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HISTORY OF THE  
DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH  
MISSION  
IN  
SEKHUKHUNELAND  
AND CHURCH DEVELOPMENT  
1875 – 1994

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SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR (Ph.D.)  
IN THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY,  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
2011

**HISTORY OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH MISSION IN  
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## **DIE GRAAD PhD**

Gabriël Jacobus Jordaan is op 21 November 1934 in Vryburg gebore. Hy matrikuleer in 1953 te Seodin, Kuruman. Tussen 1954 en 1972 werk hy by die Staatsdiens, daarna by Christelike boekwinkels en uitgewers. Hy behaal die graad BA in 1974 (Unisa), Dipl Teol in 1976 (Afdeling B, UP), MTh in 1982 (Univ Stellenbosch), Doktorale Eksamen in Praktiese Teologie, Ou Testament en Sendingwetenskap in 1984 (Unisa). Hy doen kwalitatiewe navorsing oor siektes onder die Bapedi en behaal MTh in 1994 aan Unisa. Sedert 1977 dien hy as predikant by die VGK-gemeente Lepelle in Sekhukhuneland.

Sy proefskrif is getiteld *History of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Sekhukhuneland and Church Development 1875 to 1994*. Die promovendus dui aan hoe die NG Kerk se sending begin het met, eerstens, die vroeë pioniersfase. Dit loop uit op die eerste sendinggemeente, Burger, in 1932. Tot in 1963, toe die NG Sending selfstandig geword het as die Ned Geref Kerk in Afrika, is verskeie sendinghospitale en sendingstasies onder leiding van die sendelinge, evangeliste en swart leraars gestig. Na 1963 tree die fase van konsolidering in en 'n vennootskap ontstaan tussen die NGK en NGKA tot die verdere opbouing van die sending en die Ring van Burger, wat Sekhukhuneland as geografiese gebied bedien. Vennootskap (*partnership*) is deurgaans die tema van die geskiedskrywing. 'n Nuwe fase begin in 1994, toe die Ned Geref Kerk in Afrika en die Ned Geref Geref Sendingkerk saamgesmelt het om die Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk in Suider-Afrika te vorm.

## NAMES AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANC: African National Congress.

DRC: Dutch Reformed Church (*Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*).

DRCA: Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (see *NGKA*).

EM: Ecumenical Movement (not Evangelical Movement).

IMC: International Missionary Conference.

*NGKA*: *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika* (Dutch Reformed Church in Africa).

NOTE: The Afrikaans name with the abbreviation *NGKA* is used in this manuscript because before 1994 this was the official name used in all written reports and minutes. This name was used until 1994 for the black members of the DRC family at national level. In 1994 the *NGKA* and *NGSK* united to form the URCSA. Some congregations, mostly in the Free State and Northern Cape, continued as the *NGKA*.

PSK: *Plaaslike Sendingkommissie* (Local Mission Committee).

PAC: Pan African Congress.

SACC: South African Council of Churches.

TVSB: *Transvaal Vrouesendingbond* (Transvaal Women's Mission Association).

TVSV: *Transvaal Vrouesendingvereniging* (Transvaal Women's Mission Association).

NOTE: The *TVSB Ligpunte* was the official organ of the TVSV. All the annual reports were in the name of TVSV. *Transvaal Vrouesendingvereniging* was the official name.

URCSA: Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa.

WCC: World Council of Churches.

## NAMES

Seseseo (p 83): This is lately spelled SESEHU, because of the Sepedi orthography fixation.

Zebetuela (p 43): This refers to the place where the North Ndebele Sebetuela tribal group stays.  
(The surveyors of the old ZAR were Dutch.)

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I want to thank my wife, Mariën, who was willing to be my partner in the mission field since 1977 when I was ordained as minister in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa, Lepelle congregation. My wife and our children Stefan, Jeanne and his wife Ezelle, Marien and her husband Francois, and Gawie carried with me the burden of the ministry in Sekhukhuneland. Ever since I entered the service of Jesus Christ, I was carried faithfully in prayer and supported by family and friends.

Last but not least I want to thank Marinda Cox who typed the draft manuscript piece by piece before it was submitted to the study leader. I thank Prof AS van Niekerk for his advice and patient guidance over the past three years for this research project. I want to mention the willing help of Annette Griessel and Mariaan Viljoen for reading and improving the language. I appreciate the help of Francina van Staden who corrected the final manuscript before it was presented to the examiners. I am also grateful to Ria Coetzee who helped with the administration. I also appreciate the work of the final proofreader and technical editor, Dora-Mari Janse van Vuuren.

Most of all, I thank the Lord Jesus Christ for the privilege of completing this thesis in a time of coming-of-age. To God be the glory.



## INTRODUCTION

The Dutch Reformed Mission in Sekhukhuneland has passed through different phases, the first of which was the pioneering phase of missionaries and evangelists. This led to the establishment of the first Dutch Reformed Church mission congregation in Sekhukhuneland, called Burger, in 1932. From 1932 to 1960 this congregation was part of the Presbytery of Kranspoort. On 30th March 1960 the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church of Transvaal, which met at Potchefstroom, decided to form a new presbytery for the Sekhukhuneland region. It was called the Presbytery of Burger and included the following congregations: Burger, Erasmus (Bronkhorstspuit), Philadelphia (Groblersdal), Sekhukhuneland (Klipspruit), Marble Hall (Goedvertrouwen) and Premier Mine (Cullinan). Further developments took place when Erasmus became part of the Presbytery of Middelburg and Premier Mine of the Presbytery of Mamelodi.

Presently the congregation of the Presbytery of Burger consists of several congregations: <sup>1</sup>Burger 1926 – The year 1926 is when the first missionary of the DRC, Rev AJ Rousseau started with mission work in Sekhukhuneland. His mission station was called Burger, established at Mooiplaats in 1929 and relocated to Maandagshoek in 1944. The other mission stations which were established in Sekhukhuneland contributed to the formation of the following congregations: <sup>2</sup>Sekhukhuneland (Klipspruit Mission Station – 1946), <sup>3</sup>Lerato, previously called Potgietersrus East (Groothoek Mission – 1957), <sup>4</sup>Lepelle, previously called Marble Hall (Goedvertrouwen, later called Matlala Mission – 1958), <sup>5</sup>Lebowa-Kgomo – 1990, <sup>6</sup>Motetema – 1977, <sup>7</sup>Sebetiela 2000, <sup>8</sup>Bothanang – 2008, <sup>9</sup>Philadelphia – 1943 (Philadelphia Mission). Geographically Philadelphia congregation is mainly an Ndebele speaking region and does not fall under traditional Sekhukhuneland. At the establishment in 1956 of the new mission station at Goedvertrouwen by Rev JT Jordaan, minister of the DRC congregation of Marble Hall, the Northern region of Philadelphia which fell within the borders of Marble Hall congregation, seceded from Philadelphia and became Marble Hall Mission Congregation. I include the history of Philadelphia because this congregation has remained part of Burger since the establishment of the Presbytery of Burger until now.

## **Sources of Study**

The reports, bulletins, prayer letters and articles written by the missionaries were used in my research programme. Thus, their voices especially during the early phases of mission work are better recorded. The voices of those black partners were made audible in the interviews and questionnaires. After power was transferred, the notes of the presbyterial meetings and agendas of the synods were valuable sources of study.

The history of each of the congregations of Burger is described; its consolidation and the life-sketches of the white missionaries, evangelists and black ministers are given to illustrate the important role that each of them played in carrying out the Great Command of Christ. Special attention is given to the Dutch Reformed Church and the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (further referred to as NGKA) Partnership which, since at Whitby the motto Partners in Obedience was coined, existed for more than half a century.

## **The Dutch Reformed Church and the Utmost Ends of the Earth**

The DRC knows from past experience of partnerships that obedience to the calling of the Master to proclaim the gospel, still stands, that the mission task is not completed yet. Partnership is not the ultimate goal, but it is a means of co-operation in fulfilling the mission call. It is a Biblical concept. Geographical, cultural and economical difficulties could be bridged by partnerships.

Mission is His great command. This call is greater than any partnership other than His own partnership with his church. There are indications in Post-1994 that the DRC and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) will humbly attend to the needs of each other in a Church-Church relationship. There is also reason to believe that the DRC is motivated to reach out to the utmost ends of the earth in obedience to the calling to witness.

### **1. MISSION HISTORY**

#### **1.1 WHAT IS MISSION?**

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a new concept has been formed to describe the particular characteristics of mission as a theology. The first aspect is *missio Dei* (God's Mission)

(Pauw 1987:29). This means that mission work is not man's initiative, but comes from God Himself who works in the world, who sent His servants in and through Christ to complete his work of salvation. The church in its totality is involved here (Kritzinger 2007:29). The second aspect is that mission is the realm of God. Pauw (1987:29) refers to Verkuyl who said:

*The message of the Kingdom (is) the frame of reference and the point of orientation from which to view our missionary task. With the above definition in mind, in writing about the mission work of the DRC in Sekhukhuneland, we may therefore conclude that it was God who called and who initiated this mission project.*

*This is in line with the motto of the DRC for their mission, which is defined as follows:*

*Mission is an act of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the world. Through this act and through His Word and Spirit, He gathers unto Himself from all of mankind's unique people. Through them He lets His Word be proclaimed to a fallen world. This act is God's way of bringing forth a community of saints from all nations and creeds. With a view of extending the Kingdom of God, He also calls this community of holy saints to serve a world in need. (Author's own translation.)*

## **1.2 WHAT IS MISSION HISTORY?**

*Crafford has his own definition of mission history: "Mission history is the story about the great deeds of God through Christ and the Holy Spirit in the world. It describes how God has moved through his Word and Spirit, people and churches; how the stumbling blocks and the powers of darkness were overcome; how borders were crossed to reach the ends of the earth and how the people of God were brought forth from all people, nations and tongues" (Crafford 1986:30). (Author's own translation.)*

Mission history is a subdivision of theology. Thus mission history describes God's self-revelation to mankind. Mission history deals with what God wants and what He did throughout the centuries. Boshoff states that to relate Mission history to Mission as a science is not difficult. Mission history, he says, is to relate that the church has to develop a new Christian community until it has grown into an independent church structure (Boshoff 1972:209). According to him, this history could be divided into two sections, the object and the subject. The sending church plans and channels the results to the

unbelievers, until it has developed into a full church organism; it is a story of wrestling with God. This story of God's dealing with men, His own whom He has gathered as the church of Christ, is the object of researching and reporting mission history.

Crafford and Bavinck (Crafford 1986:30) share the same view on missiology as comprising theory and mission history. Bavinck states that missiology cannot be derived from the history of missions, but from Scripture. He sees, however, a close relationship between mission theory and mission history. The theory will draw its norms from Scripture, and history shows where the theory, norms and practice have succeeded.

The Mission theory must provide the key for correct interpretation of history. The Mission history must in turn again declare why certain methods and theories in praxis have succeeded and others not. The failure of history must bring the church back to Scripture. Therefore, we accept Mission history as independent and a necessary subdivision of Missiology (Crafford 1986:30). (Author's own translation.)

### **1.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MISSION HISTORY AND CHURCH HISTORY**

Crafford (1986:31) refers to TN Hanekom who had the idea that church history and mission history as two separate academical disciplines was fundamentally untenable. Hanekom mentioned that the writing of DRC history focused mainly on the European culture group. Therefore, ethnically and geographically, it concentrates on the history of their church. The history of the younger churches was not attended to. He felt that the task of mission history was to fill the gap, reporting on the proclaiming of the Gospel, the building up of congregations and church planting across cultural borders.

Saayman (2007:6), however, says: "I do not see any reason to separate the two. In my opinion church history occupies one of the rubrics of the wide spectrum of human history." Crafford (1986:31) also refers to Gustav Warneck who stated that the two should be treated in unison but that they must remain two separate disciplines. Mission history must be 'The history of Christian expansion' (*Geschichte der Ausbreitung des Christentums*). Crafford also mentions Bergema, Manfred Linza and Verkuyl as missiologists who are in favour of mission history as a supplementary function to church history (Crafford 1986:31).

I conclude with Bosch's theory (Crafford 1986:28) that missiology should function as yeast within theology. Church history should lead along this line to total reconstruction, so that the church will not always be occupied with an institute but with interaction between proclaiming the Gospel and the world. This means that all of church history will develop a mission perspective. "One of the roles of the church in the world is that of witness. We owe the world faith" (Bosch 1976:181). Considering the view-points of the above missiologists, there is a need for the writing of a history about the mission work done by the Dutch Reformed Church in Sekhukhuneland, the reason for its involvement in Sekhukhuneland in particular. Already the work of the Berlin Mission Society (BSG), established on 29 February 1824 in Germany, was published in a book written by the pioneer missionary Alexander Merensky. In it he describes his mission station and work in Sekhukhuneland before he fled from Sekhukhune I with his Christian followers, to establish his new mission station, Botshabelo (Merensky 1888). A short summary of their work has also appeared in *Lantern Journal of Knowledge and Culture*, February Special Edition. The German contribution to the development of South Africa was described by Werner Schellack, page 52.

#### **1.4 OBJECTIVITY IN MISSIOGRAPHY**

In his opening lecture to his students at UP Theological Faculty in 1973, Prof Ben Marais explained the meaning of objectivity in writing church and mission history. He stated that church historians belonging to different denominations may write about the same subject or theme in church history, but every one would reflect the view of their own theological and church denominational background or culture. Every one would strive for objectivity by reporting history as factually as possible according to his research programme, but the outcome would be different. Each has a subjective view influenced by his social or political or denominational background. One usually remains loyal to one's own denomination or group and looks through the spectacles of subjectivity (Marais 1973).

He told the story of an old minister and his grandson who visited the Grand Canyon in America. That evening he wrote to his daughter: "Today I saw the glory of God and all its majesty." His grandson wrote: "Today I managed to spit one mile away!"

Having objectivity in mind in writing this history, I tried to gather information from acquaintances or colleagues I have worked with since 1977. Ministers and evangelists

from other church groups who grew up with the Pedi, Swazi and Ndebele and who knew the culture, language and world view as well as the historical background, were consulted and made a valuable contribution.

## **1.5 OBJECTIVITY AND SUBJECTIVITY**

The historian wants to prove that his story is true and scientifically verified. This honest searching for the truth, to be reported as factual history, is the claim of science – but it also poses a problem. The historian is only human, with his own presuppositions, which cause him to interpret and to judge facts from his own viewpoint and background. There must be an awareness of his subjectivity in his interpretation. Unless recognized, subjective interpretation will render the claim of scientific reporting of history invalid.

As with Church history, Mission history also has an object. This object is Biblically grounded: the Word of God is the norm. The historian works with the church as the Body of Christ. Christ is the Head of his church and the historian cannot base his work purely on scientific grounds – he will have to work through God’s Word, because missionary workers are obeying His call.

The historian must satisfy the criteria that the story of missionaries and their co-workers is true. Their experiences and views must be taken seriously and interpreted correctly. Secondly, the historian has to have knowledge of the indigenous people’s social and cultural milieu. These must be respected and reflected without prejudice.

### **1.5.1 The dual role of the researcher**

The researcher has worked for a long time as missionary in the studied region. Thus he contributed to the development of the very history that he studies. This indeed could cause the researcher to be too subjective in presenting the research material. Within the context of the study, the researcher worked within a social cross-cultural situation where he has, as missionary and as researcher, been in constant dialogue with other role players. The insights presented in this study are the result of his encounter with other role players. The experiences of all the role players in this particular context are important. The researcher was also a role player, which enabled him to obtain insights others would not have been able to obtain. Thus both the researcher and the people in the research carry with them a

history of their experiences, and this study presents the view points of one role player, within an ongoing dialogue and discourse.

## **1.6 HISTORICITY**

### **1.6.1 Mission history as theology**

Brown (1998:203) asks the question: “Is there within the reformed tradition room for a separate practice of church history as a scientific subject? The following hypothesis is presented: The reformed view of history sees the history of God’s creation as a unity. Yet, we must discern between God’s act of salvation within the history of creation: firstly the Church of Jesus Christ and believers and secondly the history of the world and that which is still under His call for redemption.”

The Word of God gives the norms for history and the role the church is playing. The Word of God also describes the church as the Body of Christ which is the object of history as a scientific subject. This same norm is applicable to mission history, which describes church history from the point of view of mission. “Thus the term *history* means the practice to describe what has happened in the past with men and with communities and its entire facets. But when we report on this history-as-reality, we have to submit a report of what has happened based on a critical, scientific and true research. We may view this practice as history done in a scientific manner” (Brown 1998:104).

I conclude with Warren’s definition in Saayman (2007:1): “Research into the history of the past, even the relatively recent past, demands of the historian the protracted and never ending task of distinguishing between pious legend and fact, never forgetting that belief in pious legend may itself not be an inconsiderable fact. What is true for historical writing as a whole is particularly true for the story of the expansions of Christianity.”

## **1.7 RESEARCH PROJECT AND RESEARCH FIELD**

This research study is limited to mission work done by the (DRC) (Dutch Reformed Church) and mission organizations under the auspices of DRC congregations, synods or presbyteries, in the so-called Sekhukhune-land. Sekhukhuneland lies in a triangle between Groblersdal, Zebediela and Burgersfort, with the Olifants River dividing it in half. Previously it formed the south eastern section of the old Lebowa and nowadays it is called



Greater Sekhukhuneland. In the Northern Synod of the Uniting Reformed Church, this area is referred to as the Presbytery of Burger. The following congregations are part of the Circuit of Burger: Burger (Maandagshoek), Sekhukhuneland (Klipspruit), Lepelle (Matlala), Lerato, Lebowa-Kgomo, Zebediela (Groothoek), Motetema (Groblersdal), Philadelphia (Dennilton) and the latest congregation, seceded from Lepelle in April 2008, Botanang (Marble Hall).

One of my correspondents, already in his eighties, mentioned that “if you speak of Sekhukhuneland, you speak of Burger. If you speak of Burger, you speak of Mothopong.” This village at the foot of the Leolo Mountains is looked upon as the birthplace of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Sekhukhuneland. Here my correspondent, Abraham Nchabeleng, and his older brother, Motolo Nchabeleng, already in his nineties, grew up as students of the pioneer missionary of the *Transvaal Vroue Sendingvereniging (TVSV)*, Rev Abraham Rousseau of the Burger Mission Station.

Mothopong is a ward of Lepelle congregation. This is a rural area. It consists of farms previously owned by white farmers, which were zoned under the government of the old ZAR. All these farms have names with a Dutch connotation like Vogelstruiskopje, Goedvertrouwen etc. From 1936 onwards, these farms were bought from the farmers to provide new land for the Pedi clans descended from Sekhukhune I (Mönnig 1967:37).

The new villages were far apart to ensure enough grazing for cattle farming. Communication was bad, as were the roads. Unemployment and poverty increased, although some roads were tarred and electricity and water were provided in some areas. Tribal chiefs still govern, and ownership is communal.

## **1.8 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

### **1.8.1 African Pioneering Work**

This study involves the very beginning of Christian mission work done in the area, even before organized efforts were made.

The period under consideration started in 1875, when a black Pedi man returned from Tulbagh where he worked for the local minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, Rev Robert Shand. Rev Shand was instrumental in his conversion to Christ. He and his



coloured wife started to work among the people at Mothopong. In those days many young African boys went to the Cape Colony for employment. They returned to their local kraals and some of them formed a nucleus for worship and further mission development. Among these were Philippus Mantsena and his wife, who contacted Rev and Mrs AP Burger of Middelburg for Christian support in 1889. With the aid of the Zusters-Sending Vereniging of Middelburg, the Mantsenas became totally involved in mission work (Louw 1972:10).

On the other side of the Olifants River, not far from Mothopong mission, work was started by Samuel and Miga at Mphahlele during the eighties and nineties of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This became an outstation of the Kranspoort Mission under Rev Hendrik Hofmeyr, son of Rev Stefanus Hofmeyr of Kranspoort (Maree 1962:98). After the Anglo-Boer war and until 1926, missionaries of the *Ned Geref Kerk* assisted at the outstation at Mothopong (Dutch Reformed Church Lydenburg) (*TVSB Ligpunte* 1975:18).

### **1.8.2 The Work of the TVSV (Transvaal Women's Mission Society)**

The *TVSV* had to wait until 1925, when Rev Abraham Rousseau became their first missionary in Sekhukhuneland. His arrival led to the establishment of the first Mission station, Burger. The congregation was called Burger in recognition of the support and influence of Rev and Mrs AP Burger of Middelburg. Unfortunately the Burger Mission Station at Mooiplaats near Apel was closed in 1943 (Louw 1972:69). Due to fever and unhealthy conditions, it was relocated to Maandagshoek. In 1946, the second congregation was formed at Klipspruit, which was called Sekhukhuneland.

### **1.8.3 The Growth and Development of the NG Sendingkerk (Dutch Reformed Mission Church) – From Mission to Church**

In 1932 the first name given to the black church was the *NG Sendingkerk van SA*. On 10 April 1937 it was changed to the *NG Sendingkerk van Transvaal*. The General Synod of the *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika* was constituted on 7 May 1963 and the Mission of Transvaal became a regional synod, called NGKA Transvaal. On 27 April 1964 the Transvaal Synod was divided into two synodical regions, Northern and Southern Transvaal. With the constitution of the NGKA General Synod in 1963, a Church Order was approved for the new church. On 17 April 1964 Rev FE O'Brien Geldenhuys declared, on behalf of the DRC, that the NGKA was now an independent synod. The

regional Synod of Transvaal accepted the new Church Order of the NGKA as guidelines. From this time on, the DRC had no representation in the DRC's governing structure. Church councils called their own ministers and evangelists. The General Synod of 1975 determined that all missionaries would become full members of the NGKA from the date they were confirmed in their congregations (Crafford 1982:41).

From 1932, when Burger Congregation was established, up to 1994, the growth of the mission in Sekhukhuneland was phenomenal. The church expanded and one congregation and mission station after the other was established. Together with the missionaries, evangelists came to assist with church planting. A short description of their names and work, as well as that of the black ministers, who became co-ministers with the missionaries, is contained in the historiography. The co-operation and support of the *TVSV* and the DRC Regional Synods, as well as the work and support of the different DRC congregations, is fully recorded.

#### **1.8.4 Development and Changes Within the Mother and Daughter Churches in Sekhukhuneland from 1975 to 1994**

During this period it was decreed that mission hospitals would become government hospitals, and the DRC and other churches transferred their medical work to the South African Government. The Medical Mission of the DRC was phased out. The missionaries supported by the DRC were also no longer replaced. Financial contributions to the NGKA congregation decreased and were even suspended in some congregations. Training of evangelists was discontinued and their posts abolished. The NGKA Synod agreed to concentrate on tent-making ministries. During this period, some conflicts occurred among missionaries, black ministers and evangelists within the same congregation. This led to disputes that were handled by the Presbytery of Burger and the Northern Synod.

#### **1.8.5 Statistical and other Trends to be Considered**

When studying some statistics of the NGKA congregations [which since 1994 (URCSA News:6) became the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa] one could ask what the role of the DRC would be in ensuring that this church would remain a self-help, self-rule and self-support institution. The question today is whether the DRC and the URC are still committed to bringing the Gospel to those outside the fold of Christ and His Church? So

much time and effort is put into the possibility of structural unity and reaching an agreement on the matter. The crux however is: What are DRC congregations going to do about actively supporting the Church in rural areas, where the need is great? In my opinion the DRC still has a role to play in being involved in what I would call establishing the Body of Christ across cultural borders.

## **1.9 THE CHOICE OF RESEARCH METHOD**

This study may be seen as a practice research study where a theoretical model is tested, but also as an action research project, where I will try to formulate the work of the role players and consider the influence their work has had on ecclesiastical mission work as input to the existing ongoing work. Another goal is to evaluate their contribution with a view to consider further steps. In order to obtain the necessary insight and knowledge, the qualitative research method has been chosen.

### **1.9.1 Participant Observation**

Since 1977, when I started as a missionary of the NGKA in Lepelle congregation, I was directly involved in mission work. Thus, observing while being part of the process, I had first-hand experience of the development of ecclesiastical mission work. This method could be described as follows: “To understand fully the complexities of many situations, direct participation in and observation of the phenomenon of interest” (Patton 1990:25).

According to Schurink (1991:3) participatory observation could also be described as an unstructured and flexible data collection method, in which the researcher is part of the everyday world of the group or institution. Usually the participant observer is himself connected for quite a long period with the group he wants to study. It could be weeks, months or years.

### **1.9.2 Structured Questionnaire**

The purpose of the questionnaire is to help the role players to write down their own stories. Bogdan and Biklen (1975:61) say the following about life history research: “The feasibility of life history case study is mostly determined by the nature of the potential subject. Is the person articulate and does he or she have a good memory? Has the person

lived through the kinds of experiences and participated in the types of organizations or events you want to explore?”

Structured questionnaires oblige the subject to give information that is needed for the case study. It helps him to do some research himself. It also helps the researcher with the analysis of the data. Hence I preferred this method rather than oral history.

I returned some of these questionnaires after they were rewritten by me. Flummer (s.a.:98), who suggested in this regard: “It is often good practice to send the transcript to the interviewees too, so that they may both enjoy re-reading their observation and provide stimulus for further comment and revision.”

### **1.9.3 Documented Information**

Schurink (1991:3) states that documented information is an important data-resource method for the qualitative researcher. He mentions the following kinds of data-resource that falls under documented information: human documents, life histories, human accounts, personal documents, first-hand reports, auto-biographies and also documentary tradition. Documents could be divided into two types: documents on specific requests, which are called requested documents. Documents that were not recorded for research purposes are known as unrequested documents. Schurink (1991:3) quotes Burgess (1984): “In the case of unsolicited documents the researcher has to make use of what is available, while solicited documents allow the researcher some control over the material that is produced” (Burgess 1984:124-125).

### **1.9.4 Analysis of the Documents**

How could one interpret the stories of these role players in the mission field? The researcher must have their names, he must obtain knowledge about their situation, families, where and when they served. Where did they study, with whom did they serve and in which congregations? They preached, taught and built their respective congregations or outposts. They worked together with community leaders, colleagues and teachers. They worked under difficult circumstances. They were living documents themselves and in some cases pioneers and co-church planters.

Their stories are important to the researcher. The written documents and the solicited materials must be constructed in an orderly fashion. For that reason, this dissertation also contains biographical data.

I agree with Mouton and Marais (1988:103) that the qualitative researcher is not specifically searching for evidence in support of a hypothesis that has been formulated before the study commences. Rather, a hypothesis could be constructed while analyzing the data. Qualitative researchers, they say, usually intend to use the inductive method to analyze and to interpret. In this regard it is important to quote Bogdan and Biklen (1975:29): “Theory developed this way emerges from the bottom up (rather than from the top down), from many disparate pieces of collected evidence that are interconnected. It is called *grounded theory* as a qualitative researcher planning to develop some kind of theory about what you have been studying; the direction you will travel comes after you have been collecting the data, after you have spent time with your subjects. You are not putting together a puzzle of which you already know the picture. You are constructing a picture which takes shape as you collect, shape and investigate parts. The process of data analysis is like a funnel: things are open at the beginning (or top), and more directed and specific at the bottom. The qualitative researcher plans to use part of the study to ascertain what the important questions are. He or she does not assume that enough is known to recognize important concerns before undertaking the research.”

#### **1.9.5 My Own Research Method**

My research programme started in 1977, when I became minister of the NGKA Lepelle congregation. Travelling in this area and visiting the different mission stations, working together with black and white ministers and evangelists, learning to know the leading church council members in the Presbytery of Burger and discussing their family and clan relationships, brought the inspiration to preserve the history in some form or other. I wrote articles for Church congregation bulletins, prayer and newsletters and *Die Sendingblad*.

The information was obtained by means of tape recordings, notes of conversations and letters received from previous missionaries or their descendants.

The DRC synodical administration played an important part in gathering and preserving material from their mission fields. Each synodical office had a mission secretary. His work

was to oversee the salaries of missionaries and to support them with certain projects in his own congregation and with administration. Some of the mission posts were synodical, others of the DRC Presbytery, and some subsidised by a congregation. The DRC synodical offices transferred much of their mission administration to the local DRC congregations which were in direct contact with the mission stations, missionaries or NGKA congregations that received subsidies for their ministers and evangelists, or were engaged in support projects. The PSK (*Plaaslike Sendingkommissie* – Local Mission Committee) carried this responsibility on behalf of the DRC Council. Missionaries had to submit progress reports to the PSK of the relevant congregation. They, in turn, usually provided the DRC Presbytery with information regarding mission work. The Secretary of the Synod also received a copy of the report so that he could provide a general report to the Synodical Mission Committee. Occasionally the secretary would also write articles for the church Mission magazine. These reports, bulletins, prayer letters and articles were of biographical help in my research programme.

During the eighties and nineties all these missionary posts were gradually discontinued due to rationalization and transformation. Some congregations suspended all financial support to local NGKA congregations. Synods even closed their mission offices and discontinued the secretarial posts. No information could be obtained from any of these *sending* bodies during this time. The only information available was the reports of the Secretary of the Presbytery of Burger from the local synodical office of the URCSA in Mamelodi. At the end of each financial year the Presbytery has its Presbytery meeting, after which the reports are sent to the archives of the URCSA at Mamelodi general office. I wish to thank the Synodical Secretary, Dr MD Maluleke, for his kind assistance in allowing me to search through the documents in the URCSA archives at the Mamelodi Dienssentrum.

## **1.10 RESEARCH ASSUMPTION (HYPOTHESIS)**

### **1.10.1 Partnership**

When one reads the reports, articles and documents etc., of the church planters in Sekhukhuneland, it is clear that these men (and women) were driven by a God-given passion to proclaim the Gospel and gather those who obeyed the calling into the *Koinonia* (the new people of the Kingdom).

One is also struck by the partnership that existed between the evangelists, the missionaries and people like school teachers and medical professionals during the pioneering stages of the mission. The one section could not succeed without the other in building the new Kingdom of God. Saayman (2007:68) says: “There can be little doubt that during the Second Wave the DRC mission was intensely concerned both with spiritual and physical well-being.” This trend overflowed to the Third Wave, as Saayman called it. He says: “During the early and mid-sixties the South African economy experienced an unprecedented boom (which affected the church in terms of rapidly escalating budgets) and it seemed as if the only way for DRC mission was to expand. Church membership in the DRC in Africa (the racially separated church for Africans within South Africa) expanded rapidly, and the church was organized into various regional synods and a national General Synod” (Saayman 2007:76).

According to Saayman (2007:69) this wave lasted chronologically from 1954 to 1976. Saayman extensively deals with the phenomenon of church and state partnership during this period. He says: “The perception took root that the NP Government financed the DRC mission expansion in support of its apartheid policy, thus strengthening the perception that the DRC was ultimately nothing more than the NP at prayer. These perceptions gave rise to sometimes frightening suspicion against the DRC mission and DRC missionaries – something which I experienced personally more than once in SA and in Namibia a decade later” (Saayman 2007:98).

