consequences for their own political future."
9. At the 1880 Transkei Agricultural Show one of the competitions was for the best homestead. Twenty five houses were entered, and it seems clear that adherence to European standards and conventions was one of the main criteria applied by the judges. (John Mazamisa won second prize). There is a very approving report of all this in the Christian Express of 1/6/1880. McLaren hoped for the day when Africans would build cottages of brick or stone, for "no large advance in civilisation is possible to a people living in round huts." (Blythswood Report, CE, 1/2/1890.)

Society in 1884¹⁰ show that he felt that there was no limit to the progress possible for the Africans as a race, provided they were prepared to buckle down to hard and sometimes uncongenial work.

Stewart - and probably most other missionaries of his time - saw that the best that most Africans could hope for, both then and for some considerable time to come, was a position on the lower rungs of society. Giving them an education which would fit them for this was not the expression of a conviction that they were inherently inferior to Whites, or of a determination to keep them down. It sprang rather from a sense of obligation to enable Africans to advance in the scale of civilization, and to prepare them for a higher role in society (tribal or Colonial) than they would otherwise fulfil. Given the political exigencies of the time the alternative to the kind of education they were providing was either no education at all, or a vastly inferior type.¹¹

Stewart did not lose interest in higher education. As we have seen, he made great efforts to construct a system of African education with Lovedale as the top of a pyramid, drawing pupils from other Institutions into its higher classes. For many years the provision of higher education for Africans at Lovedale was one of his ideals.¹² But he saw that the process of civilizing and uplifting the African people would take a very long time. He was also deeply convinced that their hope of taking their place among the civilized nations depended first of all on their moral regeneration. This would not happen overnight, but without it the whole structure of civilization would be built on sand. The spiritual work of the Institutions must be given priority. In their interpretation of the missionaries' approach to African education in this period neither Davis nor Brock (in her discussion of the

10. "The Experience of Native Education," CE, 2/6/1884.

11. R.H.W. Shepherd, *Op.Cit.*, 222f., describes an unsuccessful attempt in Parliament in 1887 to abolish government grants for African education.

12. *Ibid.*, 260f.; CE 1/1/1884.

change from assimilationist to trusteeship policies¹³) make sufficient allowance for the effect of the pressures against African education, or for the missionaries' own sense that the civilization of the African people as a whole was a long, laborious process.

Similarly Dale is not given enough credit by Davis for a sense of what the Africans as a people were capable of in the long term. The letter to Stewart, with which we began this chapter, shows that he thought that a broad, fairly elementary education for a large number of Africans, with the option of a higher level of education for a few, was the best means of uplifting the whole race gradually. (The implication might well be drawn that he did not think it could be done rapidly, even if unlimited resources were available.) He made the same demands of African parents as he did of Europeans for sharing the burden of the cost of education.¹⁴ He was also a firm advocate of self-help as a means to African advancement. In 1883 he declared:

"We need no longer go to the Natives with words of pity and weak sentiment, commiserating their ignorance and debased standard of life. It is time to go boldly and honestly, saying as men to men:- You, Kaffirs, have intellectual powers, but they are not cultivated; you have moral feelings and instincts but they are not chastened and regulated; you have all the potential elements of civilized life, but you lack the training of the eye and of the hand, the development and direction of the intellect, the control of the moral feelings, which are instrumental in giving technical skill to the artisan, an honourable spirit of emulation to the student and a due sense of moral obligation to all, whether they work with the hand or the brain."¹⁵

13. S.M. Brock, Op.Cit., 115ff.

14. E.G. Malherbe, Education in South Africa (1652-1922), (Cape Town, 1925), 111f.; CE, 1/3 & 1/7/1887, 1/4/1889.

15. CE, 1/3/1883.

CHAPTER V

BENNIE LAYS THE FOUNDATIONSHis Appointment

John A. Bennie (1840-1885) was the son of one of the first two G.M.S. missionaries in Kaffraria, and was very much a Lovedale product. He completed his education and trained as a teacher there, joining the staff soon afterwards. Except for two years at Blythswood, he remained there from 1864 until his early death. For some years Bennie was boarding master at Lovedale, and he evidently became a trusted associate of Stewart. Twice he was acting head of Lovedale for over a year during Stewart's absence. After the second of these periods he went on leave to Scotland to seek relief from long-standing chest trouble, which had latterly become much worse.

On agreeing to move MacDonald, the F.M.C. appointed a Mr Scott, but he was given permission to do a year's medical study before going to South Africa, and subsequently withdrew.¹ The withdrawal may have come somewhat unexpectedly or at an awkward time. At any rate Bennie later said that he went to Blythswood because no one else could be found.² His appointment was apparently a temporary one, and was undoubtedly arranged by Stewart. A man of Bennie's experience, and with whom Stewart had "never had one jarring word,"³ would be a good candidate in his eyes for the difficult task ahead at Blythswood.

At a large meeting, held early in February 1881, Blythswood was re-opened, and Bennie and the new assistant teacher, Dr Bond, were installed. The speeches by Blyth, Stewart, Bennie, Veldman Bikitsha, Mazamisa and Luzipo, as well as the presence of a number of missionaries and magistrates, show that a major effort was being made to regain the confidence of the Mfengu.

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1. Presumably Scott was a minister, or at least a divinity graduate, since it was the custom of the F.M.C. to appoint ordained men as heads of Institutions.
 2. J.K. Bokwe to Stewart, SP 25A(i), 10/6/1880; memorandum from Bennie to the Mission Council (rough copy), SP 25A(iv), March or April, 1881.
 3. CE, 1/3/1881. In his obituary (CE, 1/6/1885) it is said that his appointment to Blythswood was a temporary one.

Blyth, for instance, emphasized that the fees were low (£6 per annum for boarders) and exhorted parents to keep their children at school as long as possible. Stewart stressed Bennie's experience, and both he and Bennie looked forward to the advice and assistance which the Native Committee could give. A donation of 25 cows from the firm of J.W. Weir and Co. in King William's Town was announced.⁴ Weir was the son of an early industrial missionary, and a generous supporter of mission and church work. He acted for some years as honorary treasurer for the Free Church Mission in the Eastern Cape and the Transkei.

Dealing with MacDonald's Legacy

John Bennie and his wife received a shock when they first saw Blythwood. Except for the principal's quarters, the Institution building was in a filthy and neglected state. The grounds were overgrown, cluttered with rubbish and crossed by military embankments. Some young trees were almost the only evidence of any improvements. Bennie found a letter from MacDonald, asking him to come to Idutywa to take over Blythwood formally, and referring to his coming as a vexed question. Subsequently he continued to be unco-operative and to make things difficult for Bennie in various ways. The latter found Richard Ross unhelpful too.

Whereas MacDonald's financial statement showed a credit balance, Bennie found evidence that the Institution was heavily in debt. He was convinced there had been irregularities in the handling of finances and stocks, and accused MacDonald of manipulating the affairs of the Institution to enrich himself and of removing many items of food, livestock and equipment which belonged to Blythwood. MacDonald refused to hand over the stock formally; his only explanation for all he had taken was that he had to recoup himself; for what was not clear.

Bennie set all this out in a memorandum to the Mission Council. He stressed that his motive was not to harm MacDonald's reputation, but to put

4. Ibid.

the record straight. It seems that MacDonald had sent the F.M.C. and either the Mission Council or the Education Board reports painting a rosy picture of things at Blythwood. In these and in a statement which had appeared in a newspaper he had represented Bennie's appointment as a fortunate promotion. The implication was no doubt that Stewart had procured "an enviable position" for one of his friends.⁵ Thomas Brown, the carpentry instructor, wrote to a friend of his at about this time about MacDonald's alleged malpractices. Inter alia he claimed to have proof that Clark, the inspector, had given Blythwood an over-favourable report because he was friendly with MacDonald.⁶

Bennie's early letters tell of his efforts to raise the standard of discipline from the low level at which he found it. He dismissed Thomas Ngcoza, one of the two African teachers, for immorality, and won a battle of wills with a boy who walked out of the Institution in a temper, but came back to put the matter right. MacDonald, he says, knew about Ngcoza's behaviour, but did nothing about it; and the boys apparently did much as they pleased. Bennie found evidence that parents were sending their boys elsewhere because Blythwood had a poor reputation.⁷

In spite of the protestations in his memorandum, Bennie's attitude towards MacDonald seems to have been hostile from an early stage. He wrote, for instance, that if Ngcoza was guilty and MacDonald knew of it, "the Presbytery will be enabled to see what kind of spirit has been manifested by their precious pet, and the F.M.C. will have their eyes opened too to the kind of man from whom such flowery statements go."⁸

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5. SP 25A(iv), March or April, 1881. Bennie does not make it clear whether it was the Education Board or Mission Council which received MacDonald's report.
 6. Brown to Pirie, SP 25A(ii), 5/5/1881. He describes MacDonald's period as "the reign of sloth and carelessness.. and heartlessness" and says he has only just become fully aware of the harm done by MacDonald's "misrepresentations and letter-writing."
 7. Bennie to Stewart, SP 25A(1), 19/1-4/3/1881.
 8. Ibid., 30/1/1881.

The F.M.C. Commission

The contest within the Mission for the control of Blythswood continued after Bennie's arrival. In mid-1881 the F.M.C. sent a commission to visit Natal and Kaffraria and enquire into the whole subject of the Kaffrarian Mission, including the question of the future of Blythswood.

The two deputies, the Rev. A. Melville and the Rev. R.N. Thornton, visited Blythswood about the beginning of August and presented their report to the F.M.C. in November. They recommended that Blythswood's affairs should be separated from those of Lovedale, and that the F.M.C. should communicate directly with the principal and the Native Committee at Blythswood. (This would mean that the Education Board would have no say in Blythswood affairs.) A girls' school and more industrial departments should be established. The deputies appear to have told the F.M.C. that the problem of disunity in the Kaffrarian Mission was serious, and that Blythswood was a particularly sensitive subject. Lovedale, as many missionaries thought, received a disproportionate amount of the money allocated by the F.M.C. to Kaffraria. Its expansion should be curtailed and the resources more evenly spread through the Mission.

The F.M.C. adopted this report. Though they did not implement the recommendations for the expansion of Blythswood, they did separate it from Lovedale. They followed this up by appointing James McLaren (1857-1934), then in his final year of divinity studies at New College, Edinburgh, as joint head of Blythswood with Bennie. (Their idea was probably that he would take sole charge fairly soon.)

To Stewart this decision was a double blow. The F.M.C. had previously supported his stand on Blythswood; now they had reversed that policy. After the expansion of the previous decade Lovedale needed a period of consolidation, he believed. Only thus could his great ambition of seeing Lovedale develop into a Native University come true. It could not afford a reduction in support from Scotland.⁹

9. S.M. Brock, Op.Cit., 86-90.

By this time Bennie was hoping to leave Blythswood fairly soon; nevertheless he was hurt by the news and resented the Committee's action, feeling that he had been unceremoniously pushed aside. He argued that the appointment of an ordained man for evangelistic work went against the deputies' suggestion and violated a promise to the Fingos to keep Blythswood unsectarian and confine its work to an educational course. (In fact evangelism was never intended to be more than a sideline for McLaren.¹⁰ In any case the appointment of an ordained man did not mean that Blythswood would necessarily lose its unsectarian character.) He believed Ross and MacDonald were working against him, and had undue influence with the F.M.C. More bitter remarks in the same vein are found in his letters in this period.¹¹ Bennie's health was particularly bad during the colder months. This made it difficult for him to do all the work he felt he ought to, and may well have made him more easily discouraged and more suspicious than he would otherwise have been.¹² It may also help to account for his tendency to harp on old grievances and indulge in self-pity.

Blyth was angry because he saw the action of the F.M.C. as the summary dismissal of the man who had managed to put Blythswood on its feet. The deputies had not consulted the Native Committee, and the F.M.C.'s decision was a breach of the original agreement with the Fingos. Under such an inexperienced man Blythswood was likely to deteriorate again and fall into the hands of "a certain clique who have ever been its enemies."¹³ At the June meeting of the Native Committee, Blyth promised Stewart, he would "work [the Committee] up to a sense of their duty."¹⁴

10. Minutes of the Presbytery of Kaffraria, CL, MS 9041, 4/10/1882.

11. Bennie to Stewart, SP 25A(i), 4/5 - 19/5/1882.

12. Bennie to Stewart, SP 25A(i), 1/6/1882. He says here that his poor health makes him irritable and impatient and less able to look at the whole matter calmly.

13. Blyth to Stewart, SP 25B(i), 9/5/1882; Blyth to Bennie, SP 25B(iv), 9/5/1882.

14. SP 25B(i), 26/5/1882.

In due course Blyth sent Stewart a copy of the resolution passed by the Committee. They opposed the change in the status of Blythswood as contrary to the agreement made with them, and did not wish to see the much respected Bennie replaced. The original Committee of twelve headmen and its successor, the present Committee, had tried to do their duty by helping the head of the Institution. While they were grateful for all the help received from Scotland, they felt as if they had been pushed to one side and dismissed, and wanted to know why they had not been consulted. They knew and trusted Stewart and Bennie, and would far rather keep the status quo.

It is doubtful whether the Committee needed much spurring on by Blyth to make this protest, but some of the details seem to indicate his guiding hand.¹⁵ That not all the Mfengu supported Stewart's views on the role of Blythswood is shown by the father who told Bennie that the missionaries' desire to send boys on from Blythswood to Lovedale implied that the former was to be a mere school. He was not at all keen that it should simply be a feeder-school for Lovedale.¹⁶ Since the Mfengu were originally told that Blythswood was to be run on the same lines as Lovedale, it is hardly surprising that some of them wanted their Institution to be more than a feeder-school for Lovedale. The Native Committee's resolution said nothing about the course of work at Blythswood; one wonders whether they realized that retaining the link with Lovedale would probably have meant the limitation of Blythswood's course, for some considerable time at least.

It may be that Ross and MacDonald had been giving members of the F.M.C. and others unfavourable reports of Bennie's work, and pressing for the separation of Blythswood and Lovedale. Dr Bond, on arriving and departing from Blythswood, received what Bennie called "poisonous communications"

15. Letter Book of James Stewart, MMI; 23/6/1882; see also Blyth to Stewart, SP 25B(i) 23/6/1882.

16. Bennie to Stewart, SP 25A(i), Jan., 1881.

from MacDonald. Bennie feared McLaren would likewise be given "wrong impressions" by Ross or MacDonald.¹⁷

There is a gap in the Presbytery Minutes between April, 1880 and January, 1882, but it seems most likely that the anti-Lovedale faction were still trying to gain control of Blythswood. This was also probably behind the decision of the F.M.C. to send the Commission and the subsequent attempt to ensure that neither Lovedale nor the Presbytery would be able to control Blythswood.¹⁸

The decision to replace Bennie is understandable in view of his health alone. In addition his appointment was probably intended to be a temporary one, and he was holding a post in which the F.M.C. seemed to prefer to have an ordained man. Whatever the wisdom of this policy, Bennie himself was in no condition to carry on the work. McLaren was sent out as soon as he had graduated, so that he could have the benefit of working with Bennie for six months, at least. Nevertheless he was so young and inexperienced that Blyth was probably not the only person who had misgivings about his fitness for the job.¹⁹ The failure to consult the Native Committee would seem to be a serious lapse. The news of the new arrangement seems to have come rather abruptly and without warning or preparation.

It is difficult to see what other course of action could have been taken: assigning Blythswood either to Lovedale or to the Presbytery would have deepened the split in the Mission. Yet it was ironical that having set up the Education Board to control all education work in the Mission, the F.M.C. found it necessary to remove Blythswood from its control. In fact the whole system of dividing responsibility had largely broken down. The Education Board had become to all intents and purposes a Lovedale body.

17. Bennie to Stewart, SP 25A(i), 14/7/1882. During part of Bennie's time at Blythswood MacDonald was responsible for sending the F.M.C. a quarterly letter on the work of a part of the Kaffrarian Mission which evidently included Blythswood. This may help to explain his continued contact with the Institution. It would certainly have given him an excuse for writing overseas about its affairs (CL, MSS 8453, 7/8/1879, and 8456, 23/3/1881.)

18. Cf. S.M. Brock, Op.Cit., 81, 86f.

19. Blyth to Stewart, SP 25B(i), 9/5/1882.

The Financial Board had been dissolved and the Mission Council was instructed to hand over its responsibilities to the Presbytery at the same time as the decision on Blythswood was made known.