In church mission history this period is the period of partnership between the two churches. I started my missionary ministry in 1977, when I was ordained as minister of the NGKA and formed a partnership with my black colleagues in Lepelle and in the presbytery of Burger. This partnership started with the establishment of the Synod of the NGKA in 1963 and continued during the first period up to 1976. However, from 1977 this partnership underwent certain changes, as will be indicated later. In analyzing this partnership, using the method of qualitative research, some questions could be asked: Firstly, what happened to it and what caused its demise, and secondly, is this partnership still a concept to be focused on when thinking of mission within the Biblical concept of *missio Dei*?



### **1.10.2 Mission is Obedience**

Looking at the mission in Sekhukhuneland, we may characterize it as an act of obedience to the calling of God in the so-called *missio Dei* (the Mission of God). How shall we define the mission work done by the DRC in Sekhukhuneland? Firstly it has its roots in Pedi Christian pioneers such as the case with Philippus Mantsena, who obeyed God's call as a young African boy in the employ of Rev Robert Shand, pastor of the Tulbagh DRC congregation. Following his conversion to Christ, he went back to his village, Mothopong, at the foot of the Leolo Mountains, where he started witnessing and serving his own people. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, before the Anglo-Boer War, he visited the DRC minister of Middelburg, Rev AP Burger, and requested his assistance (*TVSB Ligpunte* 1975:9).

That opened the way for the *TVSV* to start their mission work in Sekhukhuneland. Their first call for a missionary was sent to Rev Abraham Rousseau who, at that time was serving the DRC in Nyasaland (Malawi). He did not accept this call, but reacted positively to a second call after being reminded by his nephew of a promise he had made while being a soldier of the ZAR during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902).

After considering the call, and his erstwhile promise, he agreed to become a pioneer missionary of the DRC in Sekhukhuneland. Evangelist Mantsena had already started the work among his own people in 1875. I am reminded of the definition of David Bosch: "Mission is the church – crossing frontiers representing the Kingdom of God" (1978:240).

I view Mantsena's call to Rev AP Burger for assistance as a Macedonian call, an invitation from God to be obeyed: "Come over and help us." I also regard Rousseau's call and mission as obedience to God. This is *missio Dei*. This definition is strongly based on obedience to His call for witnessing among people of different races, crossing the borders of culture and language. This is not piety or to teach people civilization or to avert 'the danger of blacks' (*swart gevaar*). This is obedience to God. This is the task of the Church. Mission is founded by God Himself, the God of history. To say that mission is 'witnessing to the Kingdom of God' may not be too far off the mark (Pretorius, Odendaal, Robinson & Van der Merwe 1987:5). On this prime base of mission in Scripture (Matt. 28:18-20), the DRC built its regimentation for their mission policy. As *mission ecclesia* (mission of the



church) the *missio Dei* is founded on the *missio Dei Triune* “The sending God, who sent his Son, also sends his Church” (Pretorius, *et al.* 1987:7).

The story of mission work in Sekhukhuneland is founded on God sending, and the church obeying by accepting the call in total obedience, notwithstanding the danger of malaria or any other obstacles.

### **1.10.3 The Phases of Mission History in Sekhukhuneland**

Mission work in Sekhukhuneland underwent several phases:

The mission work in Sekhukhuneland also corresponds with the third wave (Saayman 2007:76). He says:

*In the budding black ‘homelands’ the DRC was involved in partnership with the NP Government, providing social services (hospitals, special institutions for the disabled etc.) on an unprecedented scale. The rapid growth in DRC ‘home’ mission therefore was consolidated and growth continued, also in administrative matters. More regional mission secretaries were appointed and with the establishment in 1966 of the General Synod to unify all the regional DRC synods, a General Mission Secretariat was created with the task of co-ordinating the formulation of mission policy for all the regional synods. The late 1960’s and early 1970’s can indeed arguably be termed the heyday of centrally organized ecclesiastical mission work in the Dutch Reformed Church (Saayman 2007:77, 78).*

Broadly speaking, these phases correspond with some of the waves mentioned by Saayman (2007:65): “As with the first wave, *ministers* played an important motivating role – Andrew Murray Junior, AC Murray, Andrew Louw, Stephanus Hofmeyr. Indeed, in his biography of Andrew Murray Junior, Du Plessis (1919:374) explicitly states that the new wave of mission enthusiasm was directly related to the reality ‘that ministers became more actively interested in missions, and that the sons of ministers came forward in larger numbers to offer themselves for service in new and distant fields.’ More so than in the first wave, the second wave indeed was structured as centrally organized ecclesiastical mission. It would probably be possible to argue that the foundations for the strong and efficient missionary bureaucracies formed in the regional synods of the Dutch Reformed Church were laid during this period.”

## **1.11 THE DRC MISSION WORK IN SEKHUKHUNELAND COMPLETED**

### **1.11.1 Commencement**

It is not difficult to find a date when the DRC officially moved into Sekhukhuneland. The *TVSV* decided to become involved in mission work in Sekhukhuneland by calling Rev Abraham Rousseau in 1925 (*TVSB Ligpunte* 1975:36). His mission work developed and the first congregation, Burger, was officially established in 1932 (Louw 1972:19) on the farm Mooiplaats, bought by the *TVSV*.

### **1.11.2 General Growth of the DRC Mission in the Transvaal**

“The period 1932 to 1955 was a period of consolidation, growing slowly and the establishment of the Mission Church” (Crafford 1982:323). In May 1963, when the first General Synod of the NGKA was constituted, the days of fostering the mission church was over. A new era of collective mission work had commenced (Crafford 1982:324). Dick does not find any problem with collective responsibility (1978:302): “In the present mission situation, where the borders of the Dutch Reformed Church family consist of different population groups, the unity of the Church must not be given up in the midst of a pluralistic policy. The DRC has accepted the idea of unity of different DRC relationships as well as collective responsibility of the mission task. While the ‘mother church’ wants to practice its policy to continue evangelization work through their missionaries, the ‘daughter church’ shares in it through a special relationship with the missionary.” Yet the missionary work of the DRC in co-operation with the NGKA gradually landed in a crisis. Crafford (1982:387) puts it this way: “The NGKA congregations covered the whole of the Transvaal. The DRC did not find any open spaces for mission initiative anymore. The NGKA did not develop a sense of accepting collective responsibility with the DRC. Missionaries were called by the local church Councils of the NGKA without taking responsibility for salaries, because the daughter church was not financially in a position to even keep to the scale for their own ministers put up by the Synod of the NGKA. The DRC supported ministers and evangelists of the NGKA financially in accordance with their salary. Unfortunately the political influence from the side of the ANC and PAC contributed to increasing unrest among members of the NGKA and their church officials. Blacks became sensitive to what was called paternalism. As a result the PSKs’ (local

congregational mission committees) function faded and the missionaries slowly disappeared.”

### **1.11.3 Closing of Mission Work**

In Sekhukhuneland missionaries were being phased out. The following dates may be seen as the end of missionary work done by the DRC mission. At Groothoek Mission (Lerato URCSA) the last missionary left in 1990. At Maandagshoek the last missionary left in 1995, and at Matlala Mission the last missionary left in 1995. At Klipspruit (Sekhukhuneland URCSA) the last missionary left in 2001. Kgatla wrote that the objectives of the DRC policy of 1935 had been fulfilled. “It is clear in the 1935 DRC mission policy that the mission churches were to be developed to become self-supporting and self-governing and that the DRC would gradually shift the load onto the shoulders of the indigenous church. It was according to the influence of the missiology of Venn, Anderson and Warneck” (Kgatla 1989:536).

### **1.12 INTERPRETATION**

I do not agree that the objectives of the DRC policy of 1935 have been reached due to influence of the missiology of Venn, Anderson and Warneck. The transition from mission to church happened because the younger churches started to develop naturally. Gerdener (1958:157) believed that this “has always been and still remains a method of Divine order,” however revolutionary it may be at times in the life of the church or of an individual. During the early stage of the NGKA’s existence, the report of the Commission for Planning (*Beplanningskommissie van die Ring van Burger*) (1969:4) seriously urged the partnership of the DRC and the NGKA to focus on a strategy aimed at being more effective in fulfilling the Great Command (Matt. 28:19). The Commission said: “Establishing an independent church is not the end of the road. On the contrary, before the two churches unite, a new experience of the mission task has to be fulfilled in JOINT CO-OPERATION. We are co-workers and each church must share in this task.” The mission strategy of the Dutch Reformed Church has always been PARTNERSHIP as is described extensively, and was also envisaged by the Federal Council of Dutch Reformed Churches (Crafford 1982:274).

Other elements and the currents of government policies into which the churches were drawn, caused the quick step-out of the younger members of Dutch Reformed Churches (30.12-30.14.1). In spite of this, the missionaries of the four mission stations of the DRC jointly and honourably worked with their black colleagues until their retirement, the only exception being Rev Johan Koen of Burger, who was still young and accepted a call to Mauritius. The Dutch Reformed Church Eastern Region ended their subsidy because of financial constraints.

### **1.13 LIST OF INTERVIEWS AND RESPONDENTS IN THE RESEARCH**

Interviews and returns of questionnaires were handled in Afrikaans except where otherwise stated.

- Banda, TM – minister Burger congregation 1993-2011. His report was written in English (30/06/2010).
- Bester, Wessel Christiaan – missionary Sekhukhuneland congregation 1980-1985 (09/06/2010).
- Conradie, Tokkie – nurse 1959-1962. Missionary's wife 1961-1995. Women's elder (13/07/2010).
- Etsebeth, PJ (Petrus) – missionary Lerato congregation 1976-1980, missionary Sekhukhuneland congregation 1987-2002 (29/06/2010).
- Jordaan, JT (Hans) – missionary Marble Hall (Goedvertrouwen) 1956-1959 (21/07/2010).
- Koen, JPJ (Johan) – missionary Burger congregation 1991-1995 (oral communication July 2010).
- Kritzinger, JJ (Dons) – missionary Burger congregation 1972-1980 (14/07/2010).
- Maduane, Mphofe Thomas – grown up in Sekhukhuneland, evangelist Burger congregation 1974 up till the present (24/06/2010).
- Mahlobogoane, SP – evangelist Lerato congregation 1974-1986 (13/07/2010).

- Mankoe, MJ – minister Lerato 1987-1994, minister Burger congregation 1977-2000 (15/06/2010).
- Maphanga, Sive Elon – evangelist Sekhukhuneland 1978-1992, minister Tembisa West since 1993 (13/07/2010).
- Masaku, Elizabeth, Lepelle congregation (15/07/2010).
- Masuku, Obed – elder in Lepelle congregation. His story was written in English (08/06/2010).
- Matemane, JM – evangelist Lepelle congregation 1966-1967. Lepelle congregation 1985-2005 (21/04/2009).
- Mojela, Lengana Petrus – grew up in Sekhukhuneland, presently minister of Myibuye (Tembisa) (29/03/2010).
- Moloantoa, MJ – evangelist Lerato 1963-1982, minister Lepelle congregation 1990-1995.
- Morofi, Mathuti Ezekiel – evangelist Lerato congregation 1972-1973, Bakenberg 1973-1978, Bethesda 1978-1979, evangelist Motetema 1979-1985, minister Motetema congregation 1986-2003 (14/07/2010).
- Nchabeleng, Solomon Pitsadi – minister Sekhukhuneland congregation 1981-2012 (28/06/2010).
- Nchabeleng, LA and SM – elders Lepelle congregation. Their story was written in Sepedi which was translated into English (05/04/2011).
- Olivier, OJ (Ockie) – missionary Lerato congregation 1981-1983 (02/07/2010).
- Phatudi, MLS – minister Lepelle 1977-1981 (25/11/2010).
- Phetla, JS – minister Lepelle congregation 1967-1971 (information given by his widow – Sept 2008).
- Ramaipadi, Enos Setjhakadume – minister Burger congregation 1962-1976 (information given by his widow in English).

- Rousseau, Kaboet – secretary of Matlala Mission Hospital 1959 (tape recording 1977).
- Shaku, Mabu Benjamin – grew up in Sekhukhuneland, evangelist Burger congregation 1965-1996 (oral communication April 2010).
- Tladi, Lesetja John – evangelist Lerato congregation 1971-1985 (July 2010).
- Van der Merwe, IM (Sakkie) – missionary Burger congregation 1963-1966, missionary Lerato congregation 1986-1990 (information given by his widow) (29/07/2010).

## **2. THE HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF SEKHUKHUNELAND**

### **2.1 THE COUNTRY**

Mönnig (1967:3) describes the area as follows: “The country can be called Bopedi, lying between the Olifants and Steelpoort Rivers and slightly over the Olifants River to the North. It continues across the Great Eastern Escarpment or Drakensberg range, passes along the south eastern region and, curving slightly westwards, towards the north.

“The Escarpment is divided into three distinct mountain ranges. In the south-east the Sekhukhune Mountains lie roughly along the western bank of the Steelpoort River. On the northern bank of the Olifants River the Strydpoort Mountains stretch roughly from east to west. Almost connecting these ranges, the Leolo (Lulu) Mountains run from north to south through the centre of the country, and roughly along the eastern border of Geluks Location. This large range, which lies in the centre of Bopedi, has great significance for the people. The whole range consists of a complex system of conical mountains of a characteristically dark colour, forming many deep valleys. As the Transvaal Sotho in general and the Pedi in particular, tend to build their villages at the base of the mountains, many villages lie stretched along the valleys of this range” (Mönnig 1967:4).

This region consists mainly of District municipalities formed in 2003. The Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality has five local municipalities: Groblersdal, Marble Hall, Tubatse, Fetakgomo and Makhudu Thamaga (see map DC47). The Zebediela and Mphahlele region is part of the Capricorn District Municipality. The magistrate’s offices still remain the same as before: Schoonoord, Nebo, Groblersdal, Praktiseer, Lebowa-Kgomo and Lydenburg.

#### **2.1.1 The People**

The boundaries of Sekhukhuneland are not easily determined. Firstly, one has to look at the history of the great Sekwati, who gathered his people from all over the Transvaal and who succeeded in uniting the Pedi into a strong nation again. After his death his two sons, Mampuru and Sekhukhune both tried to obtain power, but this resulted in what is known as the Sekhukhune wars. This geographical area could be referred to as Sekhukhuneland. History also tells us that many small tribes were formed, each with its chief’s name as

described in *TŠA MAGOŠI LÊ DILETE SESOTHO SA LEBOWA (History of Native Tribes in the Republic of South Africa – Author unknown:76-79)*. Some of these tribes settled across the Lepelle River towards Chuenespoort and even as far as the Turfloop region (Dikgale). The Mphahlele group came from Tzaneen and settled towards the Lepelle River on the western side, not far from Zebediela and Chuenespoort. It is here at Mphahlele where the Kranspoort Mission of Stefanus Hofmeyr started a mission, with the assistance of faithful evangelists. The Mphahlele chief, Mmutle, married Sekhukhune's daughter so that inter-relationships were created – as was the case with the other tribes as well. Geographically the Olifants River (Lepelle) did not adversely affect inter-relationships.

### **2.1.2 The Mission at Mooiplaats**

Once the first missionary, Rev AP Rousseau, had completed Burger, his Mooiplaats mission station at the foot of the Olifants River; he started outstations towards Zebediela, in the west near Chuenespoort, and along the Olifants River towards the south as far as Ottensville, near Marble Hall. One of his outstations was situated on the high plateau near Nebo at Gembokspruit in the south-east. He also worked among the Pedi along the Leolo Mountains towards Ga-Ratau (Maandagshoek) in the east near the Steelpoort River, and had outposts such as India on the eastern side of the Leolo Mountains.

He even investigated the possibility of erecting a mission hospital at Zebediela. We will see how this led to further developments and the building of the Groothoek Mission Hospital in 1941 by the Dutch Reformed Church Synodical Mission Commission. The project was completed in 1943.

As Burger Mission grew and developed, the geographical region of the Burger congregation took shape. This later led to the establishment of several other congregations to form a presbytery called Burger. The presbytery of Burger was closely connected with the *TVSV*. The *TVSV* greatly contributed towards the extension and growth of the mission at Mphahlele and the villages on the western side of the Olifants River towards Zebediela. In 1966 they even built an institution called Sekutupu for 150 old people and 56 chronically ill patients, which formed part of the Groothoek Mission Hospital. This was part of their contribution towards mission work in Sekhukhuneland. In its earlier stage, Lerato congregation must also be seen as part of the mission outreach in Sekhukhuneland.



Today this vast area comprises of the following:

1. The area between the Steelpoort River in the east, the Olifants River in the north and the Leolo Mountains in the south-west, which roughly describes the borders of the Burger congregation of the URC.
2. The north-eastern area, where the congregation of Sekhukhuneland is situated, and which consists of the Steelpoort River to the point where the Diepkloof stream flows into the Steelpoort River, which borders the Eastern Highveld plateau of Bopedi.
3. The southern and western area, which includes Motetema village (Motetema URCSA), Marble Hall and Leeuwfontein villages (Bothanang URCSA).
4. The northwestern region, which includes Zebediela (in this manuscript, Zebediela is referred to as a place and Sebetiela as the name of the congregation), the Chuenespoort Mountains (part of the Strydpoort Mountains) up to the point where the Leolo Mountains meet the Olifants River.

Today there are three congregations of the URCSA presbytery of Burger, covering the area all along the Olifants River: the Eastern borders of Sebetiela congregation, the Lerato congregation, with Lebowa-Kgomo at Chuenespoort sandwiched in between.

5. From Marble Hall the Lepelle URCSA Congregation lies stretched out along the Olifants River, called the Lower Olifants River Irrigation Scheme, as far as Mphaaneng and India on the northern side of the Leolo Mountains, a distance of nearly 120 km. This congregation is in a central position and touches the borders of all the congregations of the presbytery of Burger URCSA. Lepelle is the Northern Sotho name for the Olifants River.

## **2.2 HISTORY OF THE PEDI OF SEKHUKHUNELAND**

At the time when mission work first started among the Pedi, by far the largest portion of the Bopedi in Sekhukhuneland were located in the Lydenburg district, where chief Sekhukhune was recognized as paramount chief (Mönnig 1967:1). In 1860 the BSG (Berlin Mission Association) sent two young missionaries, Alexander Merensky and

Heinrich Grützner, to start working here (Schellack 1992:54). The main group lived south of the Leolo Mountains near Geluks Location. “One may say that Bopedi is Sekhukhuneland with slight extensions towards the north and more particularly, in the south. The heart of the Bopedi is the so-called Geluks Location” (Mönnig 1967:1). Today, Geluks Location no longer exists, but the old ruins can still be seen near Jane Furse. The 1961 census figure for Sekhukhuneland was 118 743 (Mönnig 1967:3).

### **2.2.1 Genealogy of the Pedi**

The early traditional genealogy of the Pedi chiefs started with Thobela and covered several generations up to Sekwati. Then Mzilikazi, one of the lieutenants of the great Zulu warrior and chief, Tshaka, defeated the Pedi and ravaged the country (Mönnig 1967:22). When Sekwati returned after an absence of four years, he started to re-establish the old Pedi ascendancy. He gained victory over his half-brother Kabu and finally rid the country of all remaining cannibalism, which had been the practice until Sekwati managed to put an end to it by distributing captured cattle (Mönnig 1967:23). Sekwati settled at Phiring, later called Magalies Location. Today it is known as Masemola.

In 1837 the Pedi first made contact with the trek of Louis Trichardt. In 1845 another group under Hendrik Potgieter entered Bopedi. “They settled at Ohrigstad. The initial relations with the trekkers appeared to have been very friendly” (Mönnig 1967:24). Sekwati left Phiring and moved to Thaba Mosego on the eastern slopes of the Leolo Mountain, where he built his fortified village called Tšate.

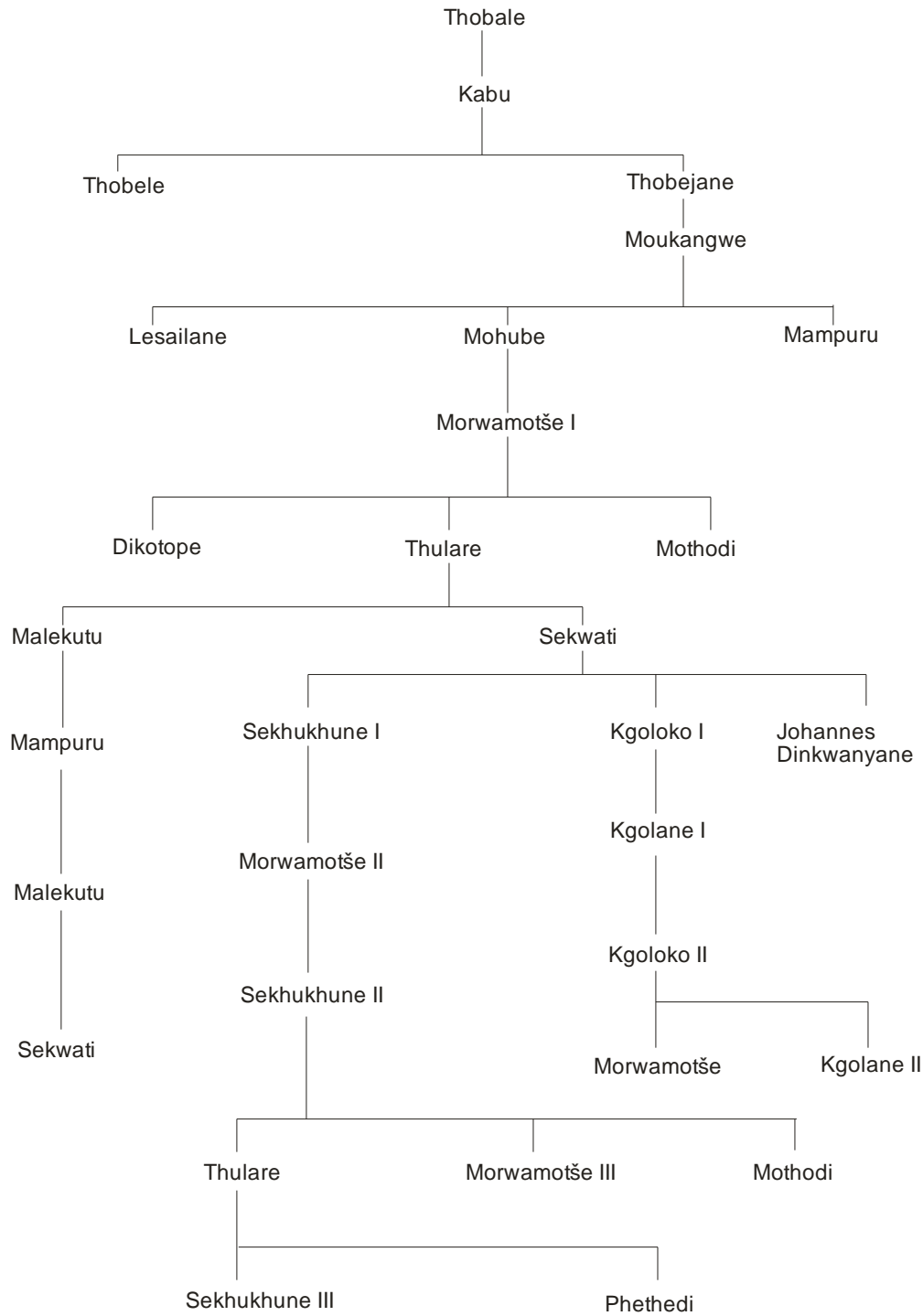
On 17 November 1857 he signed a peace treaty between the Pedi and the Boer Republic (Mönnig 1967:24).

In 1860 (Mönnig 1967:25) Sekwati was visited by Alexander Merensky. Sekwati told Merensky that he was welcome to build a mission station in his village. “Finally on the 14 August 1860, Merensky and his fellow missionary Grützener started their first mission, Gerlachshoop near Bopedi, among the Kopa tribe under chief Boleu. They were joined in 1861 by two more missionaries, Nachtigal and Endemann” (Mönnig 1967:25). In 1861 Merensky again visited Sekwati and obtained permission to build a station a few miles from Tšate, on a hill called Kgalatlolo.

On 22 September 1861 Merensky held the first service at the new station. Sekwati died on the same day (Mönnig 1967:25).

**Figure 1: THE PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY**

SKELETON GENEALOGY OF PEDI CHIEFS



(Mönnig 1967:15).

### **2.2.2 Mampuru**

Now the spotlight fell on Mampuru, the son of Sekwati's wife, Kgomo Makatane. Mampuru was not Sekwati's biological child, as Sekwati was too old to have children, and the chief, according to custom, designated another man for the purpose. Mampuru was not raised by his own mother, but by Thorometšane, the first wife of Sekwati, and mother of Sekhukhune.

On Sekwati's death, Sekhukhune claimed the chieftainship. He killed the councilors who supported Mampuru and claimed all his cattle. Mampuru was forced to flee on 17 June 1862 (Mönnig 1967:26).

Mampuru formed his own regiment and succeeded in establishing his own tribe, but remained on the look-out for an opportunity to wrest the chieftainship from Sekhukhune (Mönnig 1967:26). Under Sekhukhune, inter-tribal warfare continued. He was also trying to enhance his influence and regularly attacked disloyal tribes (Mönnig 1967:27).

### **2.2.3 Sekhukhune**

Because of Sekhukhune's friendship with the missionaries, mission work progressed. The Berlin Mission treated the ill and the wounded. One of Sekhukhune's wives and his half-brother were among those converted. The chief was not pleased with this, because his authority was being undermined. Early in 1864, he had two Christians severely lashed as a warning. At the time, Merensky had been summoned by the President of the ZAR and appointed as representative of the Transvaal Republic among the Pedi. On his return to Bopedi, he was at first well received by the chief (Mönnig 1967:27), but soon afterwards all their cattle, land and grain were confiscated.

On 15 November 1864, thirty-two Christians were brought before the chief. They defied his authority and professed their faith. The Pedi chief was very angry with them; they were beaten mercilessly, and their homes were attacked. The missionaries were accused of stealing his people and undermining his authority. "He forbade them to do further mission work, and ordered all the Pedi Christians to forsake their religion" (Mönnig 1967:28).

Because of the intolerable situation, the Christians, led by Merensky and Sekhukhune's half-brother, Johannes Dinkwanyane, fled towards the south. They eventually bought a

farm near Middelburg and started the Botšabelo Mission Station, which in later years was declared a historical site. Merensky also began to build a stone fort as protection against attacks from Sekhukhune. The fort was named Fort Wilhelm, after the German Emperor. Situated 12 km north of Middelburg on the Middelburg-Groblersdal road, Botšabelo has become a historical town where the buildings and annals are open to the public (Botšabelo information bulletin).

Johannes Dinkwanyane, however, became disillusioned with life away from the tribal context and in 1873 left with a considerable following to settle as an independent chief in the Spekboom Valley north of Lydenburg. Sekhukhune openly acknowledged him as a chief under the Pedi Empire. In this way Sekhukhune extended his territory beyond the Steelpoort River, which ended all hope of peace with the Boer Republic (Mönnig 1967:28).

#### **2.2.4 The First Sekhukhune War 1876**

In March 1876 some warriors of Dinkwanyane detained a Boer with a wagonload of wood and ordered him to unload before allowing him to proceed. This proved to be the last straw and on 16 May 1876 the Boer Republic declared war on the Pedi, which was later to become known as the first Sekhukhune war. There were sporadic attacks but in February 1877 the two sides signed a treaty (Mönnig 1967:30). The Pedi had to pay 2 000 head of cattle to the Republic. On 12 April 1877, Sir Theophilus Shepstone annexed the Transvaal on behalf of the British Crown. He considered the treaty between the Boers and Pedi to be valid, and notified Sekhukhune that the Pedi would be recognized as British subjects. Sekhukhune only sent 200 head of cattle, followed by another 45 as well as some elephant tusks at a later date. Shepstone returned these as insufficient, thus setting the stage for the second Sekhukhune war (Mönnig 1967:30)

#### **2.2.5 The Second Sekhukhune War**

The Pedi once again started cross-border raids, rustling cattle and killing a Boer farmer. Captain Clarke had to intervene, but realized that his contingent was too small. Additional troops were sent under Colonel Rowlands, but had to wait for the end of the Zulu war for assistance from General Sir Garnet Wolseley, who felt that Sekhukhune might wish to pursue peace. Sekhukhune refused an agreement.

Sir Garnet Wolseley immediately mobilized a strong army, a total force of some 12 000 men. In a well executed flanking attack, the Pedi were completely routed on 28 November 1878. The Sekhukhune era ended and the Pedi Empire was crushed, never to regain its old glory. Sekhukhune was taken to Pretoria and imprisoned (Mönnig 1967:31).

### **2.2.6 The Founding of the Pedi Lutheran Church**

Lobethal, another Lutheran mission station was started in the south of Sekhukhuneland by Rev Posselt, who was the first missionary in Bopedi after Merensky had fled. (This modern mission station is situated at Phaahla on the road between Marishane and Lebowa-Kgomo, and can accommodate approximately 400 conference delegates). Another mission station was allowed on the site of the ruins of Tšate. Rev JA Winter was sent to this station. Wanting to grant his converts greater control in the church, Winter soon became dissatisfied with the attitude of his fellow-missionaries towards the Pedi. He finally adopted the Pedi way of life, which forced the mission authorities to expel him. In 1889 he founded the Pedi Lutheran Church, one of the first separatist church movements in South Africa (Mönnig 1967:32).

### **2.2.7 The Retrocession of the Transvaal**

*On 8 August 1881, after the first Anglo-Boer War came the retrocession of the Transvaal (Mönnig 1967:32). Sekhukhune was released from prison and immediately took control of the chieftainship once again. Mampuru remained at Kgono. He refused to acknowledge the new Republican Government and fled to avoid arrest. Abel Erasmus was appointed as Native Commissioner and was assisted by Sekhukhune. Mampuru and Sekhukhune were the two chiefs recognized by the Pretoria government. Mampuru was dissatisfied, because he wanted the tribe to consolidate. He rid himself of Sekhukhune by murdering him at Manoge on the night of 13 August 1882, together with a number of men and women. This did not have the desired effect of consolidating the Pedi under Mampuru, who once more had to flee for his life. He sought refuge with the Ndebele chief Nyabele (Mönnig 1967:32). (Author's own translation.)*

### **2.2.8 Sekhukhune II**

Sekhukhune's son and heir was killed in the war against Wolseley. He had married a wife from the Mphahlele chief's family, but she died childless. A substitute was chosen by the name of Thorometšane. She was allowed by her parents to have a child by a certain Sekwati, who was the son of Moyalodi, a senior brother of Sekhukhune I. Thorometšane's son was named after Sekhukhune and he became Sekhukhune II. While he was still too young to rule, Kgoloko, the son of the fourth wife of old Sekwati, was appointed as regent. "Kgoloko immediately requested the Government to deal with Mampuru" (Mönnig 1967:32). Nyabele, who sheltered him, refused to hand him over. A commando, sided by Kgoloko, was sent to attack Nyabele, but they found him heavily fortified, and the campaign, which became a blockade, lasted for nine months.

Finally, Nyabele surrendered on 11 July 1883, and handed Mampuru over. The latter was found guilty of murder and hanged in Pretoria on 22 November (Mönnig 1967:33). Sekhukhune II completed his schooling in Pretoria and assumed the chieftainship at the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War in 1899. He died in 1943, after having led his people for a relatively peaceful decade. Sekhukhune II was pre-deceased by his son and heir, Thulare. Sekhukhune was succeeded for a short while by his brother Phatudi as regent, until Morwamotše III, the brother of Thulare, was appointed as regent in 1964. He, in the name of his brother, married the tribal wife, Mankopodi. She had two sons, the eldest of whom, Sekhukhune III, was the heir-apparent to the chieftainship. Morwamotše was chief only of the section of Bopedi known as Sekhukhuneland.

In other districts a number of chiefs had been appointed, including Chief Sekwati of the Pedi at Mamone and Chief Frank Maserumule of the Koni tribe near Jane Furse.

Appointing Morwamotše as chief over the whole of Sekhukhuneland was not acceptable and immediately caused trouble. To solve the problem, the Pedi decided to form a tribal authority under the Bantu Authorities Act. The outcome of this meeting led to the appointment of 18 heads of larger tribes and 17 councillors from Mohlaletse, where Sekhukhune III grew up. This naturally led to dissatisfaction, as many tribal heads, who in fact functioned as chiefs in their own right, were overlooked (Mönnig 1967:39).

Among the Pedi, however, were those who did not agree to this government scheme because, they said: "it is meant to force agricultural planning on the tribes." The whole of

Sekhukhuneland then became divided into the so-called ‘Rangers’, the government supporters, and the ‘Voortrekkers’, those who opposed the government programme (Mönnig 1967:39).

All efforts to solve the problem politically among the different leaders, failed and fighting between the Rangers and the Voortrekkers spread throughout Sekhukhuneland. “On 16 May 1958 a meeting was held at the local Commissioner’s office to discuss the appointment of Mothodi in place of Kgobalala, who realized that he could not control his people” (Mönnig 1967:41).

Attempts at internal reconciliation led to the appointment of Morwamotše as acting Paramount chief of Sekhukhuneland, on 27 July 1961. Unfortunately he died on 3 January 1965. The young Sekhukhune III was still not old enough to assume the chieftainship and his mother, the tribal wife Mankopodi, was designated as regent (Mönnig 1967:41). This caused a break-away of many newly formed tribes, each with its own chief. Towards the south, in the Nebo district, chief Sekwati at Mamone regarded himself as superior to the Pedi of Mohlaletse, where Sekhukhune III was situated. The tribe at Mamone was much larger and stronger than the one at Mohlaletse, but his superiority was not recognized (Mönnig 1967:41).

The homeland of Lebowa was eventually formed, with its own local government. The capital was Lebowa-Kgomo. The first prime minister was Dr Cedric Phatudi, who was the son of Chief (Kgoši) Phatudi Mmutle Mphahlele, also called Chief Mmutle III (Phatudi 1989:2). The Mphahlele village is situated 60 km south-east of Pietersburg, now known as Polokwane.

## **2.3 OTHER INDIGENOUS GROUPS IN SEKHUKHUNELAND**

### **2.3.1 The Swazi of Hoepakranz**

Mönnig (1967:27) mentions two groups of Swazi, one under Msutu and the other under Mpehle, who fled Swaziland because of unrest. They obtained permission from chief Sekhukhune to settle on the Leolo Mountains. A large Swazi army followed the fugitives to recapture them, but was crushed by the Pedi, who were well armed with guns. Malan (1963:2) wrote a script on one of these groups, that of Johannes Nkosi, son of Ngobe, son of Mabhedla. The group that came first was under the leadership of Ngungunyane, son of



Shopeane, son of Msutu. This group settled further south near the offices of Schoonoord. The group of Johannes Nkosi made their home further and settled on top of the Leolo Mountains, on the section 24'30 and 24'45 south. The habitable plateau is 5 000 to 6 000 feet above sea level (Malan 1963:1). The DRC missionaries started to work among the Swazi of Hoepakranz and also enlisted a full-time evangelist. Ever since the establishment of Burger mission and later Maandagshoek mission, this was an outpost for Holy Communion. Even today the present minister, Rev TM Banda of Burger congregation, has Hoepakranz on his programme for Holy Communion. Well-known Christian families in the church are Lukhele, Moekoena, Nkosi and Zulu (Banda 2009).

### **2.3.2 The Swazi People of Gareagopola as told by Elizabeth Masemola**

Her grandfather, Noag Mashayela Maseko, and grandmother, Joan Sebengwa (Nkosi) lived in Swaziland. During that time they became dissatisfied with life in Swaziland. Noag had to look after other people's cattle and was also forced to become an impi. When he got married, he decided to move to the Transvaal. They went to Lydenburg and Noag became a farm worker for Mr Hendrik Coetzee on the farm Badfontein, between Lydenburg and Machadodorp. He stayed with Hendrik all his life. The farmer took very good care of the family. He even gave him his name, because he said that Noag was a man of integrity. The couple had the following children: David (1880), Johanna (1882), Thomas (1888), Elizabeth (1891), John (1896) and Alida (1902). Elizabeth married Uncle Ngomane of Witrivier. Alida married Jacobus Mnisi of Lydenburg.

### **2.3.3 Jacob Masina**

The Maseko family came in contact with Jacob Masina. He was the son-in-law of our grandfather, Noag. He stayed at Lydenburg. The Masina family belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church. Jacob Masina was the leader. He attended night school and he was able to read the Bible. He preached to the congregation, although he was still a youngster. The Maseko family was all baptized and became members of the DRC. It was Rev Maritz who worked here and assisted Masina with his ministry. Masina grew old, almost 100 years. When he was ailing, a certain Moruti Koenraad took him to Matlala Hospital, from where he was transferred to the Pretoria General hospital, where he passed away.

#### **2.3.4 The Maseko Family**

Elizabeth wrote that their father, John (1896) married Emmah Nkosi. God blessed them with boys and girls. The Maseko family was all members of the DRC. We had two brothers who assisted old man Jacob Masina. Brother David helped the church very well, but died in 1970, a year before old man Masina. My brother Esau also continued the work but died in 1983. Our sister Mieta's son, Mphete Shongwe, continued as elder and leader and is still here. His father, Andries, helped him and made a wooden bench which is used by the church members while waiting outside the building for the minister.

#### **2.3.5 Alida Mnisi (1902)**

Alida married Jacobus Mnisi. Ever since the beginning of the DRC in Lydenburg, the Mnisi family as well as the Masina family were Christians. Their children also helped to expand the church. Noag, one of the sons, married Batseba. He went with his family to Arnot, where he worked as evangelist for almost ten years. From Arnot he moved to Saaiplaas. Both he and his wife were buried there. He also had a younger brother, JS Mnisi (28.5.1), who became a full-time minister in the NGKA (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1975). They can say the Swazi families of Lydenburg who came to Gareagopola were all Christians. After 100 years we and our children are still with the church. Our grandparents and parents showed us the way to Christ.

#### **2.3.6 Gareagopola**

This is the place where they stay now. In 1929 a law which was called ICU came into effect for the whole of Lydenburg district. This allowed all Bantu people to obtain farms for farming purposes. Our father, John Maseko and Jacob Masina, who were brothers-in-law, decided to find their own place. In 1930 they moved to Middelburg. The magistrate of Middelburg, Mr Wesman, allowed them to stay. After two years they moved to Gareagopola (Klipspruit 377). The owner of Klipspruit was Mr Misioner. The magistrate of Nebo, Mr Grobler, helped them to buy a farm. He arranged with the Department of Native Affairs in Pretoria, so that they could obtain a deed of sale for the farm. The group had to choose a committee with a chairman and a secretary. They chose Johannes Kgoroba and Dan Mashiloane as their leaders. They arranged for every household to pay £25 to become full members and owners of the farm. Amongst this group of Swazi and Pedi

people there were many Christians from different Church denominations. A school was erected first. It was called Gareagopola Tribal School. It was the second school in the whole of Sekhukhuneland built by a community. The first was Marishane Tribal School. In 1940 the Gareagopola Tribal School was named Gareagopola Primary School for pupils from Substandard A to Standard 5. Two languages were spoken in the school, namely Sepedi and Zulu.

After the school was built the different church denominations, about 8 of them, began to build small church buildings for worship. The DRC also built their church of clay bricks, with a grass roof. All the churches were built in a row next to the road that led from Marble Hall to Nebo via Arabie and Mogaladi.

Rev Abraham Rousseau of the Burger Mission Station visited them and served the Sacraments. In 1946 when the Sekhukhuneland congregation was established, the missionary at Klipspruit took over the ministry services. The first missionary at Klipspruit was Rev Attie van Niekerk.

#### **2.4 THE MASUKU FAMILY OF MATHUKUTHELA AT PHOKWANE AS TOLD BY OBED MASUKU**

“A long time ago our grandfather came from Swaziland and settled at Lydenburg. He had three wives. The second wife was our grandmother, the mother of our father, Stefans Masuku. They were blessed with four girls and two boys. The second son was our father. We lived on the farm Doornhoek, Lydenburg, which belonged to the Vosloo family. We were five boys and five girls and I, Obed, was the third child. My family started to attend the Dutch Reformed Church under old man Mnisi, who lived at Goedgedacht. I was sent to my grandmother to stay there, but when my second grandfather died, I had to return to my parents. Till then I looked after the cattle, sheep and goats of my grandparents, at Waterval between Lydenburg and Steelpoort. I started school in 1939 at Goedgedacht School, where I passed Standard 5.

“My brothers and sisters were all baptized when they were small, but I, being older, had to first attend catechism under Rev Prinsloo, who only came for Holy Communion and evangelistic campaigns. I worked for three months without pay every year, attending school for the remaining nine months. In 1949 I went to high school at Lydenburg. There

were no boarding schools, so I had to look for a place of employment while attending school. I found employment and my employer wanted to register me, but the farmer refused to give me a permit. After my father talked to him, he gave me a ‘trekpas’ showing that I no longer belonged on the farm. From 1949 to 1952 I stayed and worked in town while studying. I worked in the early hours of the morning and after school. Our father passed away in December 1952.

“In 1953 I enrolled at Fortcox for two years’ training. My younger brother left school, as he wanted to work instead. When I came home during the December holidays, I learned from my mother that she wanted to leave the farm to move to Phokwane to her eldest daughter, where she lived with her in-laws. My brother and I searched for transport and a farmer near Ohrigstad came to our assistance. My brother paid for the transport and we obtained the necessary permits to drive the cattle.

“It was a sad day when we had to say goodbye to the farmer and his wife, as we had lived on the farm since the days of our grandfathers. We left our grandmother in the care of our aunt who lived nearby. We also left our brother and sister who passed away. I helped my other brother and for two days we drove the cattle via Lydenburg and Steelpoort to Phokwane. We stayed with one of our family members at Gareagopola and I returned to school at Fortcox. I found them staying with my sister at Mathukuthela when I returned at the end of 1954.

“A certain Maseko offered us a temporary place at Platklip to do some ploughing while waiting for a permanent place. I helped my mother and family with temporary shelters. All through this period the family attended the church at Gareagopola. Rev JS Malan from Klipspruit was our minister. In 1955 I obtained a temporary teaching post at the Acornhoek mission. In 1956 I managed to move nearer home, when I worked for Aboo at Phokwane. In 1957 I was appointed in a permanent position within the Department of Agriculture. In 1977 we moved to our new stand at Mathukuthela – Stand 197.

“This is the story of Obed Masuku: His brother Daniël was married to Katrien Maphanga. She and her husband, together with Obed and his wife, Anna, helped me in building the Mathukuthela church in 1993 and 1994. Katrien lives opposite the church and is also the caretaker of the church. She and her brother-in-law are the elders of this congregation. Obed is in charge of the administration and finances and Katrien is a colporteur for

Dibukeng, selling Bibles and Hymn Books. She lost her husband, Daniël, in 2007, as well as her son and daughter-in-law. As a grandmother, she is looking after their two children. These two families are the spiritual leaders of the village, caring, praying and serving the Body of Christ.”

## **2.5 SAMSON MNISI: A PIONEER CHURCH PLANTER**

The above stories of the Maseko and Masuku families, who relocated from Lydenburg to Gareagopola and Mathukuthela near Phokwane, are an indication of the influence they and others like the Maphanga, Shongwe and Mnisi families had on the mission work done in Sekhukhuneland. The Swazi Christians of Lydenburg were inspired by one man, whom I have already mentioned, as told by Rev PNJ Maritz in his biography. His name is **SAMSON MNISI**. Mnisi was General Burger’s sidekick in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899 to 1902. He was also his personal bodyguard and master of the horses. When General Joubert visited Pretoria he allowed Mnisi to be taught at the Presbyterian Church School. Samson Mnisi, who was looked upon as the ‘old man’, was actually the Lord’s trailblazer among his own people, the Swazi and a shining light amongst the non-believers. The fruits of his labour were carried by the Swazi families into Sekhukhuneland. Although more than eight decades have passed since these families arrived here, their descendents continue with unwavering faith to witness among the Swazi and Pedi in their congregations, Gareagopola and Mathukuthela.

## **2.6 THE SOUTH NDEBELE – THE NDZUNDZA**

Mabhogo gathered all the Ndzundza and settled at Namshazelo, also known as Mapoch’s cave, near Roosenekal. Mabhogo ruled from 1837 to 1865 (Coetzee 1980:245). When the Voortrekkers arrived in the Eastern Transvaal, they were far from welcome, and clashes occurred as early as 1849 (Coetzee 1980:245). Another clash came when Maleo, the chief of the Kopa, and a citizen of Sekhukhune, entered into a conspiracy with Mabhogo to kill Sekhukhune. This did not happen immediately and the two chiefs decided to riot against the white farmers, destroying some of their property, as well as the Berlin Mission Station at Maleoskop. The farmers campaigned against them, but were unsuccessful. The Swazi, however, conquered the Kopa in 1864, but were unable to take the Mountain settlement of Mabhogo. Mabhogo died in 1865 (Coetzee 1980:246).

After the death of Mabhogo several successors of the same lineage ruled the Ndzundza nation. When Nyabela became chief, he refused to work under the ZAR government. He preferred to work under the English, who took over the government of the Transvaal for a short period of time. Another incident caused serious trouble for the Ndebele. This was when the Pedi chief Mampuru (Mampoer) was charged by the ZAR with the murder of a farmer, Gert Viljoen. He then committed another crime by murdering the chief of the Pedi, Sekhukhune.

Mampuru sought shelter at Nyabela's place. This caused the ZAR to take over Nyabela's kingdom by military force in the winter of 1883. Nyabela and Mampuru were taken to Pretoria and Mampuru was hanged while Nyabela was sentenced to life imprisonment (Coetzee 1980:248). Parliament decided on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1883 to terminate the kingdom of Ndzundza. Their citizens had to find employment on the farms in the Transvaal Highveld and in 1895 the Mapoch's land was incorporated into the district of Middelburg.

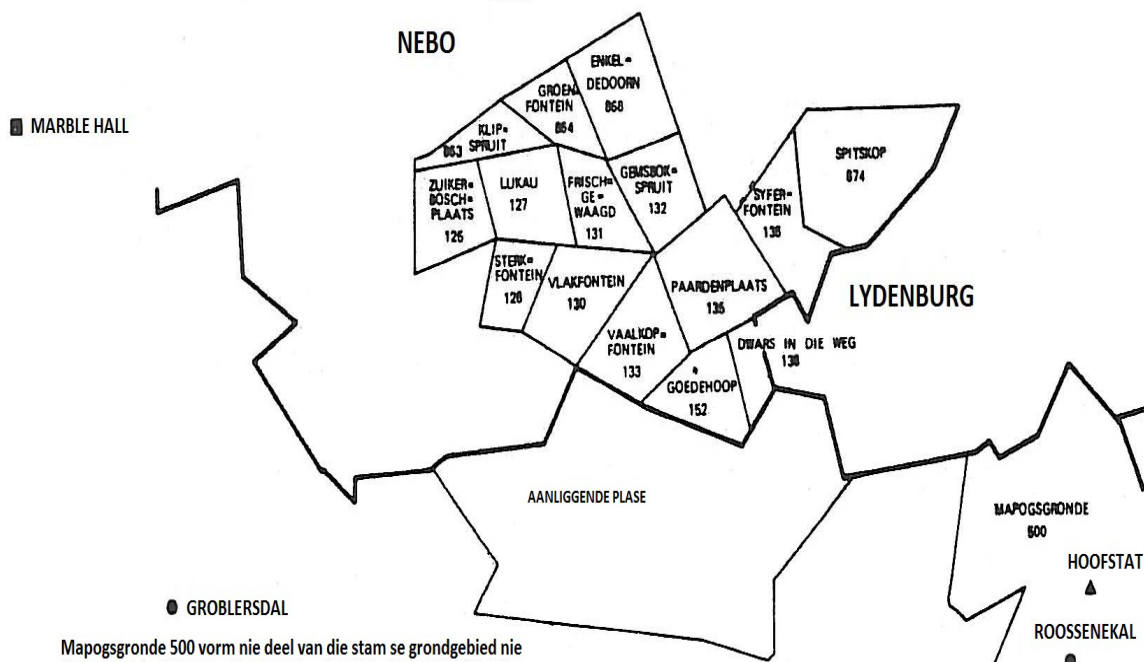
Nyabela was freed from jail in 1897 and settled with some of his followers at Derdepoort, near Pretoria (Coetzee 1980:250). Another section of the group settled in the district of Middelburg (Kwa-Mkhina) under Jafta Mahlangu. A son of Nyabela, Fene Mahlangu, settled with his group near Bronkhorstspuit. Fene tried to return to Mapoch's land, but it was refused again. When he died in 1922 at Welgelegen (Kwa-Hlanga at the Wilger River) he was succeeded by Cornelis Mabhogo. They bought the farm Weltevreden 158 JR in the Dennilton district and settled there in 1923. When he died, he was succeeded by his son Fene II, also known as David Mabhogo Mahlangu. This Ndzundza (Mabhogo) tribal authority was institutionalized in 1969 (GK 2143/1969), with Weltevreden as the tribal farm, along with several other farms in the Dennilton region. Geographically these farms were seen as part of the Lebowa Regional Government. In 1974 this section became a Regional authority (R135/1974) and in 1977 it was included within the Ndebele Regional Authority (R2021/1977) (Coetzee 1980:256).

This group was reached by the DRC Mission work of Philadelphia. When the homeland expanded to Kwaggafontein and Kwa-Mhlanga, a new congregation, called Hlanganani, seceded from Philadelphia, in 1981. At this time I was the secretary of the Ndebele Mission Committee. This region does not fall under Sekhukhuneland, but the other two Ndebele divisions captured our attention because of the very important part they played in the establishment of mission work in the Sekhukhuneland and Lerato congregations.

## 2.7 THE NDEBELE OF NEBO (SEKHUKHUNELAND)

This group is referred to as the Ndzundza of Jack Mahlangu. They were living on the farms shown on Chart 1 (Coetzee 1980:269). With the creation of the Nebo regional authority, the Ndebele tribal authority was included and eventually became part of Lebowa (R1247/1962). The refusal of Jack Mahlangu to form part of the new Ndebele Regional Government was a great disappointment to David Mabhogo. Some of Jack Mahlangu's people were also connected to Mabhogo. This schism went back to the 1883 war, but it also contributed to later rioting and political division and unrest in the Dennilton-Mutsi region (Coetzee 1980:272). As far as the ministry is concerned, the two languages, Sepedi and Zulu, are still being used in congregational meetings. The Ndebele members have no problem with Sepedi. They are bilingual.

**Chart 1: TRIBAL AREA OF THE MDZUNDZA OF NEBO (GK 1139/1957)**



## 2.8 THE NORTH NDEBELE OF ZEBETIELA

According to Coetzee (1980:287) Kekana, who stayed near Premier mine, broke away from the Yakalala/Madidzi tribe and settled at Moletlane. This group must not be confused with the South Ndebele. They had different chiefs, but the one known to historians is Sebetiela, who was the successor of Sello Kekana. The commissioner for Soutpansberg,

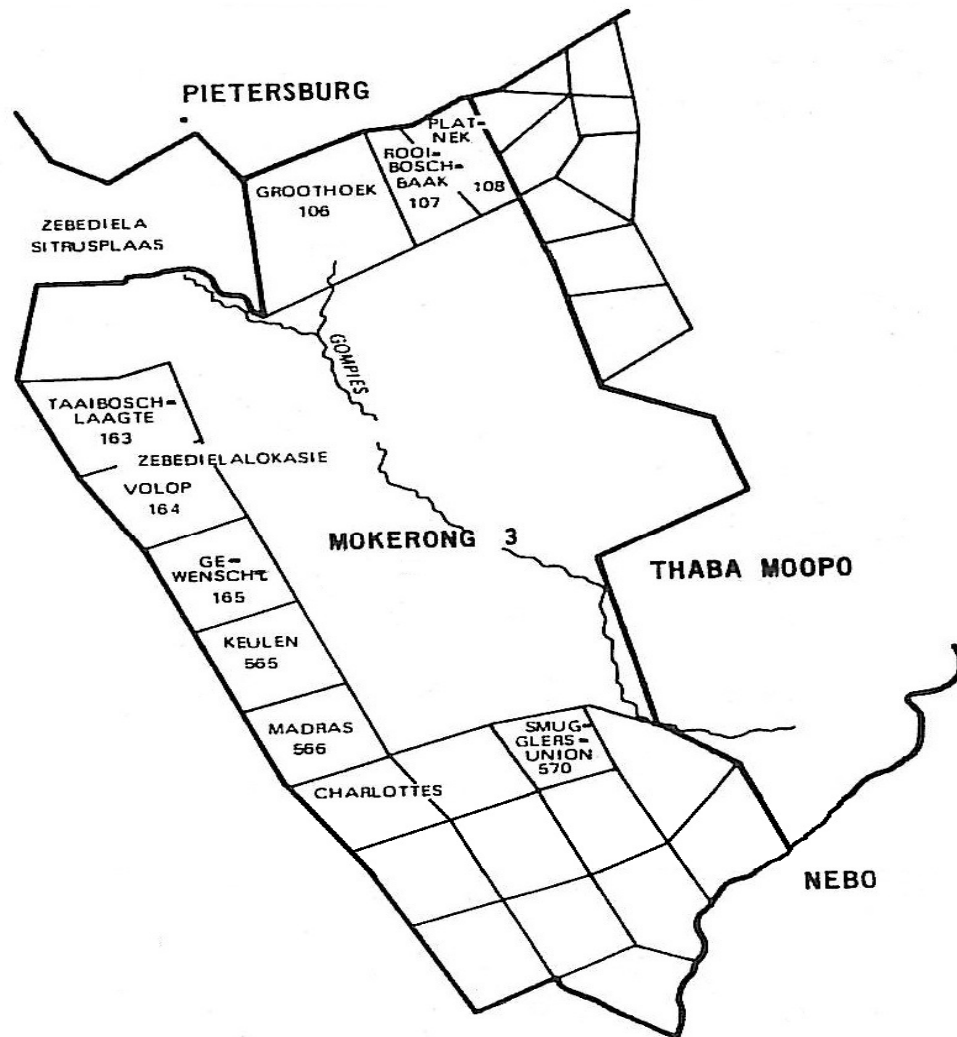


Mr Barton, visited chief Sebetiela, who was crippled. He was succeeded by MmaMokebe, who had contact with the Europeans. The Kekana tribe of Sebetiela helped President Krüger in the war against Sekukuni and Magoeba. They also helped during the Second Freedom War. One of the later chiefs was Ramabele, but there were many others. Johannes was chief in 1980 (Coetzee 1980:302). This region of Kekana was allocated on 4 June 1884 by the Location Committee of the ZAR, represented by Christiaan Joubert, Piet Cronjé and P Muller (Coetzee 1980:302). The Sebetiela Tribal Authority was eventually included in 1972 as part of Lebowa in terms of Mokerong district. This tribe has a dominant Northern Sotho milieu (Coetzee 1980:306).

The Farm 7785 allocated to this group is shown on Chart 2 (Coetzee 1980:303). They played a very important role in the establishment of the Grootboek Mission Hospital, mission work at Zebediela (Orange Farm) Estates and the development of a congregation. The history of the congregation of Lerato started here. In 2000 this section seceded from Lerato to form a new congregation called Sebetiela. The name is derived from the history of the Ndbele (Yearbook 2006 URCSA:74). Most of the farms in the Sekhukhuneland area have Dutch names, because the surveyors of the ZAR were Dutch speaking. The s, z, d and t in Zebediela (the place) and Sebetiela (the tribal name), explains the difference in spelling, because of the difference in pronunciation.



**Chart 2: KEKANA TRIBAL AREA IN SEBETIELA (GK 110/1957)**



## **2.9 THE BA-KOPA AND THE BERLIN MISSIONARIES**

According to Grosskopf the Ba-Kopa tribe split from the Kwena of Matshabela (approx. 1740) and settled at Moganyaka (Leeuwfontein). Before eventually relocating to Thabantsho in 1856, they first settled at De Oude Stadt west of Groblersdal. Following an agreement with the Lydenburg Republic in 1859, they relocated from there and moved to the farm Rietkloof. They settled on a hill flanked by two smaller hillocks in the centre of the farm and named the prominent central hill Thabantsho or Black Mountain.

Maphogo of the Ndebele, and Boleu (sometimes referred to as Maleo) of the Ba-Kopa, decided to declare war on the Boers in 1863 when a commando of 350 men showed up. (The reason for this was the constant cattle theft committed by the tribe.) The commando

decided to attack the Ba-Kopa but not the Ndebele under Maphogo, as the latter were successfully barricaded at Mapochskraal near Middelburg. The attack was a dismal failure and due to internal strife in the Boer camp, the ZAR decided to employ the Swazis as mercenaries.

On 10 May 1864 a combined force consisting of Swazis and Boer forces attacked the mountain settlement from the rear and succeeded in surprising the enemy. During the attack the Ba-Kopas were nearly annihilated and the king and some of his sons were killed. The survivors dispersed after the battle but later assembled at the Gerlachshoop mission station where food and medical services were provided. Ramapudu, the son of Boleu, was appointed king. The farmers in the area allowed the survivors to settle in an area to the west of the mission station.

Because of tribal tensions, the tribe eventually split into two groups. On 27 January 1865 a group under Ramapudu moved away and settled near Botshabelo, in the Middelburg district, while the other group joined up with Matsepe and moved to Leeuwfontein near Marble Hall.

In recognition of their valuable assistance during the First Boer War, the ZAR allowed the tribe to move back to the farm Rietfontein. In 1889 the Ba-Kopa settled at Thabantsho, now referred to as Boleu, where they lived until 1962, when they were moved to Tafelkop.

### **2.9.1 The Mission at Gerlachshoop**

The missionaries and the mission station at Gerlachshoop played an integral part in the history of Boleuskop and the people of the Ba-Kopa tribe. After receiving their orders from the executive council in Utrecht, Alexander Merensky and Albert Grützner travelled to the settlement of Boleu accompanied by Rev van Heiningen (from Lydenburg), Field-Cornet JC Holtshausen and Commandant P Nel. The missionaries reached an agreement with Boleu allowing them to settle in the area and work with the tribe.

A church was constructed with the help of the local Christians and the first sermons were delivered on 20 September 1863. Although the missionary work prospered, it also caused discord between Boleu and the missionaries. The first major disagreement occurred during conflict between Boleu and Sekhukhune, when the tribe of Boleu employed witchdoctors to strengthen their foot soldiers. The missionaries fervently opposed this practice and

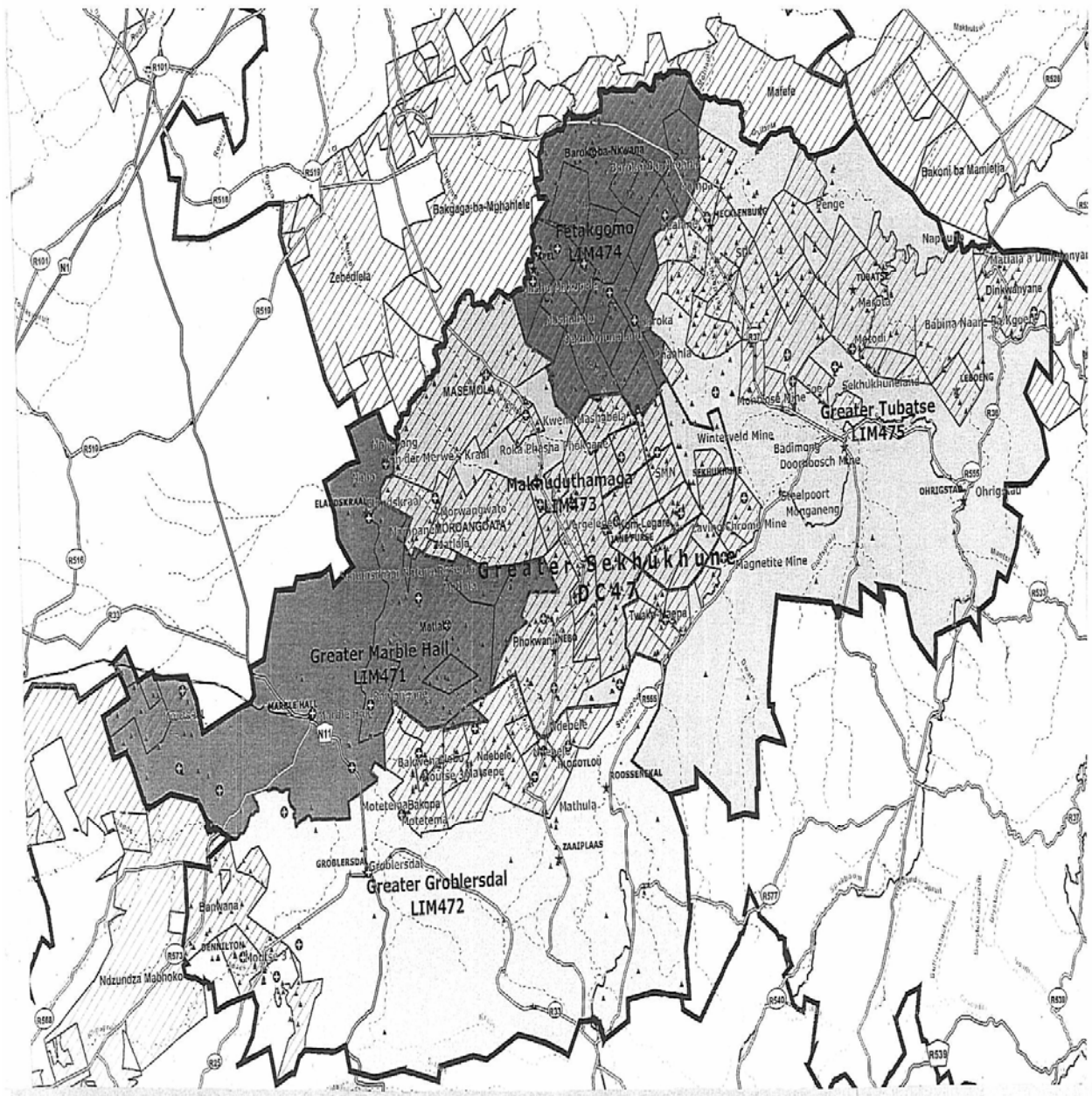
derided them for employing such heathen beliefs. The confrontation escalated to such a degree that the settlers on the outlying farms had to come to the mission's defense.