Stewart made his own protest and passed on those of Blyth and the Native Committee and probably one from Bennie as well, but the F.M.C. did not change its decision. In a private letter the new convener assured Stewart that the Committee did not lack confidence in his abilities, but felt Lovedale gave him more than enough work. Blyth's letter and the arguments of the Native Committee made things difficult for the F.M.C. Neither they nor anyone they approached to work at Blythswood could accept that the Native Committee should have a say in the appointment of the Church's agent there. Finally he said that the F.M.C. had been guided only by the deputies' report, and had not had communication with any parties in the mission field.²⁰

Bennie's Work at Blythswood

The new principal spent his first few months at Blythswood sorting out financial tangles and getting educational and administrative routines established. By mid-February there were 39 boys in the Institution, apparently all boarders. The Native Committee were surprised at Bennie's financial report, but undertook to collect the outstanding fees, which amounted to £150. Bennie made an attempt to insist on prepayment of fees, but this failed. It took a considerable time to complete the most urgent repairs and improvements, such as dealing with a problem of smoke in the kitchen, and planting protective hedges of aloes for the crops. Money had to be laid out to build up the stock of animals.

Surprisingly soon Bennie was making plans for the expansion of the work. He invited W.W. Anderson to join the staff, which to begin with consisted of Bennie, Brown, Dr Bond and, as far as can be ascertained, one African assistant teacher, Falati. Blythswood began taking a few day-pupils, but

20. SP 25A(i), 25/10/1882. Only the first part of the letter survives, but the contents make it clear who the writer is.

the number remained small throughout Bennie's time: at the end of 1882 there were only 9 in the school, compared with 63 boarders.²¹

The carpentry squad was kept busy from the beginning, both with work at the Institution and with outside contracts. Bennie was unhappy about the latter, as they were not always profitable, and he felt they had a bad effect on the apprentices. Outside work took the boys away from their evening classes and made discipline much more difficult to maintain.

Bennie wanted to start an agricultural class, with about six pupils who would do schoolwork on weekday mornings and agricultural work for the rest of the time. He hoped this would be the beginning of a more developed scheme of agricultural training, which would supply a great need in the Transkei. The move failed, apparently through lack of support. No doubt Bennie was up against the conservatism which resisted so many attempts to introduce new agricultural methods. A scheme for a blacksmiths' class did not get off the ground either, but the sewing school was restarted by Falati's wife.

In his report for the two years' work Bennie stressed that the spiritual progress of the pupils was the main aim of the education given them. Sunday services had been held regularly, with occasional help from two U.P. missionaries. Every Wednesday at noon there was a prayer meeting attended by all at Blythwood, and another weekly prayer meeting for the staff. The growth of an enquirers' class from 3 or 4 boys to over 30 was seen as evidence of increasing interest in spiritual matters. All these boys were in earnest, and one had been received into church membership by his missionary. Every other Sunday evening Mr Anderson led a praise meeting, which was very popular. The Christians among the pupils had formed a Missionary Association. It was divided into three groups which took turns to go out on Sundays into pagan villages. Bennie reported indications of moral improvement, notably that discipline had become easier to maintain. Three boys had had to be expelled.

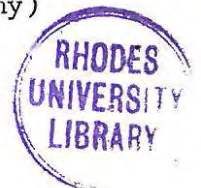
21. Blythwood Report for 1881-2, CE, 1/2/1883. This report and Bennie's letters to Stewart (SP 25A(i), 19/1/1881 - 13/1/1883) are the main sources for this section.

The Institution had suffered from frequent changes of staff, but there had generally been two European and two African men, and an African woman teaching sewing. At some stage Ngcoza was apparently reinstated. Several temporary members of staff are mentioned in Bennie's letters, among them Robert Young, assistant secretary of the F.M.C., who was in South Africa for health reasons.²² Dr Bond and his wife left towards the end of 1881. During his short stay he did some medical work, and perhaps some evangelism as well, since he was experienced in this field. At any rate Bennie seems to have been dissatisfied with him for spending too much time on medical work and not enough on teaching.

In spite of all the staff changes Bennie was able to report an increase in numbers and a satisfactory report from Clark, the inspector. Besides the school pupils there were 17 day pupils in a preparatory class and 15 carpentry apprentices. Of the 20 girls in the sewing class 13 were in the school classes as well. Evening classes were run for the apprentices, servants and herd-boys. There were a few European boys at Blythswood, but no number was given in the report.

Very few details were given of the academic work. At the inspection in April, 1882 6 boys passed Std IV, 33 Std III, 16 Std II and 13 Std I; 7 were below any standard and 10 were absent; the apprentices were away at the time. In Std IV Blythswood had two more passes than either the Methodist Institution of Clarkebury, 25 miles away, or the Anglican Institution of St John's College, Umtata. The curriculum was said to correspond to that of an ordinary English school, and to aim at qualifying for the Government Teachers' Certificate. At this time a one year course after Std IV was required for this certificate. Bennie's statement about the aim of the course at Blythswood is interesting in view of Stewart's wish to limit Blythswood's course to Std IV. Bennie also noted that some of the boys were particularly

22. Young was the author of African Wastes Reclaimed (see bibliography) and other works.



eager to improve their English, but their attempt to speak English all the time had met with little support from the other boys. A few European boys who could not speak Xhosa would be a great acquisition. More successful was the Training Society, which met on Friday evenings. Readings, recitations and debates were among its activities. Though not part of the academic curriculum, this obviously had educational value.

The carpentry department was turning out items such as doors, windows and school furniture, and had done the woodwork for a government office, a jail, a hospital and several churches. To help support the Institution about fifty acres had been put under various cereals and vegetables. The boys helped with the field work in the afternoons. Other outdoor work done included building about a mile of roadway, laying out paths and planting hundreds of trees.

Considering the depressed state of Blythswood when Bennie took over, this is quite an impressive range of activities. The influence of Lovedale is discernible in the general pattern and some of the details. The spiritual activities, for instance, follow the Lovedale pattern fairly closely. The manual labour requirement has been discussed already, but it may be emphasized that this enabled the Institutions to do a great deal of maintenance, improvement and farming without incurring labour costs. At Lovedale all the girls had to do some domestic work, and this probably applied at Blythswood at this time, as it did under McLaren. The manual labour requirement expressed the belief, widely held by missionaries at the time, that one of the most important ways in which a nation became civilized was by acquiring the habit of hard work.²³ This view was propagated in slightly more subtle ways as well. At the end of 1882 Blyth and Girdwood offered four prizes, amounting to £5 altogether, for the best essays on prescribed subjects; these were "The Dignity of Labour" and "The Advantages of Education".

23. CE, 1/8/1878, 2/11/1891 (leading articles on the "Gospel of Work"), 1/5/1883 (article by McLaren), 2/6/1884 (address by Stewart), etc.; R.H. Davis, Op.Cit., 182ff.

As at Lovedale, the chief sources of income were government grants in aid and school fees. The latter amounted to £268 in 1881 and £385 in 1882. By the end of 1883 Blythswood had received about £1200 in fees and £3000 in grants.²⁴ Bennie's report mentioned three donations: the cows from Weir, an American Organ, subscribed for by a number of visitors who had attended an end-of-term concert, and £20 for a bell. This was given by Nogaga, a well-to-do man, and came with the stipulation that a suitable inscription be placed on the bell. The story current at Blythswood in later years was that Nogaga⁹ resisted all attempts to persuade him to become a Christian, but after a few years gave this donation, saying that every time the bell rang, it would pray for him.²⁵ Over the years Blythswood received a few fairly large donations, but never enjoyed the advantages which accrued to Lovedale and Livingstonia through the regular support by wealthy Scottish businessmen and industrialists. None of its principals appears to have had the contacts or the fund-raising talents of James Stewart. Lovedale and Livingstonia Institutions could embark on capital projects and provide facilities which Blythswood could not contemplate.

According to Stormont the original F.M.C. grant to Blythswood was £800 a year, but until 1918 industrial work was undertaken on the principal's responsibility, as far as the F.M.C. was concerned. Government grants were made, but even with those and the income from contracts it was difficult to make industrial work pay.²⁶ This, together with the comparative lack of donations probably explains why Blythswood, throughout the 19th century, had only one industrial department for boys and one for girls (though some boys were trained in agriculture). This limitation had one good effect, in that it saved Blythswood from the major financial crises which Lovedale suffered more than once.