The derision gradually intensified, which led to an attack on the tribe in October 1863, led by 40 Boer commandos. The attack failed and gave Boleu the added determination to oust the missionaries from the area. Merensky and Nachtgeal eventually returned to Europe in January 1864, which provided some respite in the ongoing confrontation. The conflict nevertheless continued and together with other factors, such as the unremitting instances of cattle theft, led to the combined Swazi/Boer attack on 10 May 1864.

The missionaries saw the fire on Thabantsho and realized that a major attack was in progress. Grützner rushed to assist the people of Boleu but was stopped by Andries, an interpreter and one of the first Christians, after it became clear that the Swazi forces might also attack the mission station. The missionaries undertook the necessary precautions to avert an attack. Boleu's surviving son informed Grützner of the intense battle, the ensuing conflagration and the fact that the king and most of his sons had been killed in battle.

The population dispersed after the battle. Some stayed on outlying farms while others went to the mission station for help. Although confusion reigned, the population eventually converged on the mission station. The Christians chose to follow Ramupudu, Boleu's only living son, while those who chose the traditional belief system, followed Matsepe, Boleu's half-brother. Chaos and uncertainty prevailed during this time, with instigators stirring rival clans, which prompted the January 1865 Maphogo attack on the Ba-Kopa. Alexander Merensky took it upon himself to mediate on behalf of the rival clans, which resulted in the returning of the plundered goods and livestock.

Merensky decided to move to Botshabelo, where Ramupudu and his Christian contingent would join him. They arrived on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1865. The tribe members who chose to follow Matsepe settled at Leeuwfontein. On 13<sup>th</sup> February, the missionaries left Gerlachshoop and joined Merensky and Grützner at Botshabelo. The mission station at Gerlachshoop continued to be owned by the Berlin Mission Society until 1964, when ownership was transferred to the South African government (Grosskopf 1957).



**Chart 3: Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality (DC47)**

## **2.10 MANCHE MASEMOLA – A MARTYR’S DEATH**

The female members of the congregation told me about the grave of a young girl who was buried in the mountains near Marishane. I have always felt the need to see it for myself, because once a year the prayer ladies of the different churches around Marishane would travel to her grave for prayer and worship. It was only in 2009 that I had the opportunity to do so. When we had finished with the service at Mathapisa I asked my colleague, Rev



Moroaswi, to accompany me to the lonely place in the mountain. He agreed and when we arrived we noticed signposts and a freshly scraped road leading to the spot. When we read the signposts we realized that the grave has become a tourist attraction, because it is looked upon by the Limpopo Government as a monument. The words on the stone read as follows: *MANCHE MASEMOLA – HER LIFE STORY*.

Manche, a young woman of the Pedi tribe, lived her short life in Sekhukhuneland. It is believed that Manche was born around 1913 in Marishane. Father Augustine Moeka of the Anglican Community of Resurrection had established a mission at Marishane. It was with her cousin, Licia that Manche first heard Moeka preach. She wished to learn more and began to attend classes twice a week. Fearful that she might leave them or refuse to marry, her parents sought to discourage her. When she defied them, she was beaten on 4 February 1928. Her mother and father took her to this lonely spot, killed her and secretly buried her here. Shortly afterwards, her sister Mabule also died, apparently from shock, and was buried next to her grave. *MABULE MASEMOLA – MAY 1928*.

Manche's tombstone carries the following inscription, being her last words before she died. Her vow:

I WILL BE BAPTIZED WITH MY OWN BLOOD. (In Northern Sotho: *Manche Masemola yo o kolobitšwego ka madi a gagwe February 4, 1926. O re rapelele.*)

## **2.11 EVALUATION**

Why was it necessary to have given a brief summary of the history of the people of Sekhukhuneland? Firstly any historian would like to know why this part of the world is called Sekhukhuneland, and who the people are that live there. This area is inhabited by mostly Bapedi and by other groups like the Ndebele and some Swazi families. Although the tribe of Chief Sekwati Mampuru was the largest and the Sekhukhune tribe small, the latter built up a considerable empire by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Sekhukhune tribe eventually became the paramount tribe of Sekhukhuneland. They are called Pedi and they are the people of Sekhukhuneland. The position of the Pedi during the time the historical churches started their mission stations, could be described as follows:

The Pedi Empire in Sekhukhuneland under the chieftainship of chief Sekhukhune with Mohlaletse as his base has dwindled through internal strife and secession. However, the

internal *political* situation was temporarily stabilized by the national policy of the homelands (Mönnig 1967:42). The tribe also acts as a social, unifying group, controlling the *social* life and activities of all its members. Such a group under a chieftainship and a tribal name is called *setšhaba* (community). Conflicting claims on chieftainship sometimes caused the breaking away of one of the leaders with his personal followers.

The *economical* life consisted of agriculture and mainly cattle farming. The low and unpredictable rainfall is a factor in determining their well-being. The traditional Pedi *religion* still plays a role in this area. The Pedi's conception of religion is called *borapedi* (devotedness). They strive for a proper relationship with the supernatural. Most of the ritual actions are performed by the community or kin groups as a whole (Mönnig 1967:44).

In this context the churches like the Lutheran, Anglican, Wesleyan, Roman Catholic and the DRC moved in during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **PART ONE**

### **THE PIONEERING PHASE OF THE DRC MISSION WORK IN SEKHUKHUNELAND – CHURCH-MISSION PARTNERSHIP**

#### **3. MPHAHLELE – AN OVERFLOW FROM KRANSPOORT MISSION INTO SEKHUKHUNELAND**

Maree (1962:96) tells about a mission journey undertaken by a French group who visited Marabastad in 1873. They met a certain Josias who had started working among chief Molepo's people south-east of Pietersburg (now Polokwane). Chief Molepo did not approve of the Gospel being preached to his people and he persecuted the Christians. A few days later they met Jonatan, a converted Pedi man from the French Mission Basutoland. He had been granted permission by chief Mphahlele to teach and preach in his village.

Mphahlele was situated more to the east, on the other side of the Strydpoort Mountain which one could reach by travelling through Chuenespoort. Christians here were also persecuted. Some fled to Berea, a farm where Swiss missionaries worked.

Between the French, Berlin and Swiss Missions there was an agreement that the Swiss Mission would work amongst the Shangaan people. The Sotho speaking evangelists preferred to work among the Sotho speaking people. However, some did not want to work with the Berlin Mission and decided to work with the "Ned Geref Kerk instead." Thus Josias, Samuel, Jesaja, Johannes and Raphela became evangelists under Rev Stephanus Hofmeyr. Hofmeyr visited Josias at Berea in March 1880. He also visited the chiefs of Molepo, Dikgale and Mphahlele, all of whom fell under the rule of chief Sekhukhune (Maree 1962:97). In one way or the other they were all related. Berea, which later became Palmietfontein, was a few miles south-east of Pietersburg. Josias' successor was Moseto Masekala. Rev Daneel in 1893 wrote of the devotion and zeal of these Christians. Samuel and Miga were some of the evangelists who worked at Mphahlele, 34 miles south of Pietersburg, during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. The revival continued among these Northern Sotho speaking groups, especially at the time when the capital of Molepo was being further developed (Maree 1962:98).

### **3.1 MOLEPO**

In 1886 chief Molepo opened up his village to the mission. Rev Burger of Middelburg and Rev Andrew Murray of Wellington had a meeting with the evangelists of the Kranspoort mission at Molepo in 1887 (Maree 1962:98). Evangelist Frederik Molepo, who was baptized in the St. Stephens Church of Cape Town, had been working there since 1883. He had a membership of 60, with 40 children at school. At the end of October 1891, Rev SP Helm began working at Molepo, where he served until 21 June 1892, when he went to Banyailand. He was succeeded by Rev JW Daneel, who shortly afterwards moved to Goedgedacht, a move that was not accepted by the congregation. They requested that he should be replaced as soon as possible. He was succeeded in 1903 by Rev Hendrik Hofmeyr, son of Rev Stefanus Hofmeyr. These early missionary efforts at Mphahlele and southern station outposts of the Soutpansberg mission opened up the way for later mission work in Sekhukhuneland.

### **3.2 REV SP HELM**

We read further (Maree 1962:113) that Rev Stephanus Hofmeyr received help from Rev SP Helm who arrived in 1887 and started working immediately. This enabled Rev and Mrs Hofmeyer to go on long leave, whilst the work was continued by Rev Helm. On Rev Hofmeyr's return on 26 June 1889, Rev Helm went on a journey to Banyailand, but soon returned and in August resumed his task by visiting the outposts. He lived at Molepo. From May to December 1891 he wrote that he had travelled between 800 and 900 miles by wagon, horse and on foot. He had three evangelists who were responsible for the following outposts: Dikgale, Nkuana, Palmietfontein, Marabastad, Makapansgat, Klein Maraba, Maletse-capital and Mphahlele. This was an important area with Pietersburg at the centre of a 70 mile radius.

### **3.3 REV JW DANEEL**

Rev Helm was succeeded by Rev JW Daneel, the son of Rev AB Daneel, who was the DRC minister at Heidelberg, Cape from 1862 to 1899. He arrived at Soutpansberg in April. In June 1892 he started in Rev Helm's place at Molepo when Rev Helm went off to Banyailand again. In August 1894 he reported to the Mission Commission that he was serving 35 500 people at nine outposts: Molepo, Mphahlele, Makapansgat, Palmietfontein,



Marabastad, Machachane, Maletseland, Nkuana and Dikgale. He had between 570 and 600 people who partook of Holy Communion, 12 schools with 307 pupils, as well as 12 evangelists. He married Rev Hofmeyr's daughter on 12 October 1893. After six years he was transferred to Kranspoort where he fulfilled his life's vision. He worked for 44 years and when he died in 1906 the total statistics read as follows:

*Church goers: 3 127*

*Adults that were baptized: 1 182*

*Holy Communion users: 777*

*Catechumen: 340*

*Conversions during the year: 131*

*Midday school: 681*

*Evening school: 305*

At Mphahlele in Sekhukhuneland the following figures were reported:

*Church goers: 141*

*Adults that were baptized: 28*

*Holy Communion users: 20*

*Catechumen: 8*

*Conversions that year: 6*

*Midday school: 30*

*Evening school: 36*

*Sunday school: 43 (Maree 1962:161).*

### **3.4 MPHAHLELE**

On Sunday, 30 August 1903 (Maree 1962:174), Rev Hendrik Hofmeyr, son of Rev Stephanus Hofmeyr, was ordained as missionary under a tree at Emmaus, near Marabastad. The two brothers-in-law shared the outpost. Rev Hofmeyr was responsible for Bethel (Molepo), Marabastad (Emmaus), Kalkfontein, Berea, Mphahlele, Sebati, Moyapelo, Doornfontein and Eland (districts of Waterberg) with a total membership of 708. In January 1904 Hendrik married Susan Fölscher, a missionary teacher in Mashonaland. The wedding took place at Swellendam. They lived at Molepo. Susan died 29 days after the birth of her third son on 27 May 1915, at the age of 36, and was buried at Molepo.

After the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) annual general conferences were continued. Local members, together with the evangelists of the mission, gathered for spiritual enhancement. On 4 July 1903 the first conference was held at Kranspoort, the main station. In 1905 it was held at Mphahlele. At this conference the evangelists requested that more workers and teachers be sent because of the many opportunities and spiritual needs. The next conference was held at Potgietersrus in June 1906. Mphahlele remained an outpost of Molepo under Rev Hofmeyr until the *TVSV* (Transvaal Women's Mission Society) took responsibility for it as an outpost of Burger mission. This came about when the first missionary, Rev Abraham Rousseau, started the new mission station at Mooiplaas in 1929. Many evangelists and ministers worked at Mphahlele during the Burger mission era. Their names and work appear under different headings. The first black minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa, Edward Moleke Phatudi (1912-1983) was born and raised at Mphahlele (Phatudi 1989:1). Mphahlele remained an outpost of the Burger congregation until 1966 when new borders were set for the presbytery of Burger. Following this, the congregation of Potgietersrus East was responsible for services at Mphahlele. Another man who, almost throughout his life played a very important role in the ministry in Sekhukhuneland, was Rev MJ Mankoe, born 23 May 1932 at Mphahlele (Mankoe 2009b:2).

### **3.5 1926 TO 1965**

It was decided by the Kranspoort mission that the new missionary of the Burger mission would serve Mphahlele congregation, which was situated much closer to Burger than to Kranspoort (*TVSV*-Feesnommer 1905-1930:91). Mphahlele boasted a well-built house for the evangelist and a small church with a pulpit and a neat pulpit cloth with the words: *Modimo o Lerato* (GOD IS LOVE) embroidered by Mrs Hofmeyr, the missionary's wife. The evangelist at Mphahlele was Willard Sefara. He died at the end of 1931 (Louw 1972:19).

When the Burger congregation was officially formed in 1932, Mphahlele became an outstation of Burger. Rev Rousseau served the congregation of Burger and assisted the evangelist. A new church building was started and completed by Rev LC van der Merwe, who succeeded Rev Rousseau in 1941. The opening took place on 13 September 1942 (Maree 1962:221). When Jacobus Murray Louw and Edward Phatudi were ordained as the first *dominees* at Mphahlele on 27 March 1943, Rev van der Merwe left for Belfast

because of ill health. Rev Louw was assisted at Mphahlele by evangelist Mojapelo. He was succeeded by ordained minister, Phineas Kutumela, a converted Nyasa policeman who worked as evangelist in Burger from 1951 to 1954, when he went to Stofberg Memorial School and completed his studies in 1957. On 25 January 1958 he was ordained as a minister and co-pastor for Rev Louw (Louw 1972:32). He worked at Mphahlele for four years. In May 1962 he was called to Boschfontein, where he died in July 1964. Ev Abiël Motau succeeded him. When JM Louw (Koos) was ordained as second missionary on 31 January 1959, Burger congregation was divided into three minister's wards.

Rev Koos Louw took all the outposts of Maandagshoek, while Rev Murray Louw remained at Maandagshoek hospital in his capacity as administrator and Bible translator. He also served for many years as scribe of the presbytery of Kranspoort and on various commissions. Rev Kutumela, stationed at Mphahlele, was responsible for the area around the Olifants River, a total of seven outposts. Working together, Rev Kutumela and Rev Louw Jr. held various youth camps, including one at Mphahlele in May 1959. Rev Kutumela also concentrated on church schools.

In 1944 a private school was opened at Zebediela. At Mphahlele a devoted Mr TJ Kriel was the principal of a secondary school with 70 pupils. He was able to preach in Sepedi and often preached the Word in the Mphahlele church. He and his wife lived at Mphahlele. Rev Kutumela, who started on 25 January 1958 as minister, left in May 1962 (Louw 1972:32). He was replaced by Rev Ramaipadi, who at first had some opposition from certain community members, but persisted and later was completely trusted. He was also elected to serve on school committees as well as the school board. In 1965 when Mphahlele became a ward of Potgietersrus East (*TVSV*) Rev Ramaipadi was moved to Penge. Rev KM Leshilo became the new minister in 1965 (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1987), and remained until his retirement in 1980. He was succeeded by Rev MC Mpe in 1984 and Rev PW Mashabela in 1986. Since 1968 the congregation was known as Lerato, with Mphahlele as a minister's ward together with Groothoek, the missionary's ward. Groothoek, including the mission hospital, became the main station (*NG Kerk in Afrika* 1968:4).

#### **4. MOTHOPONG (MANKOPANE) – THE FIRST CONGREGATION IN SEKHUKHUNELAND**

According to old mission reports, this place was referred to as Mankopaan (*TVSV-Verslag* 1932:26). Mankopane was the first name of chief Nchabeleng. His village, together with other villages around and towards Apel and Strydkraal, are presently known as Ga-Nchabeleng. It is situated on the southern side of the Leolo Mountains, very near the Olifants River. The Mohwetse River also flows through the village and the road from Apel to Schoonoord passes through the village along the southern slopes of the Leolo Mountains. This village is a few kilometers from Mohlaletse, the capital of the Sekhukhune chief. A number of families who became Christians lived at Mankopane. Among them was Phillipus Shaku (Mantsena). His full name was Letlakane Phillipus Shaku. He has a remarkable history which started when he was a young boy of 15. Born as a son of the Nchabeleng clan, he was from the kraal of Molongwane. He and his friends went to the Cape Colony to look for work. When the others returned home, he remained behind. In those days many members of the Bapedi tribe left for the Cape Colony, where they served as labourers on the farms. Mantsena reached Tulbagh, where he met Rev Robert Shand of the local Dutch Reformed Church. Rev Shand employed him, while his colleague, Rev Zahn, instructed him in the Word of God. He was converted to Christianity and became a member of their congregation (*TVSB Ligpunte* 1975:18).

##### **4.1 1875 TO 1897**

In 1875 Mantsena returned to his homeland with his wife, Johanna, who was a descendant of the old Malabar slaves. She could only speak Afrikaans. He arrived unexpectedly and that is why they nicknamed him *Mantsena*.

The year of Mantsena's return is indicated as 1890 in the missionary's reports (*TVSV-Verslag* 1932:18). According to the research of the Nchabeleng brothers of Mothopong, however, the year was 1875 (Nchabeleng 1993:1). Back among his own people, he started to minister to the following members: Makgobong Shaku, Senche Piet Shaku (father of Saron), Boloile Daniël Moroaswi, Joël Makatane Shaku, Silas Mathulwe Maila, Johannes Marweshe Moroaswi, Abel Senche Shaku and Apolos Mathato Mashoene. The congregation held their services under the Marula trees. The church grew and the first to be baptized were Helena Tjebane (Shaku), the wife of Michael Tjebane, and Elias Shaku

in 1902. They were the children of Makentane Shaku. Mothopong was an outpost of the Mphahlele congregation under evangelist Willard Sefara, who was one of the evangelists of Rev Hendrik Hofmeyr of the Kranspoort Mission, Bethal (Nchabeleng 1993:1).

#### **4.2 1898 TO 1925**

In 1904 Mantsena went to Rev AP Burger of Middelburg to introduce himself. When Mantsena approached the reverend and his wife, they immediately gave him their full support. As an evangelist, he was given a few donkeys as well as a monthly salary of one pound. He received further assistance from Rev JTA Maré, the first missionary of the DRC of the Transvaal Church. At the time Rev Maré was stationed at Jakkalsdans near Pretoria (1885-1903). From 1903 to 1913 he was stationed at Middelburg (Crafford 1982:67). Rev Maré visited Mantsena and his wife at Mothopong. The small congregation of Mothopong requested Rev Maré to help them, so two evangelists who were trained by Rev Maré were sent there by the Middelburg DRC in 1897. This support however, was suspended during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902).

After the war, Mantsena, although in his seventies, was still looked upon as an evangelist. He was again visited in 1908 by two missionaries, reverends Vogelzang and Van Rensburg. They wrote as follows: “At the request of Rev Burger of Middelburg, a mission journey to the Leolo Mountains was undertaken by us. Firstly we met Phillipus Mantsena, evangelist of our church, who worked in the village of Mankopane, vice-chief of Sekhukhune. We arrived here on 3 January. When we reached his village we were met by the old friendly evangelist who was not in a position to work far from his home. His wife supported him well and they were regarded as shining lights in their community. He complained about his donkey, which he regarded as willing in spirit but weak in the flesh” (*TVSB Ligpunte* 1975:18). “After this visit an anonymous person from Pretoria provided him with a donkey as well as a saddle” (Louw 1972:11).

#### **4.3 THE MOTHOPONG CHURCH BELL**

The members of the congregation at Mothopong decided to buy a church bell long before the first church building was erected. The men, who went to Middelburg in 1907 to buy the bell, were Johannes Letswalo Nchabeleng, Phillipus Mantsena and Boloile Daniël Moroaswi. They went to Middelburg on foot, a distance of more than 200 kilometers, and

physically carried the bell back to Mothopong. The bell was in use until the first church building in Sekhukhuneland was erected in 1936. The bell was placed outside the church on concrete pillars. When the new church building was erected in 1988 the bell was moved to the new premises. Every Sunday when the bell rings, it echoes the history of the Gospel being preached for more than a century in this village (Jordaan 2006:3).

At the fifth annual meeting of the *TVSV*, which was held at Pietersburg in 1910, Rev B Saayman of Lydenburg presented a report about the work in Sekhukhuneland. He requested support for two evangelists and told the congress about a bell which had been bought for 14 pounds by Phillipus Mantsena and his congregation (Louw 1972:13).

In 1913 Rev Maré moved to Carolina and was replaced by Rev CP van der Merwe of Middelburg. He was succeeded by Rev W Bruwer in 1917, who was also able to visit the congregation of Mothopong (Crafford 1982:151). As from 1920 the work was transferred to Rev PJ Maritz of Lydenburg (Maritz 1977:16).

Rev Maritz baptized Elizabeth Makeke Moleke (nee Maila), Mabopetja Rebone Dipee (Moroaswi) and others. Both Mantsena's wife and Piet Senche Shaku died in 1914. Makgobokong Stefane Shaku, Makantane Joël Shaku and Mantsena all died in 1915. Mantsena was 90 years old when he died. He and his wife were buried in the mission church graveyard at Mothopong.

This graveyard is still regarded as belonging to the mission church, although much has changed over the years. Both in the time of the NGKA and since 1994, when the church became the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, only members of the church have been buried here. The Lutheran Church also has its own graveyard.

The son of Mantsena, Michael Shaku, was sent to Stofberg by Rev AP Burger to become an evangelist. He not only completed his studies, but also taught at one of the mission schools. There was a Dutch school as well as a Lutheran school at Phokanoka (Nchabeleng 1993:1). The school of the DRC was discontinued, but that of the Lutheran Church remained. The Mankopane School developed from this school at Phokanoka. Michael Shaku was transferred to Hoepakranz, but was later replaced by Piet Khomo of the Kranspoort Mission. He was succeeded by Johannes Nkosi. Both Michael Shaku and Johannes Nkosi were sent for training by Rev AP Burger. Nkosi was the son of the chief

of the Swazis of Hoepakranz. He was stationed at Mothopong, but was sent to Hoepakranz when his father died.

#### **4.4 1926 TO 1943**

The *TVSV* sent Rev AJ Rousseau (Purnakana) to start a mission named Burger. The mission station was situated at Mooiplaas near the Olifants River at Apel. This station was only about 10 kilometers from Mothopong. Rev Rousseau was nicknamed Purnakana, because he had a strange manner of walking. “How did he walk?” I asked my informant. He answered: “He was a short man who walked like a tall man” (Nchabeleng: oral communication). According to the *TVSV* report of 1932 a visit was paid by the leaders of the *TVSV* to Mankopaan, where a conference was held. There were seven Christian families, and their homes were built separate from the village. Among them was a blind man called Abel. The elder, Silas was very helpful and a devoted Christian. “A service was also held at chief Mankopane’s lapa” (*TVSV-Verslag* 1932:26).

#### **4.5 MISSION SCHOOLS**

Rev Rousseau encouraged the Mothopong children to attend school and they were also sent to colleges for further training while staying at Burger hostel. A person, who passed Standard 10 in those days, passed the equivalent of Grade 12 today. The first teachers were: SM Nchabeleng (1940), NN Mashoene (1942), VL Maila (1943), SM Maila (1945) and SM Mashoene (1946). The school of Burger Mission continued under Cedric Namedi Phatudi, who became well-known as Pedi leader and later as Prime Minister of the Lebowa Government. Mr Kaboet Rousseau said that he attended school with Cedric Phatudi and the two of them wrote Standard 6 together at the mission school. Kaboet and Cedric both qualified as teachers (Kaboet:tape recording). The Mothopong church was built by Rousseau in 1936. In 1986 the congregation celebrated its 50 anniversary (Jordaan 2007:1).

#### **4.6 1944 TO 1995**

With the relocation of the mission station to Maandagshoek on 1 April 1944, evangelist Mokwena was stationed at Mothopong, where he continued working. Evangelist G Mphahlele succeeded him and when the congregation of Burger was divided in two in



1946, Mphahlele served under the new missionary, Rev AS van Niekerk, who was stationed at Klipspruit. Evangelist MJ Matemane arrived in 1966 and was stationed at Mothopong.

#### **4.7 BURGER MISSION STATION RELOCATED TO MAANDAGSHOEK**

Immediately after the two ministers Edward Phatudi and Murray Louw were ordained at Mphahlele on 27 March 1943, plans were made to relocate Burger station to Maandagshoek. It took time and this caused Murray Louw some concern, but finally they relocated on 1 April 1944. Louw went to Maandagshoek, while Phatudi took responsibility for all the outposts south of the Leolo Mountain, including Mothopong. Phatudi went to Gembokspruit on the Highveld near Nebo. He extended his ministry to places such as Groblersdal, Marble Hall and even as far as Zebediela. At Zebediela, Stephen Njuweni became the evangelist for the Nyasa workers of the Zebediela orange farm estate. Rev Louw also extended his work towards Penge mine, where a congregation of 39 Nyasa Christian mineworkers was established. After three years Rev Phatudi left, having received a call to Magaliesburg (Louw 1972:30).

A new congregation, called Sekhukhuneland, seceded from Burger. On 10 August 1946 they welcomed their first missionary, Rev AS van Niekerk, at the new mission station, Klipspruit, only a few kilometers from Gembokspruit where Rev Phatudi resided. Rev van Niekerk was succeeded by Rev JS Malan on 12 August 1950. Under his ministry a new church building was erected at Strydkraal in 1953, only 15 kilometers from Mothopong and 5 kilometers from the old Burger station. When Malan left, Rev HJ Grobler arrived on 30 March 1961. He left in 1964. During his ministry the outposts at the Olifants River and Mothopong were cared for by Rev JS Mnisi. He was a son of Sekhukhuneland, who began his ministry in 1962 in the congregation where he was reared. He was stationed at Strydkraal, where a parsonage was built next to the church. This became a minister's ward post for all the outposts along the lower Olifants River, including Mothopong.

On 24 October 1964 Rev CH Delpont was inducted at Klipspruit. Rev Mnisi left for Belfast and evangelist MJ Matemane was received at Mothopong. In order to establish new borders for the different congregations of the presbytery, Rev Delpont and Rev



Conradie of Marble Hall were appointed by the presbytery of Burger to form a Planning Committee. In 1966 their proposals were accepted by the presbytery.

The congregation of Sekhukhuneland was divided in two. The southern section remained as it was under Sekhukhuneland, with five evangelists and with Klipspruit as the main station where the minister lived. The northern section was added to Marble Hall with one minister's post at Strydkraal and one post for the missionary at Goedvertrouwen mission station (today called Matlala), as well as two posts for evangelists (*Ned Geref Kerk in Afrika* 1966). The reason for this division was that Sekhukhuneland was too large an area to be served as a whole. Some of the outposts of Sekhukhuneland could be served more effectively by the mission of Goedvertrouwen because they were nearer. Hospital clinics were already functioning at some of these outposts.

Mothopong became an outward for three ministers, one staying at Goedvertrouwen and the others at Strydkraal and Marble Hall.

From 1966 the following ministers have served at Mothopong:

P Conradie	Goedvertrouwen	1961 to 1975
ME Moloto	Leeuwfontein (Marble Hall)	1966 to 1985
JS Phetla	Strydkraal	1967 to 1971
VWM Magagane	Strydkraal	1964 to 1966
MLS Phatudi	Strydkraal	1977 to 1981
GJ Jordaan	Matlala	1977 to 1995
JJ Makgae	Strydkraal	1987 to 1989
MJ Moloantoa	Strydkraal	1990 to 1995
MJ Moroaswi	Leeuwfontein	1999

AM Kupa	GangKwana	1999 to 2010
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Rev Moroaswi grew up in Mothopong. His parents were Christians and members of this congregation throughout their lifetime. His brother, Erasmus Moroaswi, still lives here with his family. In 2007 Rev Moroaswi was transferred to Mothopong following the secession of Leeuwfontein from Lepelle in 2008. Dr AM Kupa was ordained in July 1999 and has served the congregation of Lepelle since this date. As he and his family live only a few kilometers from Mothopong at Gangkwana, he is also available to serve the congregation of Mothopong. His parents were baptized by Rev AJ Rousseau, the pioneering missionary of Burger.

#### **4.8 THE NEW CHURCH BUILDING AT MOTHOPONG**

The church building erected by Rev Rousseau in 1936 was too small for a congregation of about 200 members. On 23 November 1986 the congregation celebrated their 50 anniversary in this church. A new stand was presented to them next to the main road in the village surrounding chief Nchabeleng's kraal (*Mošate*). Rev MLS Phatudi helped the congregation with a ground-breaking ceremony. In 1986 the local church council under the leadership of AL Nchabeleng applied for a steel structure. I was the minister at the time. I consulted Dr J Theron at the Synodical Mission office in Pretoria. He provided the necessary funds and the structure was completed in the same year. I also contacted the Christian students of RAU. We managed to obtain funds to start with the foundation during the July holiday of that year. They stayed at Matlala and we travelled to Mothopong every day for two weeks. It was during the time of the political riots. On our first day the police officer in charge at Mothopong would not allow us to travel or work in the area. I pleaded with him, explaining our situation and the weeks of preparation that went into this project. He relented, but we had to obtain permission from the riot police stationed at Veeplaats before we could travel any further.

We managed to hire a concrete mixer, which was a great help. During these two weeks we moved and used 52 bags of cement and 48 loads of sand and rock with a two-ton truck. Quite a few years passed before we could start building. Mr AL Nchabeleng, as chairman of the building committee, worked hard to solicit funds. They completed the building and

on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1993 the church cornerstone, donated by Mr Danie van Wyk of Groblersdal, was unveiled by Rev Murray Phatudi.

Rev Murray Phatudi is the son of Edward Phatudi, the pioneer black minister of the Dutch Reformed Mission in Sekhukhuneland. The three of them, father, son and Rev Murray Louw were all ministers of this congregation ward at some stage in the past: First Burger, then Sekhukhuneland and now Lepelle. The pulpit was a gift from the Technical College of Ndebele near Marble Hall. The guests included Rev Andries Louw of Valleisig DRC congregation and some of his members and Rev Jan van Jaarsveld of Action Labourers of the Harvest in Pretoria. A former minister, Rev JS Phetla, who also attended Rousseau's school at Burger, conducted the service. Elder MS Nchabeleng, brother of elder AL Nchabeleng, chairman of the building committee, gave a speech about the history of the congregation. He said that the inaugural ceremony was in memory of one hundred years of mission work since Phillipus Mantsena started this congregation in Sekhukhuneland. He rendered valuable assistance with the research into the history of this mission (Jordaan 2007:1). The old church building across the river, which was erected by Rev Rousseau, is still in use, together with the parsonage for evangelists. A crèche is run on the premises by the community. Being the oldest DRC mission church in Sekhukhuneland we have already discussed ways and means of restoring the old church and having it registered as a tourist attraction.

## **5. THE BURGERS OF MIDDELBURG AND MISSION WORK IN SEKHUKHUNELAND**

During the 18 century hundreds of Pedi went to the Cape Province in search of jobs, money and guns. On record (*TVSB Ligpunte* 1975) are Jan Mafadi and Jacob Mantladi, who went to Port Elizabeth, where they were instructed in God's Word. They returned to Sekhukhuneland as believers. They were the first Christians in Sekhukhuneland who worked together with the Berlin mission in 1861.

The history of the DRC mission started with Rev AP and Mrs J Burger of the Middelburg congregation. They had a desire and a vision for mission work in Sekhukhuneland ever since their arrival at Middelburg in 1884. Rev Burger married Miss Janie Boshoff, daughter of the Treasurer-General of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek. She was born on 12 November 1863 in the small Free State town of Boshoff, which was named after her grandfather, President Boshoff. In those days there were only three ministers of the DRC in the whole of the Transvaal. The Burger couple lived at Middelburg (1884-1928) and their congregation was called Nasaret (Olivier 1952:413). Mrs Burger conducted Scripture reading and prayer for the servants every day and had a Bible class as well as a Sunday school for Africans (*TVSB Ligpunte* 1975:17).

In 1897 the native commissioner, SP Trichardt, told Rev and Mrs Burger that he had met with chief Sekhukhune and that the chief was in favour of mission work amongst his own people, especially chiefs Malekote and Mapote near Jane Furse on the Highveld of Sekhukhuneland.

The Burger couple immediately contacted the missionary, Rev TJA Maré, who was residing at Middelburg at that time. He sent Paulus de Klerk and Silas Kahle. Paulus was called Stuurman before he was baptized on 1 March 1869 by the pioneer missionary, Stephanus Hofmeyr of Bethesda (Maree 1962:71).

These two evangelists were trained by Rev Maré at Jakkalsdans and were able to render some services at Goedgedacht, Marabastad and Jakkalsdans (Maree 1962:78). Paulus and Silas were sent to Sekhukhuneland at the expense of the Middelburg Women's Association (*Zusters Zending Vereniging* of Middelburg). In 1899, however, they were withdrawn because of the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War. Their work was not fruitless

though, because chief Sekhukhune agreed that he would send his son, who was to succeed him, to Pretoria for further education.

After the war, in 1904 a certain Phillipus Mantsena visited the Burgers at Middelburg. Mantsena told them that he had worked in the Cape Colony for 47 years. He was converted under the ministry of Rev Robert Shand of Tulbagh, and had now returned to his people near Mohlaletse, where chief Sekhukhune was stationed. The mission ladies of the Middelburg congregation gave him two donkeys for his work as well as a monthly salary of one pound (*TVSB Ligpunte* 1975:8)

Mantsena's son, Michael, was taught by the Burgers at the Middelburg parsonage to read and write. They also undertook to support him so that he could study to become an evangelist at the Stofberg Memorial School.

### **5.1 THE TRANSVAAL VROUE SENDINGVERENIGING (TVSV)**

The strong influence of Mrs AP Burger with the *Zuster's Zending Vereniging* at Middelburg and her vision that all women of the Transvaal DRC should be organized into a united front for the specific purpose of supporting mission work, contributed to the inspiration which led to the establishment of the *TVS Vereniging* (Transvaal Women's Mission Association) on 15 November 1905 (Louw 1972:11). The part played by Mrs HS Bosman of Pretoria was the final impetus needed for such a mission movement to be launched. As a child, Mrs Bosman was challenged by the pioneer missionary of the Kranspoort mission in Soutpansberg, Rev Stephanus Hofmeyr. He once saw her and placed his hand on her saying: "Lettie, what are you doing to spread the love of the Lord Jesus to the non-believers?" Mrs Bosman arrived in Pretoria from Stellenbosch in 1876 as a young minister's wife. During those years the zeal for mission work in Stellenbosch was high, following the Mission Conference of 18 to 19 April 1860 held at Worcester. Ministers like Andrew Murray, his brother-in-law Rev JH Neethling, and Prof NJ Hofmeyer of Stellenbosch urged the DRC to be obedient in preaching the Gospel to the unreached nations of the African Continent (Louw 1972:11).

An opportunity came one day, while she was on her way to her women's prayer meeting, to talk to them about the necessity of mission work. As a result, a regular monthly collection for mission work was held and the money was donated to the Cape Women's

Mission Society (*Kaapse Vroue-Sendingbond*). Slowly the idea of a similar movement in the Transvaal developed. Just before the Anglo-Boer War, three ministers' wives met to discuss the possibility of such a movement. At first they were a bit hesitant, but the discussions led to the forming of the *Predikantsvrouevereniging* (Ministers' Wives Association) in 1897 (Louw 1972:12). It was also decided that each of the 12 women would contribute £2 for mission work yearly. Further, that this initiative should be made known to the women of their congregations. Unfortunately the war started and the congregations had to care for their widows, orphans and the poor instead. This need forced the church to establish the now well-known women's organization, *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Vrouefederasie* (The South African Women's Federation – 1904) (Olivier 1955:13).

When the war was over, Rev and Mrs Louw arranged a social meeting for ministers and their wives at the Boksburg Lake in the form of a picnic. Mrs Bosman again stressed the need for mission work, which was positively received. She then wrote a letter to *De Vereniging*, which was published on 21 October 1903. Mrs Louw confirmed her co-operation and suggested the establishment of a *Zuster's Zending Vereniging* (Louw 1972:12).

This was followed by a ministers' conference at Middelburg in 1904. Here the ministers' wives gave their approval for such a movement within the church. Mrs HS Bosman, wife of Dr Bosman of the Dutch Reformed Church in Pretoria, together with Mrs JM Louw, went to see Mrs Burger at Middelburg in 1904. The three ladies discussed mission work and prayed about it in Rev Burger's study. They decided on a steering committee with Mrs Burger as president and Mrs Bosman as treasurer. After this, Mrs Louw and Mrs Meiring drew up a proposal and in September a call was made to all congregations to send delegates to Pretoria with a view to establishing a Women's Mission organization.

On 15 and 16 September an organization was established with the name: *Transvaal Vrouwen Zending Vereniging*. The first ladies to serve on the management were Mrs HS Bosman as president, Mrs AP Burger as treasurer and Mrs JM Louw as secretary. In his opening speech, Rev Neethling of Lydenburg congratulated the ladies and said that before the Anglo-Boer War his congregation and the ladies of the presbytery of Lydenburg were involved in reaching out to the Pedi of Sekhukhune with the Good News. It was agreed that the management would consist of a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and three other members, who would be elected annually at the general meeting. All the ladies

of the DRC were involved and were asked to contribute six pennies per month or six shillings per year. In 1975 Mrs JF Linde wrote: “In 1905 a mustard-seed was sown that became a tree. Today it is a tree with shade for the many souls who seek the message of salvation” (*TSVB Ligpunte* 1975:16).

## **6. THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH OF LYDENBURG AND THE SEKHUKHUNELAND MISSION OUTREACH**

Pioneering mission work at Lydenburg and the district of Lydenburg played a very important role in the later work done in Sekhukhuneland. The missionary, Rev PNJ Maritz, was the main mover (Maritz 1977:1). He was supported by Rev GD Worst of the DRC (1917-1929) who had a zest for mission work. He believed his church council and congregation should take responsibility for this vast area (Olivier 1952:406).

Rev Maritz was a young man of twenty-six when he served temporarily at Hope Town in the Cape Province. Rev Worst advised him to get married before he went to Lydenburg. The lady in his life, Katie Rossouw, consented and they got married. When they arrived at Lydenburg in 1920 he was ordained by Rev Paul Nel, who conducted the service. His induction took place beneath a canvas specially erected for the occasion. The following Sunday Rev Maritz preached in the DRC at Lydenburg. He was not allowed to use the pulpit, but had to speak from the floor. A missionary was known as a reverend (*eerwaarde*) while a fully qualified Dutch minister was called *dominee*. The missionary parsonage had not been built yet. For a month the couple stayed at Rev Worst's parsonage.

A man who was of great assistance to the Mission Commission was General Schalk Burger. He lived on a farm 17 miles from Lydenburg, and he donated 30 morgen of land to the church to be developed as a mission station. A small house was built on the farm, called Goedgedacht, north of Lydenburg. Their furniture was stored on the stoep while Mr Coetzee was completing the house.

Rev Maritz mentions in his writings that it is impossible to start missionary work without the aid of the indigenous people. One such person was Samson Mnisi. For many years Samson taught at Goedgedacht and diligently tried to keep the small mission congregation going. Some other churches tried to persuade the members of the DRC to join their denominations. Samson was very loyal and tried his very best to prevent members from leaving. He went to one of these church ministers to discuss the problem with him. This minister's argument was: "If straying sheep arrived at your door when it was cold, would you not care and protect them?"



“Yes sir,” Samson replied “but I would set them free the next morning when the sun was shining again.”

Rev Maritz wrote that he experienced much resistance from many European farmers, because they saw in him a ‘Philips and Read.’ The Lord, however, gave him wisdom to deal with them. Some farmers agreed that he should preach the Gospel to everyone, but reckoned he should not educate them. He argued that they should also be able to read the Word of God, but they viewed this as a political danger. The mission commission, however, continued supporting the missionary and his needs. They provided him with a cart and two mules to visit the farms and the outposts as well as the vacant congregations.

The Goedgedacht church could seat about 60 people, compared with the 80 of the church at Lydenburg. Much travelling had to be done in mountainous terrain. The congregations he served were Ohrigstad, Pelgrimsrus, Sabie, Witrivier, Nelspruit, Waterval-Boven, Machadodorp, Dullstroom, Roosenekal and Sekhukhuneland.

In the short space of about three years Rev Maritz succeeded in building six schools around Lydenburg and Ohrigstad. He had very little assistance from local farmers, but was able to make and burn clay bricks. He was strong, healthy and a hard worker, and built the schools single-handedly. The schools were also used for church services, Sunday school and the training of catechists. He mentioned the names of the families who helped him in erecting these schools. They were Malan, Broekman, Du Preez, Swart, Maré, Kruger and Bezuidenhout.

The Maritz family lived at Goedgedacht, 17 miles north of Lydenburg, from August 1920 until January 1927. The mission commission decided to build a new parsonage for the missionary at Lydenburg, from where it would be more central to reach the outposts. Mr Achterberg donated two stands for this purpose. Maritz’s old Dodge car gave in after two years. In 1926 it was replaced with a Chevrolet for the sum of R360,00. In the interim, although extremely difficult in the mountainous terrain, he made use of a bicycle. He and Rev WS Bruwer of Middelburg were the only two missionaries to cover an area bordering Sekhukhuneland, Middelburg, Witbank, Ogies, Morgenzon and Swaziland. Rev Bruwer served in nine congregations and Maritz was responsible for thirteen. Maritz founded all but three of these congregations. He later also succeeded in persuading the mission commissions of three of these DRC congregations to call full-time missionaries. The

*TVSV*, under the inspiration of Rev and Mrs AP Burger, decided to secure a missionary for Sekhukhuneland by calling Rev A Rousseau. Barberton managed to call Rev Stadler, and Ermelo called Rev JH van Schalkwyk.

### **Sekhukhuneland**

This was a vast area with great opportunities that awaited the spread of the Gospel. Rev Maritz and Rev Bruwer were already visiting small groups at Mankopaan (Mothopong), Ga-Mphahlele as well as the Swati group of chief Ngobe at Hoepakranz. Rev AP Burger of Middelburg was also assisting these congregations, and the Burger family sent a son of Ngobe, Johannes, to be trained as an evangelist. The arrival of Rev Abraham Rousseau was a further stimulus to the work being done. However, the question was where to establish his mission station. Platinum had been discovered east of the Leolo Mountain near Maandagshoek, and Rev Worst and Rev Maritz managed to obtain a stand of approximately 12 morgen from the Department of Land near these mines. The place was called Garatau.

At a Presbytery meeting at Lydenburg, Rev Worst pleaded that a mission station be started at Maandagshoek. Rev AP Burger pleaded for one on the western side of Sekhukhuneland. The presbytery commission decided to send the four missionaries of the Lydenburg presbytery to investigate the possibility of a mission station in Sekhukhuneland. They were Reverends Bruwer, Van Schalkwyk, Rousseau and Maritz.

They travelled by car to Zoetvelden, near Nebo, to a place owned by Rev Rousseau's brother. There the four of them stayed for a week, repairing an ox wagon to travel to Sekhukhuneland. Their first stop was at Mahila, situated on the western side of the Leolo Mountain, where they paid a visit to the Native Commissioner. They left the wagon at Mahila and went on foot to reach Hoepakranz on top of the mountain, the place of the Swazi chief Ngobe.

Maritz reports:

*We held a service for them, and from there we descended on the eastern side of the mountain. Rev van Schalkwyk got tired, and the chief gave us four donkeys and a saddle. I knew this area and I also knew that the donkeys were going to cause trouble. When we reached the foot of the mountain, we entrusted the donkeys and saddle to a young man.*

*From there we went on foot to Garatau and Maandagshoek. We investigated the area and returned to where we had left the donkeys, only to discover that the young man and our saddle had disappeared. We had to ascend the mountain again with our donkeys and no saddle.*

*We met someone who enquired where we are heading. 'To Mahila', we replied. He stated that he was also going to Mahila and knew a short cut. We decided to follow him. When we reached the top of the mountain, I realized that we were lost. 'Young man, is this the road?' 'Yes, but I travelled here long ago, but I am sure this is the correct road.'*

*Only at this stage I asked him his name, and he replied: 'Satan.' I remarked: 'Oh, what on earth, on a strange mountain, a dark night, lost without a torch and with Satan as our guide!'*

*We walked further until nine o'clock when Rev van Schalkwyk remarked that the donkeys were gone. We only had a box of matches. In the dark of night, in a prickly pear bush, we were searching for the donkeys with matches. We also discovered at this stage that there were two Mahila villages. From here we walked further in the dark on a broader road, which was easier to follow. At sunrise we arrived at the correct Mahila and our camp. We were very hungry, thirsty and footsore. By then we knew each other well. We realized that Sekhukhuneland had taught us love, born out of hardship, pain and sacrifice.*

*From Mahila we travelled in a westerly direction all along the southern side of the Leolo Mountain. We met chief Sekhukhune at Mohlaletsi and arrived at the Olifants River. There a farmer was willing to sell his farm, which we considered as a possibility for the mission station. The farm was called Mooiplaats. We returned from there to Soetvelden and from there by car to Lydenburg, where we reported our findings to the Commission of the Presbytery. We, in turn, informed the TVSV management, and as a result Mooiplaats was purchased. Rev Rousseau could then start making preparations to erect a new station, which was called Burger, in honour of Rev and Mrs AP Burger of Middelburg, who had exerted themselves over many years for mission work in Sekhukhuneland (Maritz 1977:16-18). (Author's own translation.)*

In January 1943 Rev Maritz accepted a call to Carolina. A few years later, in August 1945, he accepted a call to Ermelo. This was actually just a changing of stations, since for many years he had been the relief clergyman for the region.

When he retired in June 1960, having served as a missionary for 41 years, the Maritz family settled at Kloofsig near Pretoria. On his retirement, the Church Office Commission of the NGKA invited him to assist in the bookshop called the *NG Kerk Mission Book Room*, now known as Dibukeng. His daughter Joey was also working there. Years later the old missionary finally retired.

## **7. THE TVSV MISSION PROJECT IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE PRESBYTERY OF LYDENBURG DRC**

In August 1904, the three women who gathered in the study of the Middelburg parsonage drew up a proposal for the envisaged mission organization. According to the rules of the *TVSV*, the purpose was firstly, to “support mission work in general, by trying to create interest for the expansion of the Kingdom of God within each congregation of the DRC; secondly, to supply information about mission work; thirdly, to collect funds for mission work and to use it accordingly.” Their stipulated vision was to reach “those within the Transvaal as well as those outside its borders, the indigenous inhabitants and others, like non-believers and Jews” (Louw 1972:12).

On 15 and 16 November 1905, 70 women from 17 congregations gathered in the Susanna Zaal of the Pretoria Bosman Church to approve this proposal. At the same time an amount of £325 was collected, of which £30 was paid over to the Synodical Mission Committee of the DRC as the first contribution towards mission work (Louw 1972:13).

At their second congress in 1907, held at Klerksdorp, they decided to send a missionary to Sekhukhuneland as soon as an amount of £50 could be put aside for this purpose (Louw 1972:13). They also approved an amount of £50 for the work in Sekhukhuneland to be continued, as decided at their 1906 congress, held at Middelburg. At that particular congress, Rev HT Gonin of the presbytery of Lydenburg proposed a yearly donation to the presbytery of Lydenburg, designated for the Commission of Missions and to be used in Sekhukhuneland (Louw 1972:13).

At the congress of 1908 an additional amount was approved for two mules, with the provision that the mules were to be vaccinated and used twice a year for travelling to Secoecoens Mountain.

Another important decision was taken at the 1908 congress. It was agreed upon to support the mission work in Angoniland in Portuguese East Africa. After Rev AG Murray of Mlanda addressed the congress regarding the urgent need of the 600 000 non-believers who had not received the Gospel as yet, it was decided that the *TVSV* would make provision for the salary of Rev AG Murray, the DRC missionary in Portuguese East

Africa. This support of the *TVSV* would continue until 1922 when the DRC had to withdraw from Portuguese East Africa.

Rev N Saayman of Lydenburg wrote to the *TVSV* on 28 January 1909: “It is not advisable to go into Sekhukhuneland during January to April, due to fever. For this reason I went during December 1908. We visited the station of old evangelist Phillipus Mantsena. He is still doing great work. We also recognized other missions like Berlin and the Wesleyans, but there are still many villages that cannot be reached.”

At the fifth annual congress held at Pietersburg in 1910, Rev Saayman of Lydenburg was present and he reported about the work in Sekhukhuneland. He asked for two evangelists and also reported about the church bell which evangelist Mantsena and his elders had bought in Middelburg. An amount of 50 pounds was agreed upon, but the delegates were not satisfied that the yearly contribution was sufficient for such an important mission project (Louw 1972:13).

In 1911 the congress of the *TVSV* learned that thousands of Pedi at Sekhukhune’s Mountain were not reached. In 1913, through the missionary of Lydenburg, Rev N Saayman tried again to do some mission work in Sekhukhuneland, but without any success.

The reason why the *TVSV* could not employ a full-time missionary in Sekhukhuneland was that the work in Portuguese East Africa received priority. They were able to fully support the mission work at Mphato with Rev AG Murray as missionary (Louw 1972:13).

In 1916 Rev AP Burger, who still had a zeal for Sekhukhuneland, together with Rev JHM Stofberg, requested the *TVSV* to send a missionary or evangelist to Secoecoens Mountain. This congress and management reported as follows: “The management decided to request the *TVSV* congress to maintain the salary of a missionary for Secoecoens Mountain, providing that the missionary should live at the mountain among the people and that he must be able to speak their language.” Mrs Bosman remarked that it was interesting how the Pedi people desired the white man’s church, notwithstanding the fact that their chief was involved in a fearless fight with the ZAR government. The proposal of the management was approved with a recommendation for a special collection to be held (Louw 1972:14).

On 12 February 1919 the management of the *TVSV* met in Boksburg. On the table was a letter from Rev JHM Stofberg, Mission Secretary, in which he stated that problems were encountered in establishing a mission station with a serving missionary in Sekhukhuneland. The management was not satisfied with the situation.

The next year, in 1920, the secretary reported to the congress as follows: “The work in Secoecoens remains unsatisfactory. We still contribute to the mission committee of the presbytery of Lydenburg. Our aim is still to obtain the necessary property through the Synodical commission and to have a full-time missionary. We are prepared to pay his salary” (Louw 1972:14). The synodical commission was informed that the *TVSV* was still keeping its promise made in 1918 to carry the salary of a missionary, but if this did not materialize within three years the money would be spent on another inland mission project. At the next congress the management committee reported that they had been informed by Rev Theron, the new synod mission secretary that missionaries Hofmeyr and Maritz visited the Secoecoens Mountain three times a year. The congress decided to increase the amount from £50 to £110 in order to have a full-time evangelist under the Lydenburg missionary’s care, in the hope that it would help in the procurement of a missionary soon.

However, in 1923 the Portuguese government closed all the stations in Portuguese East Africa. The same year Rev D Theron, the Mission Secretary of the DRC at that time, suggested that the Lord wanted them to concentrate on the thousands of indigenous people in our own country. He asked the ladies to take full responsibility for the mission in Sekhukhuneland.

The congress in 1923 decided to take responsibility for the mission station to be established at Nebo. Nebo, from where the police and magistrate’s offices were operating, was thought to be the ideal place for a mission station. This, however, did not materialize (Louw 1972:15). At the meeting held on 24 August 1924 the management of the *TVSV* stipulated clearly that funds were needed, but nothing had been done. At the next congress in Heidelberg, the mission secretary reported that everything was in place and that the stations would be erected under the banner of the *TVSV* as soon as a missionary was available (Louw 1972:15).

With the reports before them, they decided to call a full-time missionary to Sekhukhuneland. A call was made in 1925 to Rev and Mrs AJ Rousseau, missionaries in Nyasaland (Malawi). The Rousseau's however declined.

Not long after this, they received a second call and this time they seriously considered it. A nephew of Rev Rousseau reminded him that he had promised God that he would enter the ministry and serve Him in Sekhukhuneland. This happened during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) while he was serving with the ZAR army in Sekhukhuneland. He became gravely ill, and prayed to God to be healed. He took an oath that if he was healed, he would return to the Pedi people of Sekhukhuneland as a missionary. God healed him. He went to Wellington to study theology and after completion of his studies, the DRC sent him to Nyasaland, where he worked for the next 15 years. In 1925 he responded positively to the *TVSV*'s calling and returned during the same year. He lived on his own farm, Eensgevonden, near Nebo. His brother, Frikkie Rousseau, owned the neighbouring farm, Zoetvelden, now called Kgarathuthu.



## **8. BURGER MISSION STATION**

Rev AJ Rousseau reported in person to the delegates at a congress of the *TVSV* held at Ermelo from 4 to 6 December 1926. He told them that the following denominations were also working in Sekhukhuneland: Lutheran, Wesleyan, Episcopal, Bapedi-Lutheran and the Ethiopian churches. He mentioned that some evangelists of the DRC had been working in the area for the previous 20 years, and reported that the Synodical Mission Commission had obtained a piece of land at Garatau near Maandagshoek with a view to starting a mission station there. However, he had decided not to use this property for a mission station, since it was divided in half by the Leolo Mountain on the one side and the Steelpoort River on the other. Secondly, it was peaty-ground and therefore not suitable for building. Close by was a large location at Maandagshoek, where the Platinum Mine workers stayed. Rev Rousseau mentioned the names of evangelists Johannes and McDonald Chitja, who were helping him at Garatau, Hoepakranz and Mankopaan (Louw 1972:16).

### **8.1 SECOND CONGRESS**

At the second congress in 1927 Rev Rousseau reported about his work at Garatau, Hoepakranz, Mankopaan, Eensgevonden, Zoetvelden, Korenkopjes and Masetleng.

At a presbytery meeting in Lydenburg, Rev Worst of Lydenburg made a plea for the new missionary, Rev Rousseau, to start his mission station at Maandagshoek, in the east, while Rev AP Burger favoured the western side of the Leolo Mountain. The presbytery's decision was to send the four missionaries in their service, Rev Bruwer, Rev van Schalkwyk, Rev Rousseau and Rev Maritz, to investigate the area with a view to a recommendation. They travelled by car to Rev Rousseau's brother at Zoetvelden, from where they proceeded by ox-wagon. This story is told by Rev Maritz in his biography. From Zoetvelden they undertook an extensive tour of the Leolo Mountain and the lower Olifants River to find a suitable location for a mission station. Eventually the four missionaries recommended Mooiplaats at the Olifants River near Apel. In 1928 the *TVSV* bought this farm for £2 000 (*TVSB Ligpunte* 1975:19).

The same year Rev Rousseau moved with his family to the neighbouring farm, Strydkraal, where a house was available for them. They stayed here temporarily while the parsonage

and other buildings were being erected at Mooiplaats. In 1929 the parsonage was completed and the family left their small three-roomed house for a better home.

## **8.2 THIRD CONGRESS**

At the 1928 *TVSV* congress it was reported that the farm Mooiplaats had been bought by the *TVSV*. The first building project, a parsonage for Rev and Mrs Rousseau, was already under way. Rev Rousseau was the supervisor-cum-builder and with the assistance of local indigenous people, the building was completed for an amount of £300. He also fenced off the area with barbed wire. Rev Rousseau informed the congress that he received no support from the European farmers in the area. He was also concerned about the few conversions: only six non-believers were allowed to become members and receive baptism, one of them the old mother of the chief at Masetleng. He mentioned that the Roman Catholic Church had bought 1 600 morgen for £5 000 ten miles from the Anglicans. Immediately the Roman Catholics formed a working relationship with a medical doctor, as well as with teachers, nurses, agricultural workers and technical people. The DRC had none of these skilled workers and urged the congress to consider all options (Louw 1972:17).

## **8.3 BURGER MISSION STATION AT MOOIPLAATS**

In 1929 the mission station of Burger was officially opened. The parsonage, a small church and a small hospital were in operation. Fruit trees were planted and a vegetable garden was established. The opening of the mission station was attended by several chiefs, church members and various guests. Major Hunt, the Native Commissioner, also conveyed good wishes. Rev Olivier and Rev Endemann took part as visiting missionaries. Since he was able to speak Northern Sotho, Rev Olivier took the lead. On Sunday morning he conducted a small meeting where Holy Communion was served to twelve European and six African believers (Louw 1972:17).

The Rousseaus and their three children, together with Sister Pietersen and Mr Schraader, formed the official staff of Burger mission station. In 1929 Miss Bettie Schutte joined them as teacher. During 1930 to 1931 the following staff members were added: Mr and Mrs Swart as well as another teacher, Miss Retha van der Merwe.

A house was built for the evangelist and a corrugated building served as a girls' hostel and nurses' home. There were 52 day-school and 22 evening-school children at Burger. The school had a total of 57 pupils in 1932, but more than half of them were non-believers. Of the pupils 40% were baptized in other churches and only 10% belonged to the DRC. At the school a Christian Youth movement was organized, which was attended by all, even the non-believers.

The work developed sufficiently for the congregation of Burger to be registered in February 1932. This development allowed Rev Rousseau and the elder to attend the first Mission Synod held in Johannesburg in March 1932 as delegates. They represented the 120 members of the DRC of Burger congregation. In December 1935 the statistics were as follows: 175 members; 525 souls and 509 pupils in day schools (*TVSV-Verslag* 1935:40).

#### **8.4 MEDICAL MISSION**

Sister van Schalkwyk was in charge of the hospital. From June to October 1932 a total of 1 219 patients were treated: 784 children under the age of 12; 298 women and 137 men. Most of the patients suffered from whooping cough, influenza, colds and other ailments, including malaria. The medical work was important in establishing good relationships with the community. The first medical doctor arrived in August 1934 and only stayed for three months. In 1936 Sister van Schalkwyk got married and was replaced by Sister Robbertze, who was very keen that a medical doctor should be appointed, but this only happened in 1938, when Dr I le Roux was appointed. Miss Maggie Mare became matron of the girls' hostel and Mr Gerrie Jansen started as a male nurse, assisting Dr Le Roux. Miss Maggie Mare got married to Rev Conradie and Dr and Mrs le Roux left. This was a serious blow to mission work in Sekhukhuneland. However, they were replaced by Miss Wasserman and Miss van Rensburg as mission workers, and Mr AD Fourie, a master builder who renovated the buildings at the mission station. On 27 October 1940 Rev Rousseau retired and accepted demission due to ill health. In February 1941 Miss Welham came as school principal, but left again to continue her studies. Miss Wasserman joined the Sudan Mission (Louw 1972:20).

## **8.5 EVANGELISTS WHO WORKED WITH REV ROUSSEAU**

1. McDonald Chitja was stationed at Garatau. He also worked at Hoepakranz on top of the Leolo Mountain, where thirty members already formed an outpost for Burger Mission. He also served at the platinum mine at Maandagshoek and was financially supported by the *TVSV*.
2. Aaron Moraka was stationed at Gembokspruit and was financially supported by the *Manne Sendingbond* (Christian Mens' Movement). He was responsible for the farming area.
3. Silas Mohoje was stationed at Eensgevonden. He was financially supported by the *Kindersendingkrans* (Children's Mission Movement).
4. Isak Khopochane was stationed at Buffelsfontein. He was supported by the Women's Mission Society of Middelburg and the Sekoekoene branch.

It was here that the Roman Catholic Church had purchased a piece of land.

5. Edward Mafanyolle was stationed at Gaataan, approximately 28 miles from Marble Hall on the Olifants River. He was supported by the *TVSV*.
6. Alfonso Mokoena was stationed at Mankopaan. It was a strong outpost, but matters deteriorated when the evangelist returned to his old ways.
7. Willard Sefara and his wife were stationed at Mphahlele (*TVSV Feesnommer* 1905-1930:90-91).

## **8.6 OUTPOSTS OF REV ROUSSEAU – BURGER MISSION – 1935**

(Report of the *TVSV* Congress held at Utrecht, 30 November to 3 December 1935)

### **Mphahlele**

Mphahlele was an outpost of the Kranspoort Mission of Rev Stephanus Hofmeyr. Kranspoort was handed over to the Burger Mission which considerably enlarged the membership of that congregation. At Mphahlele a house was built for the evangelist as well as a church with a pulpit. The pulpit cloth, embroidered with the words *MODIMO O LERATO* (The Lord is Love) was made by Mrs Hofmeyr. An existing small school was

run by the mission in co-operation with the community. The incumbent evangelist, Willard Sefara died towards the end of 1931. He was succeeded by Evangelist Isak Khopochane. Rev and Mrs Daneel of Kranspoort conducted a conference with a theological group of women in October 1935. Mphahlele was the strongest of the Burger outposts.

### **Garatau**

Garatau was an important outpost 58 miles from Burger mission, which at one stage had been under consideration as a main station, but was found to be unsuitable. The station consisted of 30 morgen of land at the foot of the Leolo Mountain and next to the Maandagshoek platinum mine. This piece of land was purchased by the mission commission of the DRC. Evangelist McDonald Chitja was already working here under difficult circumstances. After a visit by Miss Nettie Bosman, a daughter of Rev and Mrs HS Bosman, Nettie came to the following conclusion: “The small church building is a disgrace to the mission, because it is dilapidated and has no windows or doors. Liquor plays an overwhelming role in the community, to the extent that several church members are not able to resist the temptation. It has happened on many occasions that Rev Rousseau came to serve Holy Communion and had to leave without doing so” (Louw 1972:18).

Garatau was one of the new missionary outposts where Holy Communion could be served. He also visited the adjoining mine, where a few hundred mine workers from Nyasaland were employed. In total about 800 mine workers were living in the mine’s hostel. Rev Rousseau requested permission from the mine manager to preach to the workers. The manager replied: “If it is the DRC that worked in Nyasaland, you have my permission, because these workers are polite, responsible and submissive.”

### **Buffelsfontein**

The following remark appeared in the 1905 to 1930 special issue of the *TVSV* Journal: “Just as the Lord needed an ass for his journey to Jerusalem, He sometimes needs a small piece of land on a farm for His work, which is sometimes refused” (*TVSV* Feesnommer 1905-1930:90). According to the 1935 report, however, Phillip was sent here and started a school with 32 children. A few years later Evangelist Isak Khopechane was transferred to Buffelsfontein.