24. CE, 1/2/1884.

25. Conversation with A.M. McGregor, November, 1976.

26. BR, June, 1931, 52, 56.

Although Bennie's letters show him anxious to achieve good results and to be able to report good progress generally, there does not seem to be any area in which the abridged report in the Christian Express glosses over difficulties. A possible exception is discipline, which is said in the report to have become increasingly simple to maintain. In a letter written in 1882, however, he reports a rebellion and mass walk-out at St John's, Umtata. This meant that Blythswood staff had to tread cautiously to keep the boys in order.²⁷

Bennie, on the other hand, was far better equipped than MacDonald had been to deal with the pupils, their parents and the Native Committee. He had grown up and gone to school with Africans and had taught at Lovedale for a long time, and he was a fluent Xhosa speaker. He was also far more competent in administration and teaching. MacDonald may not have been a qualified teacher, but unlike Bennie he could not often bear to admit mistakes or inadequacy. Nor would he readily delegate. Bennie, on the other hand, gladly handed over to Anderson the job of keeping the books of Blythswood. All in all he seems to have restored confidence in the Institution and, by his educational and administrative work, laid a good foundation for the future. Unfortunately his health did not improve after he left, and he died in 1885 at the age of 45.

Throughout his principalship Bennie maintained a close relationship with Stewart. His letters are friendly and informal and at times he seems to have been very dependent on Stewart, not only for advice, but for encouragement and reassurance. Almost all major proposals regarding finance, organisation, etc. were referred to Stewart for approval, but we do find Bennie inviting Anderson to join the Blythswood staff.

The Native Committee's protest at Bennie's removal showed their high regard for him. His assurances when he arrived, coupled with their satisfaction with his work, indicate that he consulted them more often than MacDonald had done, and generally showed himself appreciative of the contribution they could make, and willing to work with them.

27. Bennie to Stewart, SP 25A(i), 15/6/1882.

Blyth's Role

Capt. Blyth had no official position at Blythswood except that of honorary chairman of the Native Committee, but he continued to take a lively interest in the Institution, as we have seen in the matter of the separation of Blythswood from Lovedale and in his awarding of prizes. The fact that he was an Anglican did not in the least discourage him from supporting a Presbyterian-run Institution, but he was very averse to any suggestion of sectarianism in its management. This was one of the things he feared most if the anti-Stewart faction in Presbytery should gain control of Blythswood.

Both through his involvement in Blythswood and his schemes for improvements in the Transkei he continued his policy of encouraging the Africans to help themselves. A local taxation committee, established in Fingoland in 1882, imposed a levy of 2/6 per man per annum to help build and repair roads, give grants to hospitals and agricultural shows, and aid local improvement generally. According to the Christian Express the move originated among the Fingos, but we know that Blyth was contemplating such a scheme quite soon after he first went to Fingoland. It seems more likely that he proposed the idea; some of the headmen may well have accepted it and then persuaded the rest to do so as well.

The headmen were to collect the levy, which was expected to amount to £800 or £1000 annually. The Express reported that a small committee of headmen would manage the fund and vote amounts to various projects, "acting however in conjunction with the Chief Magistrate of the district."²⁸ Blyth and the other magistrates were members of the committee. Their guidance was obviously considered essential. It was the familiar policy of self-help under firm European guidance - and mainly at European initiative - which was characteristic of Blyth. Paternalistic his policy certainly was, but Blyth was prepared to give Africans more responsibility than many others in his day. Though he had no doubt White rule should remain, he fought for government by consultation and for just policies towards the Africans.²⁹

28. CE, 1/4/1882; see also SP 25B(i), 26/5/1882; SP 25A(ii), 5/8/1873.

29. SP 25B(i), 26/5/1881, 21/5/1886; CE, 1/3/1881, 1/8/1889.

CHAPTER VIMcLAREN ERECTS A SOLID STRUCTURE

James McLaren's career followed an almost archetypal Scottish pattern. Born on a small Perthshire farm in 1857, he had a brilliant career at Edinburgh University, interspersed with periods when he worked as a shepherd. In his final year at New College (the Divinity Hall of the Free Church) he was one of eleven students who volunteered for mission work. He was appointed to the principalship of Blythswood the same year, when he was barely 25, and thus had little experience to prepare him for his work. Once he had become acquainted with the situation at Blythswood and the history of the Institution he must have been profoundly thankful he had not come two years earlier. As it was he had to work with Bennie, who was still not entirely happy about his appointment, and with Blyth who was strongly opposed to it and to the new status of Blythswood. His position called for great tact; it says something for his attitude during the first few months that he made a good impression on Bennie.¹

McLaren Formulates his Policy

After only nine months in the country McLaren submitted an article to the Christian Express which shows how much he had absorbed regarding the African people, mission work and the opinions of others about this work. From his introductory remarks it is clear that what he was doing was drawing together all these impressions and trying to work out from them a policy which he could follow at Blythswood. He spoke diffidently of his opinions, saying that they were published only "for purposes of comparison and connection." Whatever McLaren's motives in publishing this article, it shows him as a man with a mind of his own, who would not simply follow Lovedale's example, or act at Stewart's dictation. At the same time he stressed his agreement with his fellow-missionaries on essential points.²

1. Blyth to Stewart, SP 25B(i), 7/7/1882; Bennie to Stewart, SP 25A(i), 31/8 and 28/9/1882.

2. CE, 1/5/1883.

McLaren saw the three objects of the missionary as the education, the civilization and the salvation of the Africans, with the last as the most important. Under the heading of education he stressed first of all the need to teach in such a way that learning became a pleasure for the pupils. He agreed with Donald Ross, the new Inspector-General of schools, that African education should be "simple, practical and unambitious", but thorough. Some knowledge of science and geography ought to be added to the three R's, however. Ross's idea of text books with English and Xhosa on opposite pages appealed to him, because he found so many Africans weak at reading their own language, but he felt that this method should be used only in the lower standards. After that English should be the medium of instruction. Somewhat naively perhaps, he saw text books as means of attacking "objectionable native customs and superstitions" and instilling "love for the true and the right." Like many other missionaries, he was inclined to underestimate the complexity of the process of cultural change.

The acceptance of unqualified and poorly qualified teachers, together with the low salaries, even for those who were qualified, he felt was responsible for the low standards in Native schools. Better paid teachers and, if necessary, fewer schools would bring an improvement.

There is nothing unusual about these ideas, except perhaps the strength of his emphasis on the need for pupils to enjoy their schooling. For the most part they are typical of Scottish missionaries of his time. He made no reference to secondary education, but this was probably simply because it was not an immediate concern at Blythwood.

McLaren's views on the subject of the civilizing process are also familiar to a reader of missionary literature of the period. He believed civilization came mainly through the eye and the hand; skilled cultivation and the building of houses were examples of civilizing activities. The teaching of agricultural methods seemed to him more important than turning out skilled artisans. Africa had room for comparatively few tradesmen, and most people would have to continue to make their living from the land.

Unfortunately both Europeans and Africans thought they knew all about farming, whereas they had much to learn. McLaren was no doubt speaking from a position of some knowledge about farming.

We can see now that it was urgently necessary for Africans to learn better farming methods, but their "civilizing" effect was not the only reason. The pressure of population in what were to become the reserves would make this progress essential. Furthermore it is easy to see that in a rural, undeveloped area like the Transkei trades such as building, wagon-making and printing would not seem nearly as important as farming. For the development of the African people as a whole, on the other hand, this emphasis was wrong. The country was on the verge of industrialization and urbanization and it was vital for the future political, social and economic wellbeing of the African people that they should not remain in the categories of subsistence farmers and unskilled labourers. Now was the time for as many as possible to take their places in the new society by supplying some of the skills that were so badly needed in the mines, commerce and industry. While agriculture was catered for at Lovedale, the Institution was able to make a greater contribution in the new field. Even Lovedale's range would need to be adjusted to supply the new demands.

The tragedy is that the pioneering efforts made at Lovedale and elsewhere aroused as much hostility from the Colonists as the earlier efforts to provide Africans with an academic education. Because of White fears of competition Africans were increasingly excluded from the skilled trades in the cities and towns, while some of the trades traditionally taught in the Institutions, such as carpentry and wagon-making, diminished in importance as time went on. The missionaries' pioneering work in the technical field was not taken up and developed by the state to nearly the same extent as their efforts in schooling, teacher training and medical care.

In dealing finally with the salvation of the African people, McLaren saw as the priority the training not of evangelists, valuable as they were, but of large numbers of ministers. Hitherto the Institutions had succeeded

as regards quality, but the numbers remained small. This seemed to be chiefly due to a course of training which was too long and elaborate, and therefore expensive. He proposed a shorter course omitting the Biblical languages, and in fact very similar to the new course proposed at about this time for Lovedale by Stewart.

McLaren soon became very interested in the Xhosa language. With some help from Bryce Ross he had worked out the rough draft of a new grammar by 1884. It was published about two years later and seems to have been a distinct improvement on earlier works in this field. He subsequently produced a Xhosa-English dictionary and various text books.³

The Issue of Control Arises Again

As soon as he was in sole charge McLaren exercised his freedom to run Blythswood as he thought best. Before very long, however, he sought Stewart's advice on a major disciplinary problem experienced by one of his assistants, a Mr Wardlaw.

In April, 1884 there was an unpleasant incident at a Presbytery meeting which may have some connection with the later trouble. Wardlaw brought before Presbytery a serious complaint against McLaren which is not specified in the minutes, but involved "the imputation or suggestion of the gravest immorality." After very lengthy discussions by a sub-committee Presbytery passed a resolution to the effect that although McLaren had laid his motives open to misinterpretation, the grounds for such a charge were utterly insufficient and Wardlaw had done great harm to the Mission by allowing rumours to spread for some months before bringing this complaint to Presbytery. Wardlaw apologized, but the incident may indicate a personal grudge of some sort on his part.⁴

Towards the end of the year McLaren wrote to Stewart that one of the two classes Wardlaw was teaching had complained to him in a body that Wardlaw

3. McLaren to Stewart, SP 25A(i), 27/11/1884; CE, 1/12/1886.

4. Minutes of the Presbytery of Kaffraria, CL, MS 9041, 2/4/1884.

was not teaching them anything and his punishments were unfair. As they seemed to be on the point of leaving the school, McLaren had handed the class over temporarily to Miss M.B. Ross, who had come from Pirie to help Mrs McLaren in the Sewing School. Though the pupils' complaints might be exaggerated, Wardlaw would admit no fault. McLaren sought Stewart's advice, for he believed this was the most serious problem which had faced Blythwood since his arrival, and the results would be ruinous if it were not solved. Wardlaw evidently took over his class again before the end of the year and tried to regain their confidence, but was very hostile to McLaren. The matter came up at the next meeting of the Native Committee, but Blyth reported to Stewart that no decision had been reached. He hoped Stewart would agree to McLaren's request to visit Blythwood, since he felt this would do more than anything else to restore the Fingos' confidence.⁵

It is difficult to see why this incident in itself should cause such fears for the future of Blythwood. Blyth may have feared that the combined effect of the rumours spread about McLaren and the threatened walk-out of a class would be a serious loss of support from the Mfengu. Wardlaw apparently stayed on until the end of 1885, when he was asked to leave.⁶

Even if it had wanted to act against McLaren on the grounds of his management of Blythwood, the Presbytery could do nothing, since he was answerable directly to the F.M.C. The Presbytery minutes do not reveal any attempt by the missionaries to gain control of Blythwood during McLaren's time. Blyth and the Native Committee, on the other hand, made at least two attempts to persuade the F.M.C. that Blythwood should revert to the status of a branch of Lovedale. The first, at the end of 1884, seems to have had no result. The second induced the F.M.C. to re-establish a link between the two Institutions, though it was not as close as the petitioners wished.

5. McLaren to Stewart, SP 25A(i), 17 and 27/11/1884; Blyth to Stewart, SP 25B(i), 31/12/1884.

6. Minutes of the Presbytery of Kaffraria, CL, MS 9041, 7/4/1886.

Blyth considered that McLaren's discipline and organisation left much to be desired. Reflecting in 1885 on Blythswood's troubles, he argued that it had been made independent before it was ready.⁷ The following year he reported to Stewart that a very large meeting of Fingos at Nqamakwe had decided to ask the F.M.C. to allow Blythswood to revert to its original status, and failing that, that Stewart should still be associated in some way with it. Moreover they wished the powers and duties of the Native Committee to be increased: expenditure and other matters concerning the Institution should be brought before them. They admitted that they had lost interest in the Institution, but claimed that this was because they had been ignored and the control of Blythswood had passed from their hands to the F.M.C.⁸

In fact the missionaries, at any rate, had never regarded the Native Committee as anything more than an advisory body, and there was no question of Blythswood's having "slipped from their hands" (as Blyth put it), in the sense that they had ever exercised a controlling influence. It is highly unlikely that Stewart would have allowed them the powers they were asking for if Blythswood had come under his control again. The request for a return to the old position probably did express their real wish, but there is a strong suggestion of Blyth's hand in the whole move. He was obviously dissatisfied with McLaren's handling of Blythswood, and had never become reconciled to the break with Lovedale. The whole move was in effect a vote of no-confidence in McLaren's management. A lack of evidence makes it difficult to tell whether he had indeed been ignoring the Native Committee, or whether they were feeling frustrated because they had no real power (See below, p.66).

Stewart told Blyth he sympathised with the Fingos' requests, and felt Blythswood had been badly handled by the F.M.C., but it was unlikely that they could be persuaded to remedy the situation. He too was dissatisfied with the state of Blythswood. He had asked his brother-in-law, John Stephen,

7. Blyth to Stewart, SP 25B(i), 18/5/1885.

8. Ibid., 21/5/1886.

who was visiting South Africa and had been to Blythswood, to lay the facts before the F.M.C. Stewart mentioned that he had found Blythswood dirty inside and out. This may have been in part a reference to the fact that there were no proper lavatories. Whether some sort of latrine was provided and not used by the pupils, we cannot be sure, but at any rate typhoid broke out shortly before McLaren left in 1897.⁹

Some months later Stephen reported that the Africa sub-committee of the F.M.C. had decided to recommend to the F.M.C. that a letter be written to the Native Committee defining the position more clearly, and "that McLaren be associated with the Lovedale Education Board and the Principal of Lovedale is to visit Blythswood. Not mentioning your name for fear of offending the Ross faction."¹⁰ It seems that the F.M.C. followed these recommendations, for the following year McLaren wrote to Stewart that he cordially assented to the position assigned to Stewart, in connection with Blythswood, by a recent F.M.C. minute.¹¹ Neither of these letters mentions extra powers for the Native Committee; it seems that the F.M.C. adhered to its earlier decision not to allow the Committee to formulate policy.

Discipline

In an article about McLaren, J.B. Luti wrote that McLaren was a strict disciplinarian; the boys were all afraid of him and called him "the tiger."¹² The whole article is very uncritical in its praise of McLaren, so that one is inclined to take these remarks with a pinch of salt. Nevertheless they may alert us to the fact that Stewart and Blyth were also biassed witnesses. Luti was trained as a teacher at Blythswood and served on the staff under McLaren.

9. Stewart to Blyth, SP 25B(iii) 14/6/1886; W.J.B. Moir to Stewart, SP 25A(i), 20/12/1897.

10. Stephen to Stewart, SP 25A(i), 24/11/1886.

11. McLaren to Stewart, SP 25A(i), 30/5/1887.

12. S.A. Outlook, October, 1934, 74.

In the abridged annual reports, which are found in the Christian Express almost every year from 1885,¹³ McLaren's comments about discipline and the moral and religious state of the pupils are consistently favourable in the period from 1885 to 1891. He repeatedly says that discipline is improving, or becoming easier to maintain, and is optimistic about the number of pupils who are Christians. It may well be that he tended to be over-optimistic; the 1893 report records that the discipline was very unsatisfactory a year earlier, but was brought into a very satisfactory state by the Rev. John Lennox before he left. Lennox substituted for McLaren while the latter was on furlough. The chief trouble, according to the report, was not during school hours, but with boarders after hours. They tried to evade the boarding house rules and the rules for work: "no doubt the freedom, indolence and irregularity of their home life is largely accountable for this." The "rules for work" probably had to do with the manual labour done in the afternoons.