### **Hoepakranz**

Hoepakranz, the village of Ngowe, was situated on top of the Leolo Mountain, a climb of 3½ hours on foot. It had a church with approximately 30 members who received Holy Communion. The incumbent evangelist stayed in the Swazi community. Services took place in the school. In 1935, 13 adults who had become full members of the church were baptized. A Zulu speaking evangelist, Thomas Dennis, was placed here. The school had 30 pupils.

### **Gaataan**

This village at the Olifants River was only 28 miles from Burger and an important outpost. Evangelist Edward Mafanyolle was stationed here. He also worked on the farms in the area. In 1935 Pako Tema, an elder from Bethesda, was the teacher. Under his guidance the number of pupils attending the school increased to 55.

### **Eensgevonden and Zoetvelden**

These are two adjoining farms. Rev Abraham Rousseau started a school on his farm, Eensgevonden. The farm Zoetvelden, where a school for European children existed, belonged to a relative, Frikkie Rousseau. Rev Rousseau's two sons, Kaboet and Joubert, attended this school. A more complete history of these outposts is included elsewhere in this dissertation.

### **Eensgevonden**

Silas was still visiting this village. The chief of Marishane had started his own tribal school and did not encourage his people to send their children to the mission schools. We were nevertheless able to baptize a number of people who were converted to Christianity.

### **Mankopaan**

Mankopane was the first name of chief Nchabeleng of Ga-Nchabeleng's father, Mankopane Nchabeleng. This name changed to Mothopong with a unique history of its own, because it was here that the pioneer Mantsena, started the DRC mission with the aid of Rev and Mrs AP Burger.

### **Korenkopjes**

Korenkopjes is a farm situated about 10 kilometers from Eensgevonden. (Unfortunately this outpost, like many others, ceased to exist after Rousseau left. It was revived again in 1985 under the ministry of the Matlala mission – Jordaan 2006:23.)

### **Masetleng**

Rev Rousseau reported to the *TVSV* congress of 1928 that six non-believers, elderly women, had been baptized during the year and a few attended the catechism class. One of them was the mother of the chief at Masetleng.

### **Seseseo**

Seseseo (Sesehu) is 1½ miles from the station. With their permission, a small building belonging to the German congregation was used as a school. Maputheo was the teacher of 16 pupils. (Today this place is still called Sesehu although spelled differently in the reports because of fixation of the orthography of Sepedi. In former times the service station here was known as Apel. The name Apel can still be found on road signs.)

### **Leswatsi (India)**

This post was situated 12 miles from Burger station. Leswatsi was the tribal chief. The school had 45 pupils and we erected a small church which could be used for services on Sundays and as school during the week. (This building, built from blue rock stones, was demolished by the school committee, after which a new church was erected in 1987 in exactly the same spot – Jordaan 2006:14.)

### **Libia**

This post is 14 miles from Burger station, but the school is not functioning too well.

### **Phaahla**

This school is a registered school with 28 pupils. A few Christians are also staying here.

### **Gemsbokspruit**

Here old Aaron is still doing good work and several non-believers have already been baptized. A local farmer, Mr Paul Mills, renders invaluable assistance.

### **Uitkyk**

Due to Aaron's efforts, a new school was started here with Miriam as teacher and with 18 pupils.

### **Klipspruit**

This place is owned by the local community. A sister-mission group brought their own teacher along to start a new school six miles from the existing one, but this was met with resistance from the community. They started their own community school with 18 pupils. The community is Zulu-speaking and do not want the Sotho language to be used in the school. Flora Nkuleni, formerly from Goodhope, is the teacher. Her departure led to the temporary closure of the Goodhope School.

### **Krokodilheuwel**

Evangelist Silas Mohoje, previously from Eensgevonden, was transferred here. His daughter, Susanna, is the teacher at the school and there are 26 pupils. There are as yet no Christians in this community.

### **Vlakspruit**

The school has 24 pupils and Jackson is the teacher. Although he has not achieved great academic success, one thing is certain: the children have a good knowledge of the Bible.

### **Malemati**

This school was transferred from the Mission to the Location Council of Mphahlele, since it was preferred that all surrounding schools be regarded as branches of the main school at Mphahlele. This proved to be an unfortunate error. When the transfer took place, the



school had 90 pupils, but the number has now dwindled to 78. We are in the process of applying for registration as an independent school of the mission of Burger.

### **Lesetsi**

A small church building is being erected at Lesetsi, but because of problems with the Location Council of Mphahlele, the work has been delayed. [The report on schools and outposts is contained in the Congress Report of the *TVSV* held at Utrecht, 30 November to 3 December 1935 at Utrecht (*TVSV-Verslag* 1935:37).]

### **8.7 REV LC VAN DER MERWE**

On 27 October 1940 Rev Rousseau retired because of ill health. He accepted a call to Stofberg Theological School in 1940. The missionary post remained vacant until the arrival of Rev L van der Merwe in November 1941. He immediately started to pay attention to the spiritual needs and upliftment of the people. With the assistance of Mrs van der Merwe, Gerrie Jansen and a theological student, Edward Phatudi, he held refresher courses for all the school teachers at a winter camp. Rev van der Merwe only stayed for 13 months, but in that time he succeeded in organizing the congregation, completing the new church building at Mphahlele and registering several schools. Unfortunately he became ill and had to return to Belfast in 1943 (*TVSB Ligpunte* 1975:19).

## **9. PIONEER OF MAANDAGSHOEK MISSION STATION: THE LIFE AND WORK OF MURRAY LOUW: 1 APRIL 1944 TO 21 JANUARY 1962**

I consider Jacobus Murray Louw Senior, who was to transfer the Burger mission from Mooiplaats to Maandagshoek, as the pioneer of this new mission station. Dr Louis Louw, also a Dutch Reformed Church minister, who was born and grew up at Maandagshoek, wrote about his father's work and included it in his treatise for a BD degree from the University of Pretoria. Much of the present material was gleaned from what he was able to obtain from his family and what he himself could recall.

### **9.1 EARLY LIFE**

Jacobus Murray Louw was born on 18 September 1918 in Boksburg. His father, James Murray Louw, was the DRC minister of that congregation. His mother was Gertruida Johanna Louw who, together with two other minister's wives, Mrs AP Burger and Mrs HS Bosman, was a founder member of the *TVSV* (Louw 1972:22).

In 1922, as a boy of four, Jacobus was present at Graaff Reinet when the Murray family celebrated his great-grandfather, Rev Andrew Murray Senior's arrival in South Africa. Rev Murray Senior was the father of Dr Andrew Murray, whose writings have been an inspiration to many.

After matriculating in Boksburg, Jacobus Murray Louw (better known as Murray) enrolled at the University of Pretoria, as one of the first six students of the newly formed Theological Faculty of the DRC. He obtained his BA degree in 1938, after which additional studies took him to Europe for a year. On his return, he continued studies at UP until 1940.

Murray was interested in mission work in Mashonaland, but submitted himself to God's will, to send him wherever He chose and in His own time. The Lord spoke to him through Psalm 27:14: "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord". On 26 November 1942 he was ordained and on 11 January 1943 received his first call to Randfontein mission, which he declined. On 25 January he received a second call, this time to the congregation of Burger.

## **9.2 ORDINATION AT MPHAHLELE**

The *TVSV* was overjoyed when the young Louw accepted the call to one of their mission stations! He was installed at Mphahlele on 27 March 1943, together with Edward Phatudi as co-minister. Edward was the son of the local Chief Mphahlele and a fully trained minister of the mission church.

They were commissioned at a ceremony which took place under a thorn tree, as the church building was too small. Rev Ben Marais, later professor at UP, spoke on behalf of Murray and Rev CB Brink on behalf of Edward. Mrs Louw, Murray's mother, and one of the ex-presidents of the *TVSV*, had the privilege of robing him in his father's ordination gown. It was an unforgettable and emotional moment. That same day Murray and Miss Helena Kritzinger got engaged. She faithfully supported him for the next 19 years – 1 year awaiting marriage and 18 years as his wife and faithful assistant in Sekhukhuneland.

On 30 March he arrived at the mission station where he was welcomed by male nurse Gerrie Jansen. Two days later he went to Maandagshoek to investigate the possibility of an envisaged new mission station, and on 4<sup>th</sup> April he preached at Burger.

## **9.3 FROM BURGER TO MAANDAGSHOEK**

Rev Louw only stayed at Burger for a year, during which time he and Helena got married. On 3 March 1942 Rev C van der Merwe gave the following reasons why the work at Burger ought to relocate to Maandagshoek (Louw 1972:27):

1. Burger was well catered for by other church organizations, notably Lutheran, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, AME and Roman Catholic.
2. The non-believers there preferred to associate with the older churches.
3. Burger was situated near the AME Head Office.
4. The school hostel could only accommodate 25 of the 67 pupils who came from nearby villages.
5. Because of the unhealthy climate at Burger, members from the Highveld did not send their children to school.

6. Water was scarce and the soil of poor quality, so an agricultural school was not an option.
7. Burger was too near to Jane Furse (Anglican) Hospital, which did not favour the possibility of establishing another hospital in the vicinity.
8. It was situated in a tropical area.
9. There were too few members in Burger.
10. New buildings had to be erected and this could as easily be done elsewhere.

Reasons for favouring Maandagshoek were the following:

1. At Garatau, a few kilometers from Maandagshoek, the mission already had a school of 75 pupils.
2. East of the Leolo mountains about 40 000 people had not yet heard the Gospel. Only the Lutheran school was involved on a small scale.
3. The final argument was that a medical mission at Maandagshoek would have a great impact on the people of Sekhukhuneland.

Rev Stofberg of the Mission Office was already negotiating with the mining company, which required an amount of £12 500 for the entire property of 4 993 morgen. This was more than the *TVSV* had available at that stage. The negotiations continued and in God's time and plan the *TVSV* was advised that the Native Trust had decided to buy Maandagshoek from the mining company and also to buy Burger mission station (Louw 1972:18).

In the case of Maandagshoek, the Trust was willing to give occupation rights to the DR Mission for 100 morgen of land. This was reported at the congress of the *TVSV* held on 5 to 7 October 1943. Much uncertainty and a long wait for the missionaries preceded the finalizing of this whole transaction. No projects could be planned, continued or completed. Finally the negotiations were settled and on 1 April 1944 the move became a reality.

In his annual church report Rev Louw stated:

*It is a great privilege to write this report here at our new mission station, Maandagshoek. By the Lord's grace Mr Gerrie Jansen, my wife and I arrived here on 1 April 1944. A long-awaited dream was now realized.*

*On March 30 the thought of 'Ebenhaezer' came to us when we spoke to the school children of Burger. On Sunday morning, 2 April, at our new place, we committed ourselves to the Lord's service, encouraged by the Scripture that came to us from Psalm 24:3-5: 'Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. He will receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation.' We are extremely grateful to the TVSV, the mission secretariat and the Native Trust office who had made this move possible (Louw 1972:21). (Author's own translation.)*

In an article written by Mrs Leen Louw, she reported as follows:

*On the closing of the Burger Mission, the personnel were transferred to Maandagshoek, a farm on which platinum was discovered. In the beginning of 1925 it was world news – a world famous South African geologist announced it in the Government Gazette. As a result, fortune seekers from all over the world flocked to the Southern part of the Leolo Mountains to try and become rich overnight. What they did not know is that this discovery opened the way for the establishment of the Maandagshoek Mission Station (Louw 1975). (Author's own translation.)*

On 1 April 1944, after months of preparation, three young people, Rev Murray Louw, his wife Leen and a male nurse, Gerrie Jansen, started their journey through the Leolo Mountains to Maandagshoek, near Burgersfort, in the eastern part of Sekhukhuneland. Maandagshoek would be the new venue for the Burger church.

The mine at Maandagshoek was not very profitable, so the buildings were abandoned and made available for the mission's use. Altogether 12 buildings were thus inherited. Immediately the old mess hall was turned into a hospital, the laboratory into a school, one of the single quarters into a home for Gerrie Jansen and the mine manager's house into a parsonage. Other buildings were used as a hostel and as teachers' accommodation.

The missionary was assisted by nine evangelists and a minister, who worked in different parts of Sekhukhuneland. All over, small schools were started which at the same time served as outposts for mission work consisting of Bible classes, catechism and services for those who became members.

The outpost nearest Maandagshoek is Garatau. Evangelist Philip Mophethe and his wife, Emily, were stationed here. Another outpost, called Hoepakranz, was situated right on top of Leolo Mountain and could not be reached by vehicle. Mrs Leen Louw used to visit this outpost together with Mma Emily, the wife of the evangelist. They were usually accompanied by other praying ladies (*bomme ba thapelo*). Mrs Louw said: “When we reached the top and the school was in sight, Mma Emily usually requested that we should kneel down in prayer, to ask God's blessing on the prayer meeting” (Louw 1972:24).

Male nurse Gerrie Jansen worked faithfully and diligently, establishing outpost clinics and administering treatments for general ailments. He was assisted by Lot Gondwe, who came from Malawi. Lot was helpful with the filling of bottles of medicine. The first mission doctor, the well-known Dr Paul Bremer, arrived in 1947.

While Mooiplaats was sold to the Native Trust, the mission kept occupational rights to the boys' hostel, the school and the house of the evangelist. This house served as a clinic. The spiritual work was handed over to Evangelist Mokoena, who was staying at Mankopane (Mothopong) eight miles away. Everything – the hospital, the hostels and the Standard 6 class was relocated to Maandagshoek, where 12 buildings with altogether 60 rooms were available to accommodate the new mission station (Louw 1972:29).

Rev Louw started at Maandagshoek with the help of seven evangelists: Mojapelo at Mphahlele, Mophethe at Garatau, Mpe at Eensgevonden, Matome at Buffelsfontein, Makoena at Mankopane, Moraka at Gemsbokspruit, and Nkosi at Hoepakranz. Moruti Phatudi stayed at Gemsbokspruit, near Klipspruit.

Following his inauguration (1 April to 30 June 1943), in his first report, Rev Louw expressed his gratitude for the good meetings held during Pentecost. A total of 230 full members received Holy Communion. He found the vast area to be covered and the organizational work very taxing. In addition, he was sowing the seeds for the forming of a new congregation as an extension to Burger (Louw 1972:25).

In 1943 another two evangelists were appointed: Evangelist Stephen Njuweni (Nyasa) was placed at Zebediela and Evangelist John Sasa at Buffelsfontein. The latter died from malaria soon after his arrival on 15 May 1944.

During 1944 three new outstations were established: Hopefield, Steelpoort and Mooihoek. In 1945 the mission was served by 10 evangelists, including Evangelist Chitja, who returned after an illness. He replaced John Sasa. Another Nyasa man, Raphael Nambuzi, was placed at Penge, where he served 1 000 Nyasa mine workers. In 1944 the membership of the DR Congregation of Burger was made up as follows: 190 Bapedi, 100 Swazi and Mapors and 70 Nyasalanders. Penge alone had 39 Nyasa members (*TVSV-Verslag* 1945:42).

The Sebetiela outstation developed from the Burger congregation to form a new congregation called Potgietersrus East. Evangelist Chitja was transferred from Buffelsfontein to Ottensville, but the people who came to his services were scoffed at by the non-believers. (Buffelsfontein and Ottensville are closely situated to each other.)

#### **9.4 BURGER DIVIDED**

A new congregation was formed south of the Leolo Mountains in 1946. Rev AS van Niekerk was appointed minister of the congregation on 10 August 1946. He had three evangelists working with him and, to begin with, 120 members out of a population of 50 000. Burger retained 255 members in an area with 50 000 souls. Rev van Niekerk had four evangelists working with him (Louw 1972:30).

Three new evangelists were added: Philip Mophethe returned from Johannesburg and was placed at Maandagshoek; Evangelist Shadrack Banda was placed at Penge, and Evangelist Thomas Masekela at Rostok, where a new church building was erected and opened on 10 May 1948. This church outstation was renamed Kwano. Through the name change the community indicated their satisfaction with this church. Evangelist Thomas Masekele left and Evangelist Malope succeeded him.

At Maandagshoek the old church building collapsed and the congregation started to collect funds for the building of a new one. At Hoepakranz Evangelist Abraham Malope, who was converted under the ministry of Rev AJ Rousseau, was placed following the completion of his studies at Stofberg. In 1952 five new evangelists were welcomed: Abiël

Motau (Mphahlele), Stefanus Nkosi (Mashishi), Herbert Luhanga (Maliptsdrif), Ishmael Thoabola (Hoepakranz) and Isak Chakalane (Maandagshoek) (Louw 1972:33).

### **9.5 AFTER TEN YEARS: 1943 TO 1953**

Membership increased from 320 in 1943, to 411 in 1953. Zebediela and Sekhukhuneland were not included. More than half of the 618 new members left the congregation to work elsewhere. Four out of five were baptized as adults. The missionary had to serve Holy Communion 38 times per year because of the increased number of outstations. Three young men went to Stofberg for training as evangelists and one person went for training as a minister.

### **9.6 1954 TO 1961**

On 4 September 1954 a newly built church was opened at Maandagshoek, seating 350 people. It was available to the personnel and patients of the hospital. The membership in 1955 was 470, with 100 new candidates for confirmation. Chief Mashishi and two of his daughters were also baptized. The congregation had 18 outstations.

On 18 September 1956 the Mission's builder, Hannes Potas, died and was buried at Maandagshoek. He was replaced by Willem Smit (Louw 1972:34). In 1957 three new church buildings were opened: Malemati, Moshira and Masete. Rev Murray Louw had to undergo a kidney operation on 12 September 1958. His health deteriorated and on 10 May 1961 he had a second operation. Fortunately, when his many-sided activities – church duties, hospital-related tasks, administration and many other responsibilities – caused further weakening, a second missionary was called to assist him. Jacobus Murray Louw, the missionary's nephew, was inaugurated on 3 January 1959 at Maandagshoek. To avoid confusion, since he was the son of AA Louw, when referring to the nephew, this was usually indicated by adding 'AA' (Louw 1972:34).

### **9.7 MAANDAGSHOEK MEDICAL MISSION**

The medical mission of the DRC played a big role in reaching people with the Gospel and winning the favour of the chiefs who were ruling their tribes.



## **9.8 MALE NURSE GERRIE JANSEN**

Gerrie did monumental work at the Mooiplaats Burger mission, from 1 July 1942 to 30 June 1943. Under difficult circumstances as many as 39 patients and 1 332 outpatients were treated at the hospital, and another 2 470 outpatients at the four clinics which he visited every 14 days. During this period, a total of 668 injections were given (Louw 1972:36). The people around Burger mission were unhappy when the medical section was transferred to Maandagshoek. Gerrie accompanied Rev Murray and Mrs Helena Louw to Maandagshoek. Immediately the number of patients increased, while the out-clinics mushroomed to six in all. Morning devotions were held by Rev Louw, Gerrie, the nurse and some prayer group ladies. Gerrie went for further training in 1946 and returned to Maandagshoek on completion of his studies.

## **9.9 THE HOSPITAL**

A year after settling in at Maandagshoek, Miss Zülch of the St. John's Ambulance came and assisted in the medical section free of charge. Angelina, the sister of Rev Phatudi, also joined the medical staff as a nurse. Lot Gondwe was a faithful medical assistant (Louw 1972:36).

The mission's builder, JL Potas, had erected a sluice-room, a bathroom for women, a pantry and an isolation ward. His wife took care of the linen. Dr H Vlok joined the staff on 1 January 1947. Drs PM Pienaar and ACK Malherbe also joined, but stayed for a short period only.

Dr Paul Bremer, the first permanent doctor, was appointed Assistant District Surgeon. Sister Joey Stephenson came in 1948. Dr Bremer left the same year and was replaced by Dr PJ Jacobs. Dr Jacobs was able to equip the hospital with the necessary medical instruments and other utensils. Sister Nortjé, the mission farmer's wife, joined in 1949 and the daughter of evangelist Mophete further supplemented the medical staff (Louw 1972:36).

## **9.10 A NEW HOSPITAL**

At the *TVSV* Congress of 19 to 21 October 1945, held in Witbank, the Congress allocated an amount of £4 000 for the building of a new hospital. This was undertaken by the

mission's builder, Charles Hockey, who made sure that enough space was allocated for a fully equipped hospital.

Mr JD Janse was the mission's farmer. He left on 12 December 1946 and was replaced by Mr and Mrs Nortjé, who worked at Maandagshoek for almost 10 years. Mrs Nortjé assisted the hospital staff and both of them were eager to do spiritual work among the patients and staff. In 1949 a total of 21 beds were available, 31 414 outpatients were seen and 11 519 patients were treated at the nine district clinics. The Provincial authorities took over some of the hospital services (Louw 1972:37).

Funds were obtained by means of fees charged in the case of patients who were able to pay, such as mine workers. Provincial support under the hospital ordinance of 1946, plus some financial contributions for infectious diseases from the Department of Health, also helped to augment the budget for medical work. In October 1950 Gerrie Jansen returned to Maandagshoek as a qualified male staff nurse.

In 1951 the Administrator of the Transvaal, Dr William Nicol, unveiled a plaque at the front entrance to the hospital with the Scripture text: "Lord, the one you love is sick" (John 11:3). Dr Nicol also explained the policy of the Administration: They would pay for medicines and medical and hospital equipment as well as the salaries of hospital staff; the church would be responsible for the buildings, but would be subsidised on a pound-for-pound basis (Louw 1972:37). After Mr Gerrie Jansen left in 1951, Dr and Mrs W Zöllner came from Berlin to help out on a temporary basis (*TVSV-Verslag* 1952:17).

On 10 October 1953 the hospital with 115 beds was officially opened. On this occasion, the President of the *TVSV* and mother of the missionary Murray Louw unveiled the cornerstone of the mission church, built near the front entrance to the hospital. Dr WM Eiselen, Secretary of Native Affairs, unlocked the doors and addressed the guests. He spoke in Sepedi and encouraged the Bapedi to start projects themselves, which would develop their life-skills and contribute to a better and healthier standard of living.

With the departure of Dr Pieter Jacobs in 1953, Dr HC Boshoff, Mrs Niewenhuysen and Dr A Schröder joined the staff. Dr Boshoff became Hospital Superintendent. He married Mrs Niewenhuysen in 1954. The Hospital was named after him in 1970 (Louw 1972:37).

Between 1954 and 1955 the number of outpatients treated at the 37 clinics increased to 200 per month and the patients to an average of between 140 and 160. A Nurses' Training College was started at Maandagshoek, a TB clinic was built and Dr Chris Jacobs joined the staff.

In the following year Dr IV de Jager came as third medical officer and Mrs NJ Bos was appointed hospital secretary. She assisted Miss W Neethling, who had been working there for a long time. Dr Wessels helped out for several months, and Dr JM Smalberger was appointed as fourth doctor. Sisters Spaargaren, Nortjé and Benecke were replaced by Sisters Zeeman, Van Zyl and Calitz. Sisters van Heerden and Schröder brought the total to five trained sisters and 40 nurses in training.

The hospital had 175 beds; an average of 178 patients per day were treated in 1956, and 200 per day in 1957 (*TVSV-Verslag* 1961:82). In 1959 Dr Chris Jacobs and Dr Smalberger left and Dr DP Cronjé replaced them. The TB hospital with 160 beds was added, bringing the total of beds available to 316. A total of 286 patients per day were treated. At the out-clinics a total of 29 257 were treated.

### **9.11 DR HC BOSHOFF**

When Dr Chris Jacobs left, Dr HC Boshoff was appointed as superintendent. From the 1960 to 1961 report we learn that Dr W du Plooy, Sr JJ van der Merwe and Miss SSM Kritzinger joined the staff. Miss Kritzinger did valuable work in teaching the patients all kinds of handcraft. Another three nursing sisters came – Sisters C de Putter, E Retief and Mrs M le Roux.

On his own initiative, Dr Boshoff started a pig farm. The 1961 report contains the following: “The pig farming enabled us to enlarge certain sections of the hospital, such as another wing, offices, an abattoir and an enlargement to the children's ward. His pig farm consisted of a total of 1 400 pigs” (*TVSV-Verslag* 1961:81).

Under the inspired leadership of Rev Murray Louw, the medical mission of the DRC, which started as a small mission clinic with four outside clinics run by one person, Mr Gerrie Jansen, burgeoned into a big modern mission hospital at Maandagshoek, with 300 beds and more than 40 clinics. The crippled evangelist, Joseph Mashabela, worked

untiringly every day to spread the Gospel to the patients. The hospital afforded opportunity for daily evangelization in the wards and clinics.

## **9.12 HISTORY OF MISSION SCHOOLS**

Rev Murray Louw, in his first report given on 26 August 1943, advised the *TVSV* as follows: “This very important channel for evangelization in Sekhukhuneland is still a powerful vehicle for bringing the Gospel to people. Church schools are being built at this moment at Goedvertrouwen, Leeuwkraal, Rietfontein and Vlakplaas.”

Notwithstanding the influence of the traditional schools, the attendance of the schools doubled in comparison to the 1941 and 1942 figures of 620 pupils.

In June 1943 there were 1 270 children in 21 schools with 29 teachers – 14 teachers in the six registered schools and 15 teachers in the 15 church schools. The church did not have enough teachers of their own, so they appointed teachers from the Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian churches as well (*TVSV-Verslag* 1943:46).

As from 1944 another teaching post was granted for Garatau by the Department of Bantu Education, while the church was able to start a school at Zebediela and also at Maliptsdrif. The *TVSV* also had bursaries available for those pupils who wanted to attend the DRC secondary school and training college at Bethesda. The children trained at this institution proved to be willing, mannerly, and obedient, able to speak Afrikaans well and loyal to the Dutch Reformed Church (*TVSV-Verslag* 1944:9).

In 1945 the pupils in registered schools totalled 700 and those in private schools 525. There were a total of 17 private schools, of which three had to be closed because of poor attendance. When the Sekhukhuneland congregation was formed in 1946, the Burger congregation retained two registered schools and six private schools. The new congregation was responsible for the running of four registered schools and seven private schools. Altogether a total of 1 435 pupils were under the care of the mission (*TVSV-Verslag* 1945:43).

A big problem was that pupils did not care to go much further than the grades before leaving school. In August 1948 there were five teachers and 495 children – 75% of them still in the grades. Another problem was to get qualified teachers. The Education

Department also widened the gap between its own objectives and the mission's aim for more and effective religious education.

Although the registered schools increased in 1949 from two to five, Rev Louw was not satisfied. He presented his case to the Education Commission (Louw 1972:39). The number of pupils continued to increase and in 1951, 612 children, of whom 521 were in the grades, attended the nine schools. They received Bible tuition on a daily basis and it remained a very important source of candidates for confirmation and membership of the church. Rev Louw was pleased that the school project increased the DRC mission's favour with the authorities. In some places, such as Malipitsdrif, their initiative was preferred to that of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1951 Rev Louw received five invitations from chiefs to start schools and spiritual outreaches. It all depended on the availability of funds and personnel (Louw 1972:40).

### **9.13 THE GOVERNMENT TAKES OVER**

It was government policy to take over all schools gradually and to incorporate them as part of the Department of Bantu Education. Yet the church still had good relations with school committees. In 1955 there were still nine schools to be transferred to the government. By 1957 twelve of the fourteen schools were controlled by the government. In most of these the teachers continued with good religious teaching. Most of the young candidates for confirmation came from the schools where the teachers faithfully proclaimed Christ (Louw 1972:40).

### **9.14 REV MURRAY LOUW AS MISSIONARY**

Rev Louw played a major role in church, hospital and schools. His untiring and humble work greatly contributed to a breakthrough in establishing a Christian stronghold in Sekhukhuneland. He learned to speak Sepedi within 18 months after starting the work in 1943. From 1954 until his death in 1968 he was a member of the Commission for the Revision of the Bible in Northern Sotho. While at Maandagshoek, he acted as scribe to the Transvaal DR Mission Synod from 1951 to 1962. He was also scribe to the presbytery of Kranspoort during this period. In 1960 he served as chairman of the presbytery of Burger. Other positions included members of the Commission for Evangelization, the Commission of the Federal Council of Mission Churches (*Federale Raad van Sendingkerke*), and the

Law and Revision Commission (*Orde en Revisie*), curator of the Wellington Institute and member of the local management committee of Stofberg (Louw 1972:40).

His first priority was his work and call as missionary to Sekhukhuneland and to his own congregation. During his ministry in Sekhukhuneland, he baptized 933 and catechized 750 people. Mrs Louw faithfully supported him. The Lord blessed them with five children:

Marietjie	born 1944/11/07	at Carolina
Murray	born 1946/10/26	at Zebediela
Louis	born 1950/02/28	at Maandagshoek
Gerda	born 1956/07/20	at Maandagshoek
Andrie	born 1958/01/29	at Maandagshoek

A unique occasion for the Louw and Phatudi families was when, in February 2009, Andrie and Legodi were both sworn in as judges in Pretoria. They are the youngest sons of Murray Louw and Edward Phatudi. As the two fathers had stood together on 27 March 1943 for their ordination, so these two young men stood together to take the oath as judges!

In a letter to Murray, a Lutheran minister who knew him well wrote as follows on 13 June 1960: “I must admit that you are like a brother to me, not only in the Lord but also in different ways.” When he heard about Murray’s illness and possible operation, he wrote: “I am willing to be a kidney donor, so that you may be healed. As soon as they can confirm that you would be healed if such an operation could be done successfully, I want to donate my one kidney to you.”

### **9.15 REV LOUW ACCEPTS A CALL TO PRETORIA**

In 1961 the NGKA North synod invited Rev Louw to become their secretary and he accepted. On 31 October 1961 he wrote to Mrs JF Linde, President of the *TVSV*: “I was willing to work here until my death, but I am convinced that it is God's Spirit who guided

me to accept this call. I am going to Pretoria in faith to become the Head of Administration for the NGKA” (Louw 1972:41).

On Sunday, 21 January 1962, he delivered his farewell sermon in the Maandagshoek church, from 2 Corinthians 5:14, the same text he had used for his inauguration 19 years before: “For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.”

Rev Louw served in only one congregation, Burger. While working in Pretoria he became the manager of the DR Church Missions Bookstore (*NG Kerk Sendingboekhandel*) with shops in Pretoria and Johannesburg.

As a young man who worked at Heart Publishers in Johannesburg in 1963, I came to see Rev Louw at his office, 512 Bosman Street, regarding the publishing of Sunday school text sheets. His office was situated in an old house. He was friendly and helpful and gave me an order, for which I was grateful.

At that time I did not know that God would one day also call me to become a missionary in Sekhukhuneland and that I would tread where he had trod. Neither did I know that the bookshop where he served would become *Dibukeng* where I too would work from 1<sup>st</sup> June 1996, after retiring from serving in only one congregation, Lepelle.

He served on many church and mission commissions while in Pretoria. Although he had to undergo regular kidney dialysis, he untiringly laboured till the end of his life. He died on 28 August 1968. At his burial his son concluded with a eulogy written by his friend and colleague, Edward Phatudi and which was published in *Die Kerkbode* (Phatudi 1969:13). Edward was ordained with him on 27 March 1943 at Mphahlele.