There is evidence from Lennox's letters that he was a strict disciplinarian, who went to considerable trouble to establish a discipline that was more than superficial. We find him writing to the Rev. J. Davidson, the missionary in charge of the U.P. station of Paterson (Mbulu), about a boy whom Lennox was sending to him. He wrote that the boy had been a spokesman for some of the others in complaints about food, and had caused dissatisfaction and disaffection generally. Lennox asked Davidson to speak to him about his conduct and make it clear that if he was to return to Blythswood it must be with a different attitude. There is a number of similar letters to parents, missionaries and, in one case, a magistrate.¹⁴ There is also a letter to J.E. Irving, Wardlaw's successor, giving him advice on how to handle a potentially explosive situation in his class. Several boys had recently complained to Lennox of unjust punishment at the hands of Irving. Lennox

13. Most of the information in the rest of this chapter about Blythswood's work is drawn from these reports; the dates in the Christian Express are as follows: 1/2/1886, 1/2/1888, 1/2/1889, 1/2/1890, 2/2/1891, 1/2/1892, 1/2/1894, 1/2/1895, 2/3/1896, 1/3/1897 and 1/2/1898.

14. Letter Book of the Rev. J. Lennox, 1892-1921, FH 24, 16/2/1893; see also 20/10/1892, 6/2/1893, 29/4/1893, etc.

counselled great patience and the avoidance of irritability or a suspicious manner.¹⁵

Discipline in mission Institutions was never easy. In 1895, for instance, there was tension and unrest in Fingoland because of the introduction of a labour tax on men who did not go away to work for part of the year at least. At the height of this the boys at Blythwood complained about their food. The following night nearly all of them secretly left the Institution. They trickled back for days afterwards in twos and threes, but the work of the Institution was considerably disrupted. Almost every report seems to mention that one or more pupils were expelled during the year. Altogether it would seem that maintaining discipline was considerably more difficult than the reports generally indicate.

Religious Activities

Most of the activities which had taken place in Bennie's time were continued, and more were begun. In 1888 a week of evangelistic services was held towards the end of the year, and this became an annual occurrence. The idea may have come from Lovedale, where such services had been introduced a few years earlier, with beneficial results. The first series at Blythwood was said to have been very effective, both in reaching those who were not Christians, and in deepening the spiritual life of those who were. The second was less effective, but the third, held in 1890, was a cause for great thanksgiving: 45 pupils announced in public that they had found faith in Christ, and only 2 or 3 of the 150 boarders remained uncommitted, according to McLaren's report. During the year the services, weekly prayer meeting and the daily bible lessons in school were used to present the Gospel and build up Christians in the faith. A class for systematic teaching was started in 1890, and for the first time a Communion Service was held in the Institution.

15. Ibid, 11/11/1892.

The boys' Missionary Society did valuable work in the surrounding villages, in which the boys gained experience which would make them valuable auxiliaries in mission work in years to come. Apparently it was also instrumental in the decision of a few boys to go on to Lovedale to be trained as evangelists.

After the Girls' Institution had opened in 1893 a branch of the Y.W.C.A. was formed and a few of its members began missionary work in nearby villages. Separate Sunday School classes were held for boys and girls, but the Temperance Society, established by Mrs McLaren in 1894, was mixed. Perhaps partly for that reason its membership grew in two years to 164 out of a total enrolment of 261. Miss Geils McDougall, a staff member, ran a Band of Hope for the younger children of the neighbourhood. In 1896 a teacher, A.F. Lyon, took over the class in Christian Instruction, and gave them a half-year's course of lectures on Palestine in Jesus' time and the customs and beliefs of the Jews.

A number of Protestant denominations were represented at Blythswood.¹⁶ McLaren continued the policy of unsectarian teaching, but this must have been difficult to apply consistently, especially once Communion Services began to be held.

Some difficulty was experienced with heathen pupils, since their parents generally did not want them to give up their heathen practices. The staff tried to do everything possible to discourage the pupils from continuing these practices at Blythswood, without stifling their parents' interest in education. Conforming to heathen customs at school and even at home generally led to six months' rustication. We do not know how strictly this rule was applied - for instance whether conforming only to certain customs, such as initiation rites, was punishable in this way. There is an interesting

16. In 1893 there were Wesleyans, Anglicans, Congregationalists, Moravians and Lutherans, as well as pupils from U.P. and F.C. missions. The report adds that while most of the pupils were Fingos, a few were "Kaffirs proper" (i.e. Xhosas - probably from the Gcaleka tribe) and four were from the Bomvana tribe.

note in one of Lennox's letters. He says that any boy who circumcises himself during his stay at Blythswood is expelled. He may be readmitted after 3 or 4 sessions (i.e. 1½ to 2 years), but only if he can bring a certificate of good character. Circumcised boys admitted to Blythswood are warned that if they are found to have taunted uncircumcised pupils with being "boys", they will be expelled.¹⁷

We see here an illustration of the point made by Brock about Lovedale: "In its relation to the black community...the Institution was at once a source of support and assault." It defended the Africans' right to educational opportunities, the benefits of civilization and, in time, to participation as equals in society. At the same time it was "a revolutionary instrument, committed openly to the destruction of the traditional society."¹⁸

McLaren's Relationship with the Mfengu and the Native Committee

In 1886, the year in which they made their complaint and request to the F.M.C., the Native Committee were instrumental in obtaining £50 for repairs at Blythswood from the Fingoland District Fund, the fund administered by the local taxation committee. The following year that committee gave £50 to make up a loss in the boarding department. There seems to have been considerable overlapping of membership between the Blythswood committee and the taxation committee. The donations show that the Native Committee had not lost all interest in the Institution.

Up to 1892 the annual reports say very little about the Native Committee (there is no report for 1886), beyond thanking them for their interest and assistance. In each of the reports for 1893, 1894 and 1896 there is a whole section devoted to the activities of the Committee. In 1893 the Committee is said to have decided to collect from the people a sum of £160 needed to pay off a debt on new buildings. The usefulness of the Committee as a means of communication between Blythswood and the people is

17. Lennox to Rev. W.A. Goodwin, of St John's College, Umtata, FH 24, 20/4/1893.

18. S.M. Brock, Op.Cit., 21.

stressed, and several headmen and magistrates are mentioned by name in the thanks. The other two reports are in a similar vein. The last one says that the Committee is still serving the purpose intended for it by Capt. Blyth: "putting and keeping the Institution in the hearts of the people" - perhaps to indicate that the Committee was never meant to be a policy-making body. Though an attempt seems to have been made to give it greater recognition, one cannot help noticing the connection with financial help and the tendency for the Committee to be regarded as a sort of Parent-Teachers' Association, whose main functions were financial and moral support of the Institution.

The Staff

There was more stability in this area during McLaren's time than in the preceding years. Irving stayed for over six years, leaving in 1892. Brown, Ngcoza and Anderson all had long periods of service ranging from 15 to 20 years, though they began their service before McLaren came. In the girls' school there were frequent changes at first, but fewer after 1893.

Apart from the incidents concerning Wardlaw, there are other indications of considerable friction among the staff at times. In 1886 Stephen wrote to Stewart that he had gathered from a letter from Anderson that the visit paid to Blythwood by himself and Stewart had had good results. "The matters were worse for a little, but now they have vastly improved and the machine is working quite smooth and he is satisfied all will go right."¹⁹ When W.J.B. Moir (1846-1904) took over from McLaren in 1897 he was surprised to find that, though staff relations were smooth on the surface, there were strong currents of animosity underneath. He felt that some of this was due to "former arrangements" (perhaps the division of work, which he wanted to change), and some to personal characteristics.²⁰

19. SP 25A(i), 24/11/1886.

20. Stephen to Stewart, SP 25A(i), 24/11/1886; Moir to Stewart, SP 25A(i), 20/12/1897; Letter Book of the Rev. W.J.B. Moir, MM II, Moir to T.M. Lindsay (Convener of the F.M.C.), 1/10/1897.

These remarks give some substance to what is probably an exaggerated account by W.C. Scully, who had two spells as magistrate of Nqamakwe in the 1890's. He described the Blythswood community as one of the strangest he had ever had to deal with. They co-operated well in their work, which, for the most part, was very well done, but most of them did not show one another the Christianity they professed. On Sundays they would appear friendly and concerned for one another when they met at the church door, but on Monday they would be divided into at least three mutually antagonistic cliques. They were constantly quarrelling among themselves and looking for imaginary slights. Elsewhere Scully wrote a satirical sketch on the same subject. One of the characters is obviously based on W.W. Anderson, the boarding master, who was to be a thorn in Moir's side because he had acquired so much power in the Institution during his long stay.²¹

Even when we have subtracted a certain amount of exaggeration for effect in Scully's description, we are left with a disturbing picture. Blythswood, of course, was not unique. Lovedale suffered from the same malaise, particularly towards the end of Stewart's life. It is likely to occur in almost any relatively isolated community. Blythswood was much further off the beaten track than Lovedale. Though it did receive visitors there must have been times when life was lonely and somewhat frustrating,²² especially for a teacher far from home and friends, and dealing with pupils whose outlook and background were quite foreign to him. In these circumstances it would have been all too easy to become jealous of others' gifts or their apparent privileges, and to exaggerate petty grievances. The pupils, on the other hand, cannot have failed altogether to notice these animosities, and so to have lost some of their respect for the staff.