“In sincere and loving remembrance I want to lay a wreath on his grave. Rev Louw was ordained on 27 March 1943 at Mphahlele as missionary for Burger congregation in Sekhukhuneland. He served for 19 years. This area encompassed Pietersburg, Middelburg, Lydenburg and Groblersdal. There is evidence of his work in all these districts. We find in him a man of God who came to Sekhukhuneland, an untiring worker, a man who challenged the heathendom in the Name of Christ” (EM Phatudi).



## **9.16 JACOBUS MURRAY LOUW – BORN 19 NOVEMBER 1930**

Jacobus (Koos) Murray Louw was ordained on 3 January 1959 in his first congregation, the Burger Dutch Reformed Mission Church at Maandagshoek. He is the son of AA Louw, the eldest brother of Rev Murray Louw (Louw 1972:33). He married Anneleen de Beer on 2 April 1950 at Maandagshoek and the Lord blessed them with four boys: Arno, born 26 October 1961 by means of a caesarean operation, was the first white baby to be born at this hospital. Ferdinand was born on 17 April 1963. After they left Maandagshoek for Bronkhorstspuit (1963) and Ratanang, Bourke's Luck (1966-1972), they were blessed with two more boys, Murray and Perold, born on 1 June 1966 and 24 June 1968 respectively (oral communication).

Extracts of reports written to the Board of the *Transvaal Vroue-Sendingvereniging* or *TVSV*, who commissioned them, appears in the addendum.

## **9.17 EVALUATION**

### **Murry and Koos Louw reports**

Many pioneering missionaries of the DRC, like Rev Murray Louw, suffered because of the unhealthy climate of the Sekhukhuneland lowveld. This was the case also with Rousseau, Van der Merwe and Burger. In this part of Sekhukhuneland, the heat during summer time is unbearable. There are no clear seasonal differences. The six months from September to March with extreme heat from November to March are not good for overworked human beings. The roads were bad and the distances between the posts far away from each other. Services on Sundays were usually in the morning, but also in the afternoon at another post. During the week, schools, building projects and meetings had to be attended to. The burden which a missionary carried because of the unreached people with a shortage of workers, with some workers causing many problems and the weak spiritual condition of the believers could also have contributed to the fact that the *TVSV* decided to send a second missionary to Maandagshoek. He was Murray Louw's nephew, Jacobus (Koos) Louw. He was a great encouragement to the senior Rev Murray Louw whose health deteriorated to such an extent that he could not cope with the workload. I noticed that these two missionaries worked together in the congregation of Burger for four years. It was the only time in the history of the presbytery of Burger that an assistant missionary



post existed. Koos Louw's reports indicated that he and another black minister Rev P Kutumela of Mphahlele served as partners together in an area which was divided in 1966 so that one section was added to Lerato congregation (Mphahlele section) and the other section (Mphaaneng and India) was added to Lepelle. Kutumela and Koos held youth camps at Mphaaneng. The sketches and reports about these missionaries, evangelists and black ministers particularly indicate with whom they served together, the period they worked together and new posts they started. This was a mission in partnership. Prayer letters and news from the missionaries later also pointed out clearly that they all worked together as 'missionaries.'

## **10. THE FIRST BLACK MINISTER IN SEKHUKHUNELAND – EDWARD MOLEKE PHATUDI – 1912 TO 1983**

### **10.1 EARLY LIFE**

Edward's father was chief Mmutle III, also known as chief Phatudi III. Edward was the first-born son of wife number eight, who gave birth to six children, four sons and two daughters. His mother was the daughter of the late Kgoši Sekhukhune, which meant that Edward was of royal lineage on two sides, i e Sekhukhune and Mphahlele. Chief Mmutle III, his father, accepted western civilization. He was strongly opposed to tribal schools because he believed that they were hampering progress. He also wanted his chieftainship to come to an end. He therefore warned Edward that if he dared crown himself as a chief of Mphahlele in his youth, in manhood or even in old age, he would never see the sun rise again. Chief Mphahlele said that he was the last chief of the Mphahlele tribe and not one of his sons should ever succeed him as chief (Phatudi 1989). His biographer wrote:

*Edward Moleke Phatudi realized at this point that he would never be a chief of the Mphahlele tribe; he then received the calling to become a minister and spent the years during 1939 to 1942 studying. He negotiated with his brothers and chief Phatudi Mphahlele to change their surname as a way of identifying their generation. The chief advised them to take his first name as their new surname, Phatudi.*

*The reason for this was that the surname Mphahlele was well-known. Edward Phatudi had realized this fact and he wanted the people to make a distinction between the Mphahleles and the royal blood family in future. The second reason for changing their surname was that their first names were more or less the same and people were reading documents not meant for them.*

*Unfortunately only a few, like his younger brother the late Cecil Seputule Phatudi, who was an agriculturalist, and a half-brother, the late Dr CN Phatudi, who became prime minister of the Lebowa Local Government, followed his idea. Some preferred to keep the old surname Mphahlele while others combined the two: Phatudi-Mphahlele (Phatudi 1989:4).*

## **10.2 THE SCHOLASTIC DAYS**

Edward started his education at the Dutch Reformed Mission, but after a few months he returned to the mission school of the Presbyterian Church at Mphahlele, his hometown. In 1921, at the age of nine, he entered the Mphahlele Community School established by his father and the Mphahlele tribe – the first community school in the Northern Region. The school was initially named Mabjana-Maswana and is today known as Matsobane School. Thereafter he and his brother CN Phatudi went to Kilnerton Methodist Training Institution. He qualified as a teacher in 1933 and started teaching at Mamabolo School at Mamabolo village. In 1936 he was appointed principal of Hofmeyr Community School at Dikgale village. In the same year he was appointed as a lecturer at Bethesda Training Institution, where he was to lecture Northern Sotho. He was also appointed as the first hostel principal (Phatudi 1989:7).

## **10.3 AS A MINISTER OF THEOLOGY**

In 1937, while teaching at Bethesda, Edward went to Rev CL Brink, who was the minister at Bethesda, to inform him of his intention to study theology. Rev Brink agreed to this.

Rev Brink realized that Edward Phatudi was the eldest son of Chief Mmutle III and, from a traditional point of view, had to be his successor. Rev Brink therefore went to Chief Mmutle III to obtain written consent for the proposed studies. Chief Mmutle III was angry, because he had hoped that his son would become a medical practitioner. He wrote a letter of consent, but told his son that he would not pay for his school fees since he had no respect for a minister of theology, which he regarded as the lowest of all professions.

From 1938 to 1942 Edward went to Stofberg. With the money he had, he paid for his studies. For the first time, on his arrival at Stofberg, he also had to study Afrikaans as a subject (Phatudi 1989:13).

The first congregation that Rev Phatudi served was Burger, in the region of Sekhukhuneland. On the 27 March 1943, history was made when for the first time a black minister and a white minister, Rev EM Phatudi and Rev JM Louw, were simultaneously ordained under a tree at Mphahlele village. Rev Phatudi served the congregation from 1942 to 1946 (Phatudi 1989:19).

Rev Phatudi had many obstacles to overcome. Chief Sekhukhune first attempted to kill him when he refused to marry his daughter, Thorometsane. The second attempt was when he refused to take over the kingship of Mphalele. Dr HF Verwoerd, the Prime Minister of South Africa during the early sixties, once offered Rev Phatudi an excellent post as leader of the North, but he declined the offer. He felt that he had to remain obedient to his vocation as a minister of religion. He served in Dr Verwoerd's Indaba from 1953 to 1963, representing the DRC. Dr Verwoerd also wanted the DRC of Sekhukhuneland to call Rev Phatudi so that he could be nearer to his office, but he refused. By then he was minister at Heidelberg, where he assisted the congregation in building a beautiful church. He rejected the call since, according to him; it was not a calling but a temptation. When the second call came from Sekhukhuneland, he resigned from the Indaba in 1963 (Phatudi 1989:13). Before this, he had served Burger from 1942 to 1946, Magaliesburg (1946-1949) and Pretoria West (1949-1952).

#### **10.4 EDWARD PHATUDI, THE FAMILY MAN**

When Rev Phatudi retired at the end of 1982, he and his wife moved to Lebowa-Kgomo. His text at his demission service was 2 Timothy 4:7: "I have run the great race, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." They had their own house built near Chuenespoort, not far from the place where he was ordained as minister of Burger together with Rev JM Louw (27 March 1943). Since those early days the mission in Sekhukhuneland had expanded and one new congregation after another was established. In 1982 the presbytery of Burger consisted of the following congregations: Burger, Sekhukhuneland, Lepelle, Philadelphia, Motetema and Lerato. When the Phatudis retired, Lebowa-Kgomo was part of Lerato. Rev Phatudi was still willing to serve. During that time I was the relief clergyman at Lerato. He contacted me, and the church council of Lerato agreed that Rev Phatudi could be called to assist the congregation. In January 1983 I ordained him in a school hall at Lebowa-Kgomo as assistant minister. He served for one year only.

He married Malesolo Grace Mojapelo on 9 December 1943. From this marriage four daughters and three sons were born. Murray Seputule, the eldest of the sons, became a minister. Mrs Phatudi played a very important role in the CVV (*Christelike Vrouevereniging*) from 1949 to 1983. She was honoured as lifelong President of the CVV

of the Northern Transvaal. Throughout her life she supported her husband in his work (Phatudi 1989:23).

### **10.5 MURRAY LOUW SEPUTULE PHATUDI**

His eldest son, Murray Phatudi, was also preparing for the ministry. He finished his studies at Turfloop and was called to Lepelle as their new minister for the Strydkraal ward. This ward is the oldest part of Burger mission. The church and parsonage at Strydkraal, where the young Phatudi started his ministry, is only 10 kilometers from the old Burger mission station of Abraham Rousseau, where his father and Murray Louw started their ministry in Sekhukhuneland in 1943.

*Die Sendingblad* (November 1977) reported as follows:

*On Sunday, 27 March 1977, candidate minister Murray Louw Seputule Phatudi was ordained in the big church at Tsimanyane in the office of minister with the laying on of hands. More than 600 people gathered in and around the church among the green trees. Thirty four years before, on 27 March 1943, candidate minister Phatudi's father, Rev Edward Phatudi, and Rev Murray Louw were ordained at Mphahlele as ministers of Burger congregation. This day, 27 March 1977, was a special day of remembrance, also a day decreed by the Lord: candidate minister Murray Phatudi had been named after his father's colleague, the late Rev Murray Louw. Rev Louw was ordained as minister on 27 March 1943. Thirty-four years later to the day, another Murray Louw was ordained to serve in the same region. This time it was a black Murray, son of the man who had been ordained together with Murray Louw back in 1943 – a son of the DRC in Africa. This event brought the Louw and Phatudi families even closer together. Today the eldest son of the late Rev Murray Louw, also named Murray Louw and minister of the DRC in Africa, and the eldest son of Rev Edward Phatudi are serving together in the same church, the DRC in Africa. The white Murray and the black Murray (Jordaan 2006:386).*

Mrs Leen Louw, the wife of the late Rev Murray Louw was present at this inauguration, as was her son, Murray, also a minister and translator of the Year 2000 Pedi Bible. His mother wrote the following letter:

Pretoria 3/4/1977:

*Dear Friends,*

*I want to thank you heartily for the hospitality I received last week-end. It was refreshing to have visited a mission station again and especially Matlala. So many memories went through my heart. I could not believe that it was real. Firstly, it was wonderful as spouse to be at the side of the man Murray Louw senior, who was so dedicated to the Lord's work. He loved the Bapedi. After his first kidney operation, when he was still under the influence of the anesthetic, he urged us to pray for the Bapedi. When he became Church Secretary of the Synod of the DRC in Africa in Pretoria, he mentioned to different people that if he could be healed by the doctors giving him the kidney of a baboon he would return to Sekhukhuneland. Through Murray Phatudi I feel that I am again connected with the work in Sekhukhuneland. I pray for you all by name – and remember, the greatest privilege is to be in the Lord's service. Love, Tannie Leen. (Author's own translation.)*

Before Murray Phatudi arrived, his parsonage at Strydkraal had to be renovated. It is an old house built in 1953. Strydkraal is 50 kilometers from the Leolo Mountains. The DRC of Marble Hall assisted with funds to restore the house. The roof and ceilings needed attention. A new front door, a new coal stove and window panes were installed and the rooms were painted. The church, built in 1953, was also renovated and diamond mesh fencing was put up. One night while Jack Mampolo, Johannes Nkogatse and I were sleeping inside, an unwelcome intruder was prevented from entering when Jack woke up to close one of the windows. He battled to close it properly but managed anyhow with a bit of force. The following morning when we woke up, a snake was hanging outside with its neck squashed near the window handle. It was a night adder. God had protected us.

Rev Phatudi got married to Annah Moshokoa soon after he was ordained. Their first son, Edward, was born at Strydkraal on 24 March 1978. With the help of his father, who was then serving as minister of Tshwane at Atteridgeville, Rev Phatudi purchased their old church benches when the Atteridgeville congregation installed new ones. I arranged with a farmer, Mr Kryn Roodzant, to collect them with his five-ton lorry. These benches were installed at Strydkraal as well as in a newly built church at Masanteng, near Tsimanyane.

Rev Phatudi also helped to start a fund for the building of a new church at Mothopong. The Mothopong church council managed to obtain a piece of land on the road to

Schoonoord in the new village of Mothopong. The ground-breaking ceremony was conducted by Rev Phatudi. In 1981 he accepted a calling to Mokopane, and on 24 July 1993 had the privilege of unveiling the cornerstone of the new church building at Mothopong.

**11. EVANGELISTS OF THE BURGER MISSION – AS REPORTED BY  
REV MJ MANKOE**

The evangelist who worked with Rev Abraham Rousseau at the Mooiplaats station of Burger mission for twenty years (1926-1946), was Alphons Mokoena. His wife, Maria, had a good relationship with Dora Mshane, the daughter of chief Sekhukhune. She was a believer who witnessed for the Lord and she had great appreciation for the Mission of the DRC (Rousseau, Kaboet:tape). She travelled with Mrs Rousseau and they did wonderful work among the women, youth and children.

Other evangelists whose names appear on the list of those who were present at a church council meeting held at Mphahlele on 5 February 1935, were S Mohole, J Khophochane, McDonald Chitja, A Moraka and Johannes Nkosi. At this time, evangelist P Mophethe served at Mphahlele.

**McDonald Chitja**: He was the pioneer evangelist for Garatau near Maandagshoek. He also served Hoepakranz on top of the Leolo Mountain, the place of the Swazi chief, Ngowe, where about 30 members resided. To reach them, a climb of 3½ hours on foot was required.

**Thomas Masekela** married Martina Pahlase on 27 February and started at Kwano on 25 May 1947. He pioneered this outstation, where he worked for a few years before accepting a call to Kempton Park.

**Lazarus Masege** married Helena and was placed at Ga-Mphahlele on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1947, but left in 1951 for Zeerust. The couple had six children.

**Abram Molohe** married Maria and started working at Hoepakranz on 11 January 1950, but left for Bethesda after a few years. The couple had four children.

**Solomon Letoaba** and his wife, Salome, worked at Maandagshoek from 4 May 1949 to December 1951. They had four children and received a calling to Nylstroom.



**Ishmael Mosiuoa Hoabala** married Anagleta Mapetla. They served at Hoepakranz from 8 December 1951 to the end of 1952, when they departed for Harrismith. They had five children.

**Bajuwel Phiri**, born 1907, and his wife Nazibet worked at Penge from 31 August 1950 to 18 October 1953, when they returned to Nyasaland. The couple had two children.

**Phineas Ngoanapheme Kutumela**, born 17 July 1911, married Julia Ntebele. They had five children. He finished his studies as evangelist in November 1950 and was inducted on 24 December 1950 at Kwano. In June 1954 he was transferred to Mphahlele. From there he went to Stofberg Theological Training School on 25 January 1955, where he studied further to become a minister. On 14 December 1957 he received a call to Burger congregation. He was inducted as minister at Mphahlele on 25 January 1958.

**Joël Rasefako Makakaba**, born 1906, grew up in Nylstroom district. His wife was Foibe Moima. They were childless, but adopted three children: Fransina, born in 1936, daughter of Naftali Makalaka; Foibe, born in 1942 and Aletta Moima, born in 1946. Evangelist Makakaba studied for two years at Stofberg, but failed to pass his exams. He started as an evangelist at Morotse on 12 February 1951 and was officially sanctioned by the synod in March 1956. On 31 July 1960 he left for Soekmekaar congregation.

**Abiël Jacob**, born in 1905, was a Mo-Sotho from Basutoland. After completing Standard 3 on Miss Annie Watermeyer's farm, Elgin, he started working. He went to Decoligny near Umtata for his training as an evangelist from 1949 to 1951. Abiël was married to Alina. They had five children. He started his work in Burger congregation on 28 January 1952 at Ga-Mphahlele. In 1955 he went to Taung. In 1960 he went to Morotse and from there to Ga-Mashishi.

**Kadali Robert Sangweni**, born on 15 March 1927, was a Zulu from Mahlabathini. He had his training at Dingaanstat and started his ministry at Hoepakranz on 24 January 1953. He married Mina Dhlamini. They had two children. On 18 May 1956 he left for Natal and served later at Babanango, but returned to Hoepakranz in March 1957. In July 1959 he left for the congregation of Empangeni.

**Isak Topollo Chakalane**, born on 6 March 1918, was a Mo-Sotho. His wife died on 18 April 1952. The couple had two children. He married Salmína Kutumela (born Khanya) on 12 June 1954. In January 1957 he left for the congregation of Dealesville.

**Herbert Lulanga**, born April 1917, was a Nyasa who lived with his parents in London, where he passed Standard 5. His mother died in 1950 and his father in 1952. After his father's death he returned from London and worked in the Rustenburg district and also at Dundee. From 1950 to 1951 he studied at Stofberg. He started as an evangelist in Burger congregation on 16 January 1952, but only stayed for one year. In December of that year he left for Barberton.

**Stefaans Josias Nkosi** was born on 16 April 1926. He was a Swazi from Klipspruit mission near Nebo. He went to study at Stofberg after he passed Standard 7 (Form 2). He was the first evangelist who started working at Ga-Mashishi. On 27 July 1953 he was married to Marta Matsipa, a member of the Bapedi Lutheran Church. They had four children. In June 1960 the church council suspended him.

**Abel Molefe Makakaba**, born on 4 October 1902, was a Mo-Sotho who grew up at Nylstroom. While he was studying at Stofberg, his wife passed away in 1953. The couple had ten children. In 1954 he started his ministry at Steelpoort, on the farm of Mr JRG Louw. In 1954 Abel was married again, to Ellen Molefe. In January 1956 he was transferred to Ga-Mphahlele but returned to Maandagshoek at the end of that year. His services were discontinued by the church council on 6 May 1961, after which he left for Sibasa.

**Ernest Marokana** started as an evangelist at Pietersburg in 1943, but moved to Burger where he began his ministry on 1 August 1954. His wife was Blandina and the couple had six children. He later moved to Soekmekaar.

**Edmund Kapari Marengwa** was born in 1926 and baptized in 1950. He could not complete his studies at Stofberg in 1953, but worked at the mission of Boekenhoutfontein. From there he was transferred to Mafafe on 1 February 1956. He left for further training at Dingaanstat on 31 January 1957.

**Mafiwa Edgar Moloko** was born at Bethesda in 1911. He was baptized at Sophiatown when he became a member of our church and started as an evangelist at Malemati on 30 July 1959. His wife was Fransina and the couple had six children. Previously he studied at Stofberg and worked at Seleka congregation from 1951 and at Ga-Molepo in 1954.

**Josef Mashabela** was born in 1927. In 1958 he was paralyzed but managed to study at Dorothea Mission in 1959. He married Anna and the couple had three children. He started his ministry on 6 February 1960 at Horp.

**Zachariah Goud Mofututsi** was born on 1 January 1934 at Vereeniging. He started working at Phiring (Sterkspruit) on 7 January 1961.

**Benjamin Moroane Ephraim Marokana** was born on 24 June 1930 at Smithfield. He married Maria Sebatana. He first stayed at Welkom during 1955 and came to Maandagshoek on 28 June 1956. The couple had three children.

**Solly Ramaipadi** studied at Turfloop Theological School, where he completed his studies in December 1961. He arrived at Morotse that same month and was transferred to Schoonspruit in August 1963.

**Petrus Phahlamohlaka** completed his studies at Turfloop in December 1961 and started working at Penge where he remained until 2002, when he retired.

**Mphofe Thomas Maduane** was born on 1 January 1939 at Ga-Magologolo, also known as Houtbos, near the Leolo Mountains in Sekhukhuneland. From 1956 to 1963 he stayed with Rev Murray Louw at Maandagshoek where he worked as a gardener for Dr du Plooy. He was married to Magdalene Sagoeme Ntsoane, born 2 February 1946. They had five children, two boys and three girls. He went for training as an evangelist at Turfloop Theological School from 1963 to 1965.

From 1966 to 1967 he served in the congregation of Meetse-a-Bophelo and thereafter at Ratanang (Bourke's Luck Hospital) near Pilgrimsrest. Here he worked for six years with Rev JM Louw (son of AA) until 1974. In the same year he returned to his place of birth in Burger congregation at Maandagshoek. His wife was a trained nurse who was able to help the family financially during all his years in the service of God.

During his long service at Maandagshoek he was responsible for many of the outposts: Hoepakranz, Mashishi, Waterkop, Moshira, Mooilyk, Kwano, Ntwampe, Mashabela, Modimolle, Shai, Waterval River and Motsepula. During this time he worked with the following missionaries at Maandagshoek: Dr JJ Kritzinger, Rev J Nieder-Heitmann and Rev JPT Koen. He also worked with the following ministers: Rev MJ Mankoe (Praktiseer), MP Mojapelo (Ntwampe) and TM Banda (Praktiseer), and with the following evangelists: MJ Makwana, Mokoena, ZG Mofurutsi, AB Makakaba, P Phahlamohlaka, J Mashabela, MB Shaku and LP Chaba.

He served the congregation as treasurer and scribe. He is a gentleman who was very meticulous in his work.

These men worked with the missionaries. They played an important role in spreading the Gospel and establishing the church. In writing the history of the DRC in Sekhukhuneland, their names, life-sketches and their contributions are considered of importance to future generations of church members of the Uniting Reformed Church (URC) in Sekhukhuneland.

## **12. MAANDAGSHOEK MISSION 1962 to 1976**

Several missionaries and ministers came and went after Rev Murray Louw left. Rev JPJ Zeeman of Ficksburg started in March 1962 at Maandagshoek. Rev ES Ramaipadi started in 1963 at Mphahlele. Rev Koos Louw received a calling to Bronkhorstspruit/Premier Mine and left in June 1963. Rev Zeeman left in April 1964. He was replaced by Rev IM (Sakkie) van der Merwe. After two years, Sakkie left for Phalaborwa. During his time he was assisted by co-minister Enos Ramaipadi, while Burger congregation also had the services of evangelists Piet Moatshe, Solomon Ramaipadi, Petrus Phahlamohlaka, Hendrik Maphanga, Aron Metsileng, Abiël Motau, Joseph Mashabela and Pieter Matebe (Louw 1972:49).

### **12.1 REV IM (SAKKIE) VAN DER MERWE**

Rev van der Merwe was ordained as the new minister to replace Rev JPJ Zeeman at Maandagshoek. Rev van der Merwe reported to the *TVSV* that the spiritual state of the members of the congregation was at a very low level. At two outstations some of the elders were placed under censorship because of alcohol abuse. At the hospital almost all but four of the local male personnel were guilty of alcohol abuse, three of whom were from Zimbabwe and Malawi. The population of the Bapedi in the area covered by Burger congregation was 70 000, of which 75-80% were still non-believers or belonged to independent sects. He was also concerned about the conduct of the European personnel at the hospital, although some of them contributed to spiritual work at the hospital and others helped at outstations.

He reported that 56 new members had joined the congregation, increasing its total membership to 434, with 103 catechists and 1 012 Sunday school children. Moruti Enos Ramaipadi was Sakkies' co-minister with the assistance of six evangelists, Piet Moatshe, Solomon Ramaipadi, Petrus Phahlamohlaka, Hendrik Maphanga, Aaron Metsileng, Abiël Motau and two lay evangelists, Josef Mashabela (hospital) and Pieter Mateba. Moruti Ramaipadi had a difficult time at Mphahlele because the members did not like his way of doing things. Slowly, however, he overcame their opposition and was accepted. He was also chosen as a member of various school committees and councils.

At the hospital a new children's ward was opened. A borehole, two power generators and a cowshed were put into use during the dry seasons. A new minister's parsonage was built at Penge for Moruti Ramaipadi, who moved from Mphahlele to Penge when Mphahlele became an outpost of Grootshoek (Potgietersrus East) in 1966. Rev Sakkie van der Merwe left for Phalaborwa in 1966, two years after his arrival (Louw 1972:49).

## **12.2 REV SCHALK BURGER AND HIS WIFE, ANNA**

Rev Burger was ordained as missionary on 12 February 1967. The service was attended by friends, family members, the executive of the *TVSV*, members of the local congregation and hospital personnel. The relief clergyman, Rev Pierre Joubert of Klipspruit Mission, conducted the service. Rev Burger's first task was the spiritual enhancement of the Burger congregation. Missionaries were usually also responsible for administration, building and the renovation of church buildings. He started to renovate the local church at Maandagshoek, completed the local church at Mashishi where evangelist Motou was stationed, and helped to complete the local church at Naboomkoppies. Both these churches were built with funds provided by the Transvaal Women's Mission Society (*TVSV*). A copper plaque with their emblem was placed on top of the tower at the Naboomkoppies church (Louw 1972:50).

The congregation of Burger had six church buildings already in use, but there were 14 wards that did not enjoy the use of a church building. The congregations gathered in schools or under trees. The first church building under Rev Burger's ministry was opened on 14 June 1970 at Mashishi, fourteen miles from Maandagshoek. The next day the 94-year-old Mrs (Rev) van der Worst, who personally had contributed royally to its erection, had the honour of unlocking the doors. The Maandagshoek church had been renovated and was also re-opened the next day. Mrs Nettie Bosman, who had also served for many years on the management committee of the *TVSV* and who was still an honorary member, unlocked its doors. This church was also named the Memorial Church in honour of the pioneers of the *TVSV*: Messrs JM Louw, AP Burger and HS Bosman (Louw 1972:50). On this occasion a plaque of remembrance was unveiled with the words: *PULAMADIBOGO – TOT EER VAN GOD – GEDENK KERK*.

### **12.3 PULAMADIBOGO – TO THE GLORY OF GOD – MEMORIAL CHURCH**

In gratitude, this newly renovated church was dedicated in remembrance of the 1905 pioneers of the *TVSV*, namely Messrs (Rev) JM Louw, (Rev) AP Burger, (Rev) HS Bosman and all those who worked together for the expansion of the Kingdom of God in Sekhukhuneland.

“And great was the company of those (women) who proclaimed it” (Ps 68:12). Pulamadibogo means to open up the folds so that the carriers of the Gospel could deliver the Good News. Several DRC congregations assisted in providing funds for the building of ward churches, including the DRC congregations of Valhalla and Bronberg who, in turn, helped with the building of the Ribastat ward church and others at Naboomkoppies, Gowe (Louw church), Ntwampestat (Apie Rossouw church), Praktiseer and Bothashoek (Bronberg church) (Louw 1972:51).

### **12.4 CENTRAL COMMITTEE FOR LOCAL MISSIONS (*SENTRALE PLAASLIKE SENDINGKOMMISSIE*)**

A very important development was the establishment of a Central Committee for Local Missions, as a link with the DRC congregation of Burgersfort and the *TVSV*. This Committee and the *TVSV* would in future share responsibility for the Burger church. The members would be as follows: the missionary, three members of the Burgersfort church council, three from the *TVSV* management and a local *TVSV* member of Burgersfort congregation. Rev Burger reported to this commission on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1971 that membership of the congregation was 892, with 1 725 children in the Sunday school. This was only a small percentage of the 100 000 Bapedi within the borders of Burger congregation (Louw 1972:51).

In this report he also stated that the outposts were as follows:

*Hoepakranz, Steelpoort, Naboomkoppies, Penge, Mabotsha, Krommelen-boog, Makofane, Weltevrede, Leoloskool, Riba, Mohlarutse, Watervalsrivier, De Grootboom, Gowe, Mototolong, Mooihoekmyn, Mashishi, Diphala, Mashabela, Masete, Moshira, Shai, Mmutlane, Waterkop, Kwano, Groothoekmyn, Mpuru Mamphahlane and Sehlako. Evangelist A Motau was at Mashishi; P Chaba at Moshira; M Makakaba at Burgersfort; M Matlala at Moeilik; B Shaku at Penge; P Phahlamohlaka at Steelpoort, while Joseph*

*Mashabela still worked at the hospital and evangelist Makakaba who stayed at Maandagshoek, was responsible for Mpura and Mamphahlane (Louw 1972:51). (Author's own translation.)*

## **12.5 THE MISSION HOSPITAL BECOMES A GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL**

Another major development took place on 20 August 1968. The mission commission of the synod was informed that, as from this date, the hospital was to be taken over by the government. Since all the mission hospitals run by the DRC had come under pressure because of lack of personnel, this was an important step.

The mission's co-operation with the Department of Bantu Administration and Development as well as the Transvaal Provincial Administration had always been good, which made things easier. On 28 November 1968 the Synodical Missions Committee's executive formed a sub-commission called the Commission of Medical Missions. As from February 1969, this commission appointed Mr CA Jansön as liaison officer between the government and the different hospitals.

A second liaison officer, Mr JCK Opperman, was also appointed (Louw 1972:52). It was agreed that the medical mission of the church would continue and to this end a proposal was drawn up to serve as guidelines for Bantu management committees. The Commission of Medical Missions convened a meeting for the first time at Maandagshoek on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1971.

In August 1970 the number of beds reached the maximum of 430, and as a result no more new wards were erected. In honour and acknowledgement of Dr Boshoff's contribution, the hospital was to be renamed the HC Boshoff Mission Hospital (Louw 1972:52).

In spite of the limited number of beds, the hospital had as many as 618 in-patients on any given day. The statistics for 1967 to June 1970 were as follows:



	1967/8	1968/9	1969/70	Apr-June 1970
General illnesses	167	184	244,4	357,2
Maternity cases	29,2	18,7	26,9	26,4
Babies	17,2	19,7	24,7	23,4
Contagious	161,5	170,4	116,8	133,5
Total	374,9	392,8	412,8	540,8

(Louw 1972:53).

The mission staff and personnel of the hospital, as well as the community as a whole, were saddened by the news that the hospital secretary, Mr M Visser (Uncle Duke) had died in a motorcar accident on 18 December 1970. Although in serious condition, Mrs Visser survived. Dr Hennie Boshoff, hospital superintendent, left and Dr Joubert was appointed superintendent. In June 1971 the hospital employed seventy nurses, most of them students, and 147 workers in the different sections. A total of 68 clinics were visited weekly. The personnel kept up the old tradition of morning devotions at 6:30. The death of Rev Schalk Burger on 30 November 1971, after a serious illness, was a severe setback. This man of God tried his utmost, in as short a time as possible, to do as much as he could for the people he loved and for the expansion of God's work. This probably caused a deterioration in his health. He was buried at the mission station and Rev (Dr) Dons Kritzingler succeeded him.