21. W.C. Scully, Further Reminiscences of a South African Pioneer (London, 1913); Chickens' Wings, in By Veldt and Kopje (London, 1907), 186f.

22. Until the time of D.D. Stormont the staff evidently had no social contact with the traders in the vicinity, partly because the staff regarded themselves as professional people, and tended to look down on those engaged in commerce. (Conversation with Miss M. Stormont and Mrs N. Shute, December, 1976).

The effectiveness of the missionary work among the pupils, both through the various classes and societies, and by personal example, which counts for so much in a school or hostel, would tend to be diminished as well.

It is impossible to calculate how much mission work in the Eastern Cape and Transkei was hampered by the divisions and feuds among the missionaries of the Presbytery of Kaffraria. Evidently the disharmony played a part in delaying the introduction of schemes which held promise of benefits to mission work, notably Stewart's scheme for a new course of theological education at Lovedale, and the proposal to unite U.P. and F.C. work in South Africa.²³ That the Mission was able to expand, and that times of spiritual awakening and renewal were experienced is evidence, however, that even this lack of some of the fruits of the Spirit could be overcome by the life-giving work of that Spirit.

Educational Developments

Gradually both educational and industrial training developed, as the Institution grew in size and complexity, and standards were raised.

The number of pupils rose from 126 in 1885 to 205 in 1890 and 316 in 1897. There were 4 European pupils in 1885, 12 in 1890 and 15 in 1893, but after that the numbers seem to have dropped.²⁴

In 1884 the Cape Education Department introduced Std V and made this the entrance requirement for the Third Class Teachers' Certificate. Std V pupils were prepared for the inspection, usually held in May, and for the Elementary Teachers' Examination in September. This made the year a heavy one for both pupils and teacher. After the introduction of Std VI in 1887 Blythswood began preparing some of its pupils for the external Std VI examination, the School Elementary, which was set by the University of the

23. S.M. Brock, Op.Cit., Op.Cit., 34, 165ff.; Lennox to "Ross", FH 24, 10/4/1884.

24. From 1896 Lovedale was not allowed to present African and European pupil teachers for the same examinations, and its multi-racial policy was thus struck "a mortal blow" (R.H.W. Shepherd, Op.Cit., 244). This change of policy on the part of the Education Department (under Sir Thomas Muir the new S.G.E.) was probably responsible for the fall-off in the number of Europeans at Blythswood in the latter part of the decade.

Cape of Good Hope. Until the end of 1893 McLaren took the senior class himself. After a year's experience at Blythwood A.F. Lyon took over the senior pupil teacher class under a new system (see below).

From 1888 only day-scholars were accepted into classes below Std IV. During the 1880's Ngcoza taught most of these lower pupils. He also helped with the evening classes for servants and took most of the classes in the school for translation from English into Xhosa.

During most of McLaren's time boys and girls were taught together in the school. In 1889 numbers were higher than ever before and in 1890 there was a large influx of male boarders; the total number of boarders rose from 100 in 1889 to 150 in 1890. No more could be accommodated in the dormitories and the classrooms were overcrowded. McLaren canvassed Stewart's support for his plans to start a girls' Institution and also to build a separate educational block with a central hall and two rooms on either side. These steps would free enough accommodation in the main building for 200 boarders.

The scheme for a girls' Institution had apparently been mooted some years earlier, for in 1890 Stewart had written in support of it to a Mrs Stephen (very likely John Stephen's wife). His letter shows that the scheme was not new even then: funds had been collected for this purpose a few years earlier. Stewart listed several advantages in having the new Institution at the same centre as the present one, and assured those concerned that the population of Fingoland was big enough to support another girls' school.²⁵

The new educational building for boys was opened in 1892. £500 was subscribed by the Mfengu; the F.M.C. and the New College Missionary Society each contributed £250 and about £250 was raised in South Africa. (See Plate II). The following year the Girls' Institution opened in part of its new building. This was largely paid for by a sum of £1250, which was

25. SP 25B(iii), 1/12/1890.

collected in Scotland by Melville and Thornton after they had visited Blythswood as deputies for the F.M.C. The Ladies' Society of the Free Church increased the annual grant they had been giving to the girls' department, and sent out a Miss Campbell to be the principal of the new school. At the end of 1893 there were 55 pupils on the roll; by 1897 this number had risen to 143.

In 1894 the new Superintendent General of Education Dr (later Sir) Thomas Muir, introduced a three-year teacher training course, with an admission requirement of Std IV. It took Blythswood a few years to adjust its arrangements to the new course. The senior classes of the two Institutions at Blythswood were formed into a Normal Department, in which those who wanted to become teachers were given three years' training as pupil teachers. The lower standards were formed into a mixed practising school. In the Normal Department the second and third year classes were mixed, but the first year group, which was the largest, was divided into boys' and girls' classes. The standard of work required and especially the range of subjects caused considerable difficulties and tended to discourage the pupils. At first the numbers dropped considerably. In the 1897 report Moir remarked that the demands of the Normal Course had made it necessary virtually to exempt the boys engaged in it from outdoor work. Woodwork had been introduced into the curriculum, but he considered this a poor substitute. The course seemed to him to have been drawn up entirely for Europeans, and without consideration for Africans' needs.

Industrial Work

The carpentry department continued to cater for about a dozen apprentices. After a year's trial pupils were taken on for a five year apprenticeship. As before, the work done consisted mostly of furniture and woodwork for schools, churches and government buildings in the Transkei. Those who completed their term of indenture received a certificate and a set of tools, which was paid for by money previously kept back from their

wages. As at Lovedale, it was found that those with a good elementary education behind them got on best when learning their trade, and so Std III was made the minimum entrance qualification. As before a few boys were apprenticed in garden and farm work.

Enquiries were made at the beginning of 1887 to discover the occupations of former apprentices. A few could not be traced, but all the rest were found to be following their trades, mainly among their own people; they were finding regular, though not always very profitable, employment. The result was that doors, windows and various articles of furniture, such as cupboards, were becoming more common in the Transkei. Pressure of work at Blythswood had led to the employment of a few former apprentices as journeymen.

Industrial work for girls was built up gradually. At first there was a class of 15 or 20 who learnt sewing, knitting and some tailoring, while the boarders all did various kinds of household work. Gradually the industrial work seems to have become more systematised. In 1889 five boarders were apprenticed to household work for a year. The report for that year noted that the girls were very keen to learn, and their parents were far more eager for them to learn how to do housework and make clothes than to master English or obtain a teacher's certificate. By 1891 50 girls were attending sewing classes; this included about 12 who were not pupils at the Institution itself.

With the opening of the Girls' Institution the industrial work was reorganized by the new instructress, Miss Geils McDougall. The 16 apprentices were divided into two companies of 8 each, and work was divided into three kinds: washing and ironing, cooking and general housework, and sewing. The apprentices' term was lengthened to two years. Miss McDougall's descriptions of the routine she had established and her comments on the girls' progress or lack of it give the impression of an efficient and demanding regime.

Extramural Activities

Something has already been said of the religious activities after school

hours. During McLaren's time the library was built up, and served as a public library for the district, as well as a school library. McLaren commented in the 1893 report that it was well supported by Europeans in the district, and by Blythswood pupils, but hardly at all by Africans who had left school. An annual government grant enabled 300 books, worth £50, to be bought that year, and a number of magazine subscriptions to be taken out.

Ross Bruce, a teacher, organized cricket and soccer teams for the first time in 1894. Matches were played against European and Native teams and Blythswood emerged with an almost unbeaten record. McLaren remarked that the introduction of sports tended to the mental as well as the physical advancement of the pupils, since the Native schoolboys had no games or pastimes of their own and during their free time used to be seen lying down or wandering about poring over a book when they should have been enjoying some recreation. The following year Bruce was drowned while visiting a mission station in Thembuland, and we hear no more about organized sport during McLaren's time.

Finances

A prolonged drought in the middle and later 1880's caused some parents to be slow in paying fees, and others to withdraw their children altogether for a couple of years. Because of the recession through which the Cape was passing, the government grant for boarders was withdrawn in 1886, causing financial difficulties for Blythswood. These were somewhat relieved by a grant of £50 from the Fingoland District Fund.

Over the five years up to the end of 1885 government grants to the educational department of Blythswood equalled the income in fees, namely £1872-10-0. In 1887 McLaren argued that the government ought to support Institutions more liberally: its grant to the educational department was only £120 as against £600 a year received from Scotland, and £400 from Africans' fees. Blythswood was supplying teachers to government-aided schools all over the country, and it was hardly fair that the burden of

preparing them should rest almost entirely on the Africans themselves and on British philanthropy. A people who contributed so largely to the income of the country in direct and indirect taxation had a right to a return in the form of education, as well as good administration. He acknowledged (the following year) that the support given to the industrial work was generous, but pointed out that the Institution was very generously supported by the Free Church as far as salaries were concerned. By 1897 the income from fees had gone up to about £1000; government grants were no longer a fixed amount, but were determined in a more complicated way.

Occasional donations continued to be received, but not on the same scale as at Lovedale. Blythswood was still a much smaller concern than Lovedale, operating on a far smaller budget. A balance sheet of assets and liabilities for 1895 showed Blythswood's assets to be worth £1726 and capital works £12,232. In 1897 its income and expenditure accounts totalled £5666, whereas Lovedale's in 1894 totalled £15,783.²⁶ In this period Lovedale's allocation from the F.M.C. was in the proportion of 2 to 3 or 3 to 5 to that for the rest of the Kaffrarian Mission.²⁷ This gives an idea of the scale of operations at Lovedale and helps explain the tendency of missionaries in the Kaffrarian Mission to feel that Lovedale absorbed a disproportionate amount of the funds available. In 1893, for instance, Richard Ross called the Presbytery's attention to the increasing disproportion between the expenditure by the F.M.C. on the evangelistic and educational sides of the work.²⁸

Conclusion

In February, 1897 McLaren telegraphed the F.M.C. that he had been offered an inspectorship and wished to resign his post at Blythswood.

26. Minutes of the F.M.C. of the Free Church of Scotland, 1892-7, FH 31, 16/4 and 18/6/1895, 20/4/1897.

27. This conclusion was arrived at by surveying figures given in the F.M.C. minutes at the end of every financial year (March) from 1893 to 1900. In 1892-3, for instance £3892 was paid to the Kaffrarian Mission and £2511 to Lovedale. In 1895-6 the figures were £4039 and £2750 respectively.

28. Minutes of the Presbytery of Kaffraria, 1890-1894, FH 15, 5/7/1893.

(He was an inspector in the Transkei until 1912, and died in 1934). His decision seems to have been unexpected, and was attributed in the 1897 Blythswood Report to health, overstrain and other causes, besides the offer he had received. W.J.B. Moir, who replaced McLaren, wrote to Stewart some months after his arrival that the reasons for McLaren's resignation "are supposed here to be various - difficulty of getting on with [illegible] growing greater yearly; loss of all missionary interest due to Higher Criticism; and finding the burden of work too much and not fairly shared. I feel this latter and mean to change it."²⁹ McLaren did a considerable amount of preaching and took meetings in the Institution, as well as performing his administrative and teaching duties. It would hardly be surprising if the pace and the responsibility had become too much for him after fifteen years. According to J.B. Luti, he was an excellent teacher and preacher; it may be that he wished to get back to a more purely educational job, without the financial cares and administrative responsibilities - and perhaps the difficulties in personal relationships - that the principalship of an Institution involved.

On the whole he had done a good job of steering Blythswood through its first years of independence. Its standards were steadily raised, its curriculum broadened and its facilities expanded. It weathered the financial difficulties of the period and McLaren's defects in organisation and discipline were not serious enough to put Blythswood in danger of losing its independence.

Postscript

Blythswood's hard-won independence was challenged once again by Stewart at the turn of the century, after the F.M.C. had asked him to settle a dispute between Moir and Anderson and look into the financial position. He recommended that Blythswood's work be limited to the first year of the Normal Course, and that the Institution be regarded as a feeder-school for Lovedale.

29. SP 25A(i), 20/12/1897.

The familiar arguments about rivalry and needless expense were adduced. The outgoing convener of the F.M.C., Prof. T.M. Lindsay, supported Stewart, but the F.M.C. decided to leave things as they were for the present. In the end Blythswood's course was not curtailed, and it remained independent.³⁰

30. Minutes of the F.M.C. of the Free Church 1897-1900, FH, 32, 8/5 and 18/9/1900; Minutes of the F.M.C. of the United Free Church, FH, 34, 20/11/1900.

CONCLUSION

All the available evidence suggests that Stormont was on the right track when he maintained that the motives for the subscriptions by the Mfengu were mixed, and that avoidance of the hut tax was the chief motive of the majority. This is true of the first two subscriptions, but in the case of the third it is more difficult to tell.

The first principal of the Institution gave it such a bad start that it was in danger of losing the support of the minority of the Mfengu who had been behind it. He mismanaged its affairs badly and tried, against Stewart's wishes, to add more departments to the Institution, and to act independently of Lovedale. The Presbytery of Kaffraria became involved in the struggle. Some of the missionaries sided with MacDonald and tried to remove Blythswood from Lovedale's control. The issue was settled by the F.M.C., but the bitterness remained. MacDonald remained persona non grata with Lovedale, partly because he continued to interfere in Blythswood's affairs.

In spite of these difficulties and his own poor health, Bennie did a good job of restoring order and laying the foundations for a steady, if not spectacular development in the years to come.

Under McLaren Blythswood steadily increased in size. Its standards were raised and more facilities were provided. He encountered some difficulties over discipline and staff relations, and his administration was not without weaknesses, but on the whole he can be said to have led Blythswood successfully along the road to independence. Blythswood did not offer theological education, nor did it acquire the variety of industrial departments which Lovedale had, but it did duplicate Lovedale's facilities to some extent, notably in teacher training.

Though not under Lovedale's control after Bennie's time, Blythswood shared many features with it. Those in charge of Blythswood shared the same general background and outlook as the Lovedale staff, and Blythswood operated under the same controls and conditions imposed by the Education

Department. Nevertheless McLaren did have some distinctive emphases of his own, such as his interest in agriculture and in the Xhosa language, which he was prepared to use as a medium of instruction for younger pupils. The atmosphere at Blythswood was probably very similar to that of Lovedale in some ways, but Blythswood was far more isolated, and operated on a far smaller scale, mainly because it lacked the private financial resources which Lovedale could call on.

The support of the Mfengu for the Institution varied with the attitude and abilities of the principal, and with prevailing economic conditions. The principals who consulted the Native Committee frequently, and gave them some feeling of contributing to the welfare of the Institution, gained support from them. Their opposition to McLaren in his early years at Blythswood may, however, have been coloured by their dissatisfaction over the break with Lovedale. It was also probably influenced by Blyth's opposition to the new arrangement. Mainly because of his great influence with the Mfengu, Blyth played an important part in founding the Institution and helping it through difficult times.

Over the years the position of Blythswood became more secure. Though it did not become the national institution it was meant to be, it retained its unsectarian character, and gained widespread respect in the Transkei for its high standards. Through the qualified teachers, carpenters and others whom it produced, it was an important agent for social change. The strong spiritual emphasis gave it a missionary function both in its immediate area and, through past pupils, in the wider community. Some of these results would have been achieved if Blythswood's status had remained unchanged. Stewart, however, showed his continued opposition to almost any development which might mean competition with Lovedale. It is probable, therefore, that the independence of Blythswood, and the freedom of action and development of the higher classes which this made possible, were largely responsible for the distinctive contribution which it was able to make in its own area.

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4. Conversations

- (i) Notes taken in conversation with A.M. McGregor, curator of the
S.A. Missionary Museum and ex-principal of Blythwood (1956-
1960), November, 1976.

(ii) Notes taken in conversation with Miss M.M.K. Stormont and Mrs N. Shute, daughters of the Rev. D.D. Stormont, principal of Blythswood, 1904-31; December, 1976.