## **12.6 THE LOUW CHURCH**

On the same day that Rev Kritzingler was ordained, the congregation celebrated the opening of the Louw Church at Gowe (Driekop). A brother of Rev Murray Louw unveiled the corner stone on behalf of the Louw family. A son of Rev Murray Louw unlocked the door and Rev Koos Louw delivered the opening sermon. On the corner stone the following

words were written: “In grateful remembrance of Rev JM Louw, minister of the DRC at Boksburg”.

Mrs GJ Louw, the president of the *TVSV*, passed away in 1963 and their son, Rev J Murray Louw, served as a missionary at Maandagshoek from 1943 to 1962. He died in 1968 (Louw 1972:53).

In 1975 the congregation of Burger consisted of almost 900 members, with both a black and a white minister to serve this vast area. There were many preaching posts and wards for serving Holy Communion. More than 120 000 people were living in the eastern part of Sekhukhuneland, but only about 20 000 of them had some relationship with the church. They had small church buildings and eight evangelists working in different areas. Dr Kritzinger concentrated on enhancing the spirituality of these small congregations. The area was too vast to try and cover or reach everyone in one way or the other. He believed in empowering each member spiritually in order for them to witness and persuade others to follow Christ. In the meantime, he started to build a conference centre. At this conference centre Bible Study and Discipleship courses were presented to the Christian Youth Movement (CYM), Christian Men’s Movement (CMM) and the Christian Women’s Movement (CWM) (Kritzinger 1975:34).

Dr Kritzinger wrote: “The history and establishment of Maandagshoek is an example of a typical mission station. It is a symbol of a traditional mission. At this stage we look forward to a development from traditional mission to a new era of congregational maturity which is centered on Christ. No longer a mission station, or buildings, but the building of God, the body of Christ” (Kritzinger 1975:33).

### **12.7 THE TVSV WITHDRAW FROM MAANDAGSHOEK (BURGER)**

For 53 years the *TVSV* was responsible for mission work in Sekhukhuneland. In 1976 this era came to an end when the work at Maandagshoek was transferred to the synod of the Northern Transvaal. Thereafter the *TVSV* would only be responsible for Klipspruit mission station. As pioneers of mission work done by the DRC in Sekhukhuneland, the management of the *TVSV* paid a special visit to Maandagshoek to officially celebrate their mission involvement over the years. For the last time they gathered with many other ladies from the *TVSV* and Burgersfort at Maandagshoek. Mrs Sibs Marais was the president at

that time. She addressed the visitors who gathered under the big Jacaranda tree and on behalf of the *TVSV*, unveiled a plaque at the front entrance to the hospital in remembrance of their work. In the evening, wreaths were laid at the graves of Rev Schalk Burger and Mr and Mrs Potas, who were buried at Maandagshoek. A prayer meeting was also held at the parsonage under the Jacaranda tree. God was praised for the black ministers and evangelists who faithfully contributed to the establishment of the kingdom of God among the Bapedi in Sekhukhuneland. Evangelist Maduane conducted the service. He compared the white mothers with the mother of Moses, who made provision for her child's well-being, although the child himself did not know of any danger (Bruwer 1976:243).

### **12.8 ENOS SETJAKADUME RAMAIPADI**

Enos Sejtakadume Ramaipadi was born at Mohlaletse village in Sekhukhuneland on 19 July 1929. He married Tryphina Mmatlou and the couple had seven children, three boys and four girls. From 1954 to 1958 he was a schoolteacher and principal of Hopefield Primary at Marishane village in Sekhukhuneland. After completing his theological training at Stofberg, he was ordained on 2 April 1962 at Mphahlele in the congregation of Burger and started his ministry. He worked with Reverends JM Louw, SW Burger, JPJ Zeeman and JJ Kritzinger. He also worked with evangelists LJ Makwana, MS Makakaba, MP Phahlamohlaka, TM Maduane, BM Shaku and SP Ramaipadi. His wife wrote about him as follows: "He was a loving and caring husband and father, and a dedicated minister. In 1973 Rev ES Ramaipadi and Rev SW Burger built a church in Ga-Motodi village (Naboomkoppies). The church building can still be seen today. He was a cheerful giver who always took care of the needy. He opened his home to everyone. Enos also transported the elderly to and from church every Sunday free of charge. He was the biological father of seven, but a father to the whole community." He died in a taxi accident on 28 February 1976. He was buried at Ga-Motodi cemetery (Mrs Tryphina Ramaipadi).

### **13. SEKHUKHUNELAND CONGREGATION – Klipspruit Mission**

Burger congregation grew to such an extent that one missionary was unable to cope with the demands of such a vast organization. Rev Murray Louw pleaded his case to the management of the *TVSV* and requested them to make a decision on dividing Burger and creating a new post for another missionary and mission station (Louw 1972:43).

On 7 March 1946 the commission for the Presbytery of Kranspoort convened in a small school hall at Gemsbokspruit, which was previously used as a farm school for European children. The meeting was attended by the following members of the presbytery commission: Rev CL Brink (Chairman), Rev PJ Joubert (Scribe), Rev VW Fick while Rev JMM Louw (Snr) as well as some members of the church council of Burger. On that day a new congregation seceded from Burger.

The school was situated only three miles from Klipspruit, the farm bought by the Transvaal Women's Mission Society (*TVSB*) in 1944 when Burger mission, which was situated on the farm Mooiplaats, was sold to the government. The amount of R6 000 thus obtained was sufficient to pay for Klipspruit. At the *TVSV* congress in 1945, it was proposed that a second congregation be formed with the name of Sekoekoeland. (The synod changed the spelling to Sekhukhuneland at their session in 1964.)

The result was that in 1946 a new mission station was founded at Klipspruit. Rev and Mrs AS van Niekerk were welcomed on the 10<sup>th</sup> August 1946 as the first missionary couple at Klipspruit, to serve the congregation of Sekhukhuneland.

The old Burger mission station, which was relocated to Maandagshoek, was included in the borders of the new congregation. That meant that the western area began at the Olifants River and stretched eastwards all along the southern slopes of the Leolo Mountains to Steelpoort River, and from there all along the Highveld escarpment, including Tafelkop near Groblersdal in the south and Nebo, where the magistrate's office was. The *TVSV* was solely responsible for the finances.

#### **13.1 REV AS VAN NIEKERK**

At Rev van Niekerk's ordination, Rev PJN Maritz' text was Acts 5:20. Rev Maritz was the missionary at Ermelo. The next day Rev van Niekerk served Holy Communion to 40

members at Klipspruit. The parsonage had not yet been completed, and they had to stay in a small farmhouse at the Native Trust in the meantime. Mr JN Graaff became the farm manager. Mr JL Potas of Maandagshoek, the mission's builder, erected the missionary's house and it was completed during the following year. The congregation of Sekhukhuneland was served by the following evangelists: G Mphahlele at Mankopane, N Maluleke at Eensgevonden and M Chitja at Buffelsfontein, two evangelists, Aaron Morake and A Mokwena, at Klipspruit. A total of 650 pupils attended the six registered schools and 180 pupils attended private religious schools (*TVSV-Verslag* 1947:51).

Rev van Niekerk immediately started two new outposts: one at Leeukraal and another at Buffelspoort, and schools were re-opened at Hopefield and Phaahla. The registered schools were not mission orientated, because the school committees consisted of some non-Christian members. In October 1947 a clinic was opened at Klipspruit and this was occasionally visited by the district surgeon. Rev van Niekerk wrote as follows:

*We are grateful to have settled in our new and practical parsonage at Klipspruit. It will take time to get the garden in shape.*

**13.1.1 Farming:** *With the £90 the 'Kinderkrans' donated and the money of last year's corn harvest, we were able to purchase 13 cows. Mr Johannes Graaff is our able farmer and we hope to become self-sufficient.*

**13.1.2 Clinic:** *This was started in October but it is not functioning to its full capacity because there is no medical doctor.*

**13.1.3 Congregational labour:** *The new outstations were established at Leeukraal and Buffelspoort. Evangelist Mackweja's house is nearly completed. Mr Oosthuyzen gave us a few morgen at Buffelskloof and elder John Nkgadima is working faithfully to begin a new congregation. At Hopefield and Phaahla the schools were closed. We have five evangelists and two lay-workers who are trying their very best to reach the non-believers.*

*We experience opposition and enmity among the non-believers. The congregation has 53 members. During the year 16 new converts were confirmed.*

**13.1.4 Schools:** *We have six registered schools and seven Church schools. Almost all our teachers are church members. At all these Sunday schools activities are taking place (*TVSV-Verslag* 1948:7).*

*In 1949 lodgings for the evangelists at Leeukraal and Buffelskloof were completed. At Leeukraal evangelist Mark Makwenya worked diligently in spite of severe opposition from the Roman Catholic Church. Mr Graaff left the mission station and Mr PS Greyvenstein started in 1950. Mr Putto assisted temporarily (TVSV-Verslag 1950:41). Three new evangelists were appointed, bringing the total to seven people who were serving the congregation. The school at Gemsbokspruit was moved to Klipspruit, which was also used as a gathering place for Sunday Services (TVSV-Verslag 1947:51 – Author’s own translation).*

### **13.2 REV JS MALAN**

Rev van Niekerk accepted a calling to Stofberg Theological School. He was succeeded by Rev JS Malan on 12 August 1950. While Rev van Niekerk concentrated on the outstations, Rev Malan gave special attention to the upgrading of the Klipspruit mission station (TVSV-Verslag 1951:72). He was assisted by the farm manager, Mr PS Grevensteyn. Rev Malan also concentrated on erecting a school for the blind (TVSV-Verslag 1953:88). In co-operation with the Department of Education in Pretoria an amount of £15 000 was provided: two-thirds was donated by the government and the balance by the TVSV. When Mr Greyvensteyn left, Mr T Botha replaced him as farm manager and builder, in June 1952. The church building at Klipspruit was planned and an amount of £2 500 was budgeted. Mr Botha started building the church at Strydkraal, not far from the old Burger Mission Station near the Olifants River. The cornerstone read ‘*Built in 1953*’. An unknown person donated £500 towards this project. The church was opened with a week-long conference, held with the aid of Dorothea Mission (TVSV-Verslag 1955:85).

### **13.3 THE BOSELE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND**

On 7 August 1957, the Bosele School for African Blind was officially opened by the mission secretary, Rev JHM Stofberg. The name *Bosele* means DAYBREAK, which is true of the boys and girls who studied here. The place where the school, hostels and administration offices were erected is called MPUDULLE, which means ‘to blow the dust from the eye.’ The hostel could accommodate 50 pupils. Nineteen Pupils were enrolled in November 1957. Phati Topola of Germiston was the first pupil to arrive at the school. Miss OJ Morrison of the Worcester School for the Blind was the first school principal. This school was unique and looked upon as the first of its kind for the African Blind. After

one year, Miss Morrison had to leave to pioneer another school. She was succeeded by Mr Wynand Malan. In 1962 Mr H Lemmer became the principal of Bosele School. Mr CW Malan was a member of the staff and he was also called Wynie. The two Malan families were not related.

Under Mr Malan's guidance, a beautiful house was built for the principal by the mission builder, Jeremiah, a black man who was an expert with quarry stones found nearby. Mr Wynie Malan's son, born in 1952 and named after his father Charl Wynand, drowned tragically, at the age of 8 in one of the cattle-dip-tanks on the farm. He was buried next to the Klipspruit church in 1960. His grave was made of stones, without any inscription. In 1977 when we had the Presbytery of Burger sitting at Sekhukhuneland congregation, I enquired about the meaning of the heap of stones. I was informed that a young child was buried there. No more details were available. However, on 27 August 2008 a man named Bennie Malan visited me at Dibukeng Christian Bookstore in Bosman Street, Pretoria. He enquired about books and Christian literature in Sepedi for a school near Jane Furse in Sekhukhuneland. He mentioned that his father had been a teacher at Bosele. When I enquired about the grave next to the church, he told me that his younger brother was buried there. The family still has plans to erect a plaque with an inscription on it. He said that his parents went to Kwa-Zulu Natal in 1961, where his father became the principal of the Vulega School for the Blind and Deaf (Malan, Bennie:oral communication).

In 1968 Mr H Lemmer became principal of Letaba School for the Retarded. In 1974 the first black man, Mr Pasha, was appointed as vice-principal at Bosele. He had been a teacher at Bosele since its inception (*TVSB Ligpunte* 1975:40). Another development at Bosele was the Bosele workshop, which was started to help pupils finishing school to earn an income. The Bosele school hall was opened in 1978 (Marais 1980:27). In 1978 a school for the deaf was also started next to the school for the blind. When pupils left school they could immediately start working in the workshop. This project was launched in 1979 and was also financed by the Lebowa government. It has a weaving section for the weaving of mats and tablecloths with sheep's wool and sisal. The *TVSV* was still responsible for this project. In 1980 the financial obligations of the VSB of Northern Transvaal with regard to the congregation of Sekhukhuneland were transferred to the Synod of Eastern Transvaal (Marais 1980:27). "Rev Phatudi, as a minister at Burger congregation played the most important part in naming schools such as Bosele (School for the Blind) and Mpudule" (Phatudi 1989:15).



### **13.4 LIFE-SKETCH OF REV MALAN**

After being legitimated in 1939, Rev Malan was ordained in his first congregation at Carolina in 1940. He subsequently served the congregations of Wakkerstroom (1942); Sekhukhuneland (1950); Witbank/Witbank South (1961); Biesjesvlei (1966) and Swaziland (17 October 1970). He served as a missionary at Klipspruit (NGKA-Sekhukhuneland) for 11 years. While at Klipspruit, he took a special interest in the evangelization of the Swazi people of Ngobe at Hoepakranz, on the Leolo Mountain near Maandagshoek, in the district of Lydenburg.

He also studied part-time at UP, where he completed a BA Honours and later an MA degree in Anthropology, with a thesis on his research among the Swazi of Hoepakranz. Many of his friends called him ‘Uncle Swazi.’ During his stay at Klipspruit the Bosele School for the Blind was erected. As was the case with most missionaries in the field, Rev Malan’s children attended boarding school at Laersdrift, not very far from Klipspruit. They were Johan, Nicola, Hendrik and Dawid. For their secondary school education they had to go to Middelburg. Antonie Christoffel, another of their sons, contracted meningitis and as a result was mentally retarded. This was a serious blow to the family. He needed constant supervision. In the parsonage at Klipspruit, he was severely burnt when, because of a burning candle, his bedding and curtains caught fire. Eventually he was placed in an institute at Howick in Natal. Johan, the eldest son, studied anthropology at UP and received his doctor’s degree in 1972. From 1978 to 2006 he was professor at the University of the North. During his time as lecturer he became involved in the work of Gideons International. They mainly distributed Bibles and New Testaments to pupils in Sekhukhuneland at Apel and surrounding villages (Malan, Johan:correspondence).

During Rev Malan’s ministry he saw the opening of a beautiful church building at Klipspruit on 26 May 1956. He also saw the erection of a clinic thanks to a donation of £1 000 by the *Kinderkrans*. The clinic formed an integral part of mission work not only for the community but also for the needs of the children. Rev Malan also believed in evangelistic campaigns. He had just over 20 outposts to be served; he held a 10-day campaign in the congregation in August 1969. He was assisted by five Bible school students, who were part of the DR evangelistic team and helped house-calls. At this stage there were seven students at the Stofberg Memorial School – five studying to become



evangelists and two to become ministers. During the evangelization campaigns many people of various ages started catechism classes (Louw 1972:45).

### **13.5 REV HJ GROBLER**

When Rev Malan left, Rev CL Brink assisted on a temporary basis until Rev and Mrs HJ Grobler arrived on 30 March 1961. The Bosele School then had 56 pupils. Mr Phasha was appointed as teacher and hospital patron. He became the first male teacher on the staff of the school (Louw 1972:41). In October 1963 the congregation had a membership of 360, with five evangelists, a missionary and a black minister, Rev JS Mnisi. Mr HR Lemmer was the principal of Bosele and there were 74 pupils in 1962 (Louw 1972:45).

### **13.6 REV CH DELPORT**

When Rev and Mrs Grobler left in 1964, Rev and Mrs CL Brink returned to help up to the arrival of Rev and Mrs CH Delpport on 24 October 1964. Two evangelists left, as did Rev Mnisi, who had accepted a call to Belfast. Evangelist JM Matemane came to Mothopong. Rev Delpport played a very important part in the division of the borders of the presbytery of Burger. A new mission station was erected by Rev JT Jordaan within the borders of Sekhukhuneland on the farm Goedvertrouwen near Marble Hall. He left in 1959, and was succeeded by Rev Pieter Conradie. To improve the ministry and mission work, he and Rev Delpport were instructed by the Presbytery of Burger to investigate the changing of the borders of Burger, in order to ease the work-load of the missionaries (Louw 1972:46).

### **13.7 SEKHUKHUNELAND BORDERS**

An important decision taken by the presbytery of Burger in 1965 had far reaching results. The Commission for Planning presented a report in which it was suggested that a large part of Sekhukhuneland should change hands and be added to the new neighbouring congregation of Marble Hall (Lepelle). It was signed by Rev CH Delpport of Sekhukhuneland and Rev P Conradie of Marble Hall. The following reasons were given:

1. *The borders between the adjacent congregations were not clear.*
2. *Certain areas were not included anywhere.*
3. *Certain areas were served by two different congregations.*

4. *Development plans by the Government compelled the church to keep pace.*
5. *In order to be effective with the placing of mission workers, finances and administration had to be shared evenly (TVSV-Verslag 1965:7 – Author’s own translation).*

Major changes were suggested between Marble Hall and Sekhukhuneland. The area marked D12, D13, DII, 5, H2, D9, D10, D8, B5, 3 and B3 and D7 on the attached plan were now included in the congregation of Marble Hall. All these places are posts that were started by Rev Abraham Rosseau, the pioneer missionary of Burger Mission station. His old station (D12) which was abandoned in April 1944 is only one kilometer from Apel’s church building (DII) (now called Sesehu). When we look at the history of Marble Hall (Lepelle), the history of all these outposts is accounted for in detail.

It is also clear that within the borders of the Sekhukhuneland congregation, three other mission stations were in operation. At Glen Cowie, the Catholic Church had erected a hospital. Not far from there, the Anglican Church built a hospital and schools. The Lutheran Church started a conference centre at Lobethal near Marishane, which is presently an outpost of Lepelle.

### **13.8 FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AT BOSELE**

In 1963 there were 74 pupils at Bosele, which increased to 95 in 1965 (59 boys and 36 girls). A third of the children were totally blind and 14 of the 95 were albinos. Unfortunately these pupils had nowhere to go after completing their schooling. On 1 April 1965 Mrs Lemmer became the vice-principal. When Mr and Mrs Lemmer left, Mr GJ le Roux became vice-principal as from 2 October 1968. Mrs Lemmer appointed Simon Seabelo, who had passed the Standard 6 departmental examination first class in 1963, as a full-time weaver. He was later also appointed as a teacher. The pupils were taught various skills such as cane work, braiding and weaving with plastic, sisal, cotton and wool.

In August 1967 Bosele celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The school was started in 1957 with four class-rooms, one hostel and an office. In 1967 Bosele had nine class-rooms, three offices, two hostels, a store-room, a staff-room, a workshop, wash-room and work-rooms. The number of pupils increased to 115 and the annual expenditure was about R40 000. A class-room equipped with books, magnifying glasses and other necessities, was installed in

1967. Mr and Mrs Lemmer left in September 1968, when they were called to Letaba School for the Mentally Handicapped. They were succeeded by Mr EH Hodge. Mr JG le Roux remained behind as vice-principal (Louw 1972:47).

## **14. GOEDVERTROUWEN MISSION STATION 1956 to 1959**

### **14.1 DR JT JORDAAN (HANS)**

Rev JT Jordaan was ordained as minister of Marble Hall Dutch Reformed Church congregation on 6 April 1956. Mr Kaboet and Mrs Zella Rousseau were asked by the church council to care for the couple for the first week-end of their ministry at Marble Hall. Kaboet told the new minister of his childhood days at Burger mission station, where he grew up. His parents, Rev and Mrs AJ Rousseau, built and operated this first mission station between 1926 and 1940. At a later stage, Kaboet accompanied Rev Jordaan to the place where this old mission was established near Apel. Rev Jordaan observed that half of the farms constituting the congregation of Marble Hall at the Lower Olifants River Irrigation scheme had been bought up by the Trust in order to establish villages for the Pedi of Sekhukhuneland. Plans to resettle the Ba-Koni tribe of Chief Frank Maserumule were well under way. At Skerp Arabie, 35 kilometers from Marble Hall, a school for the sons of Pedi chiefs only, called Boaparankwe, had been established.

The congregation of Marble Hall was deeply in debt, and therefore a full-time missionary could not be considered. To apply to the synod of the DRC for the development of a new mission station was considered too time-consuming in view of the urgency of the matter. Rev Jorrie Jordaan took the following measures as minister of the DRC congregation of Marble Hall:

1. He wrote to Dr HF Verwoerd, the minister of Bantu-affairs, to provide a farm next to the Olifants River which could be developed as an irrigation project. He had his eye on a farm which was already under irrigation, and he wanted the mission to be self-supporting.
2. Secondly, he advised the church council to investigate the possibility of doing mission work among the Pedi that were settled on the Trust farms.

Rev Jordaan wrote the following about the formation of a new mission station on the farm Goedvertrouwen:

1. Rev CWH Boshoff was at this stage minister of the DRC congregation of Belfast. He advised Rev Jordaan that he was negotiating with the Department of Native

Affairs to obtain a farm in the Lowveld with a view to establishing a mission station. At the same time Rev 'Brood' Potgieter was available to start a mission station at Bosbokrand.

Rev Boshoff managed to start at Meetse-a-Bophelo and Rev Nico Smith started at Sibasa, which later became Tshilidzini. These strong movements of the DRC ministers that became available for mission work among the up-coming tribes of the Lowveld inspired Rev Jorrie Jordaan to make himself available on a full-time basis for mission work within the borders of the congregation of Marble Hall. The church council agreed to his decision and ruled that he would remain co-minister of Marble Hall while they would call another full-time minister.

2. Dr HF Verwoerd replied that the Department would start their own irrigation scheme, but that a section of the farm Goedvertrouwen could be reserved as a mission station. On this section was the old farm house which he could use as a residence, paying a rental fee of just R2,00 annually. Somebody in the Department of Native Affairs gave instructions that this house be renovated at the Department's cost. This move delayed occupation of the farm house and he had to live temporarily in a rented house at Marble Hall, which belonged to a teacher.
3. Rev Jordaan immediately started negotiations with the Department of Health at Pietersburg for the establishment of a TB hospital. Dr Brink was in favour of the idea and immediately started the lengthy application procedure. In the meantime the mission residence was ready and the Jordaan family was able to move in on 17 December 1956. Rev Jordaan borrowed the truck of his friend, Kaboet Rousseau, to move his furniture from Marble Hall to Goedvertrouwen. They were the only Europeans in that area at the time. From here he launched his mission project in 1957.
  - a) He started with services in a small church in the Marble Hall location. It was made of clay and only had half a roof.
  - b) He also showed slides and held services on farms. He arranged with kind-hearted farmers beforehand and held services for the farm workers with the help of a generator and an interpreter.

- c) He also held services in the villages surrounding the mission station.
- d) He was assisted by three evangelists. Two of the evangelists came from Stoffberg Gedenkskool in the Free State. One of them, Zello, lived at Goedvertrouwen with the missionary. One of the evangelists was placed on the farm Onverwacht of Andries Schoeman on the road to Nylstroom. The farm had a small church built by Andries' father, Karl Schoeman. ES Nonyane was the evangelist who was stationed there. In 1962 Nonyane was relocated to Goedvertrouwen and replaced by evangelist Molefe. He lived at Onverwacht till his death. The other Schoeman brother, Hendrik, also built a church on his farm, Moos Rivier. One of the evangelists was stationed there.
- e) Rev Jordaan received permission to start with the TB Hospital at Goedvertrouwen. Mr Bill Hockey was the mission-builder. Mr Hockey used local labour and purchased the building material in Johannesburg from Mr DA van der Walt at a special discount. He also bought a Thames lorry for the purpose and administrated the whole project. A crusher belonging to the Trust was used for concrete. All the sand and stone were collected in this area.
- f) The Transvaal DRC congregations were visited by the missionaries to obtain support and funds. The province was divided in a way which restricted missionaries to their own areas. A newsletter, printed on an old Roneo machine, was sent out to all friends and supporters.
- g) In 1958 the NGKA Marble Hall Mission congregation was established (Jordaan 2006:24 – Author's own translation).

## **14.2 THE HOSPITAL**

Mr Bill Hockey was called by the DRC Mission Office in Pretoria to another mission station. His place was taken by Mr Martiens Venter, and the hospital, as well as several houses for the personnel, were completed. The first medical superintendent was Dr Frikkie van Niekerk who was 23 years old. He was a handy man, who even helped with road-construction. He made certain apparatus himself if it was not available. When he and his wife left, Sr Tokkie van der Schyff had to do much of the work he had taught her. Serious

cases were sent to Philadelphia Mission Hospital. Routine operations were done with the help of Drs. P Conradie and Hentie Terblanche of Groblersdal.

Sister Tokkie van der Schyff wrote that she was also assisted by Sister Annabel Ferreira who left at the end of 1960, and Sister Marina van der Walt, who later married Dr Frikkie van Niekerk.

### **14.3 INAUGURATION OF THE MISSION HOSPITAL**

The hospital was opened in January 1959. Rev Coen van Rensburg, the moderator of the NGKA for Transvaal was the speaker. Chief Frank Maserumule, chief of the Matlala tribe named the hospital the Matlala Mission Hospital. The hospital was opened by the first secretary of the hospital, Mr Kaboet Rousseau. He was the son of the first missionary in Sekhukhuneland who started the Burger mission further down the Olifants River. He gave up farming to take up this position as mission hospital secretary. Previously he also served at the Katete mission station of the DRC in North Rhodesia (Zambia). Rev Jordaan left Goedvertrouwen in February 1959. He wrote that he saw God's hand in this move.

### **14.4 1959 TO 1961**

This was a period without a missionary. All the mission work and the hospital administration took place under the auspices of the secretary, Kaboet Rousseau. He was well equipped for this task. He could speak Sepedi and knew Sekhukhuneland well because he was raised there. As a small boy, he and his brother, Joubert and their sister Ella, came from Zambia with their parents. His father, Abraham Rousseau, accepted the call to become the first DRC missionary for Sekhukhuneland. The *T/VS* bought the farm Mooiplaats near Apel, only 60 kilometers from Matlala, where Burger mission was founded by him in 1926. Kaboet first went to school at Kgarathuthu, five kilometers from Eensgevonden which was his father's farm. They temporarily lived there till Mooiplaats was developed enough to provide the basic requirements for a family. He attended the second primary school at Strydkraal, close to Mooiplaats. There he completed Standard 6 and left to train as a teacher. Those years were important to him, because of the pioneering work done together with Rev Jorrie (JT) Jordaan at Matlala. His wife, Zella, assisted him in this task.

Kaboet felt the need to continue with the mission project. He consulted the missionary of the nearest DRC mission station at Philadelphia, near Groblersdal, Rev Jacobson. He arrived with a tent and some of his evangelists to conduct a campaign at chief Maserumule's kraal at Mohlalaotwane (Vooruitzicht) about 10 kilometers from Matlala. The services of an evangelist from Dorothea Mission was obtained for follow-up work (story told by Kaboet in person on tape – Jordaan:27 – Author's own translation).

#### **14.5 1961 TO 1975 – REV PIETER CONRADIE**

Rev Conradie arrived as the new missionary in March 1961. He immediately started to serve all outposts and to stabilize the work at the mission hospital. Together with the hospital staff, he worked diligently to obtain funds for the building of a chapel at the hospital. At the inauguration of the chapel which he had built himself, he married one of the sisters, Tokkie van der Schyff, on 13 January 1962.

Her husband did not want her to continue working. So she decided to become his permanent assistant. He was involved in the upliftment of the congregation of Lepelle, which had been vacant for more than two years. He served Holy Communion to members in schools, huts and even under trees. He was also the link between the PSK, the mission hospital board and the church council of the NGK Marble Hall. He served as an elder of the DRC of Marble Hall. At that time, the staff of the Arabie Agricultural College, six kilometers from the hospital, and the staff of the hospital formed a ward of the congregation of Marble Hall. The ward was called Goedvertrouwen.

A teacher, Freek Vercueil of the Boaparankwe School for the sons of the Pedi chiefs, also at Arabie, was the deacon of the Church. Rev Conradie had training sessions with the staff on a weekly basis for spiritual upliftment. Every day at 06:45 morning devotion was held where staff members took turns to conduct the devotional service. This was followed by a short service conducted by a staff member in each ward. The staff also had a weekly prayer meeting as well as a service every Sunday evening, alternating between Arabie and the mission station.



#### **14.6 OTHER BUILDING PROJECTS AT MATLALA**

The parsonage was enlarged with an extra bathroom, sitting room and main bedroom. He also built a study, with two rooms that were to be used as storage for mission equipment, and an open garage. A separate building with two garages, two single rooms at the back and an outside toilet were added. Between the garage and the study he built a rondavel.

In 1964 he started building an old-age home for mineworkers. In March 1965 the first elderly person moved in. The home consisted of a well-equipped kitchen, a hall and two wards for the sick as well as 50 rondavels, each to accommodate four people. The name of the place was called Boputswa (the gray-haired ones). The first Superintendent was Mr SH Kriel. When Mr Hen van Zyl left in 1978, the home was placed under the supervision of the hospital. Gradually the number of residents decreased and in 2007 the home was closed. The rondavels are now being used by the hospital staff. The main building is no longer in use.

In addition to all his building activities, he also handled the administrative work. Missionaries usually did not have the services of a secretary. He served all the outposts with whatever they needed. He also served as treasurer on the commission for the presbytery of Burger as well as on other commissions. The most important work he and Rev CH Delport did for the presbytery was to submit a report in which the borders of the congregations of the presbytery of Burger were reviewed and changed at a special meeting of the presbytery held at Groothoek on 18 June 1965 (Ring van Burger 1965). (This will be discussed later with the history of each congregation.)

The first church building which Rev Conradie erected was the church at Apel (Sesehu). His second big project was the building of the church at the Matlala mission station. He and his wife, Tokkie, and all the staff of the hospital worked diligently to obtain funds for this project. The congregation of Marble Hall contributed well, as did friends and family members of the staff. Mr Anton du Toit was the architect. On 1 April 1972 the building was inaugurated. Mrs Conradie was very ill at the time, and the staff of the hospital took care of their children while Rev Conradie was engaged in the building operations. Mrs Conradie wrote as follows:

*The Women's Service Group of the congregation of the DRC Marble Hall was the caterers at the inauguration of the church on 1 April 1972, the date of my birthday. I was in hospital for three weeks but was able to return to unlock the doors of the new church building. There were many members of the congregation of Marble Hall and Lyttelton East. Nearby mission stations and many of our own congregation members were present as well. The whole place was filled with guests. Fébé van Vuuren, wife of the hospital superintendent, made all the curtains. A few choirs performed and the nurses sang Händel's Halleluja. (Author's own translation.)*

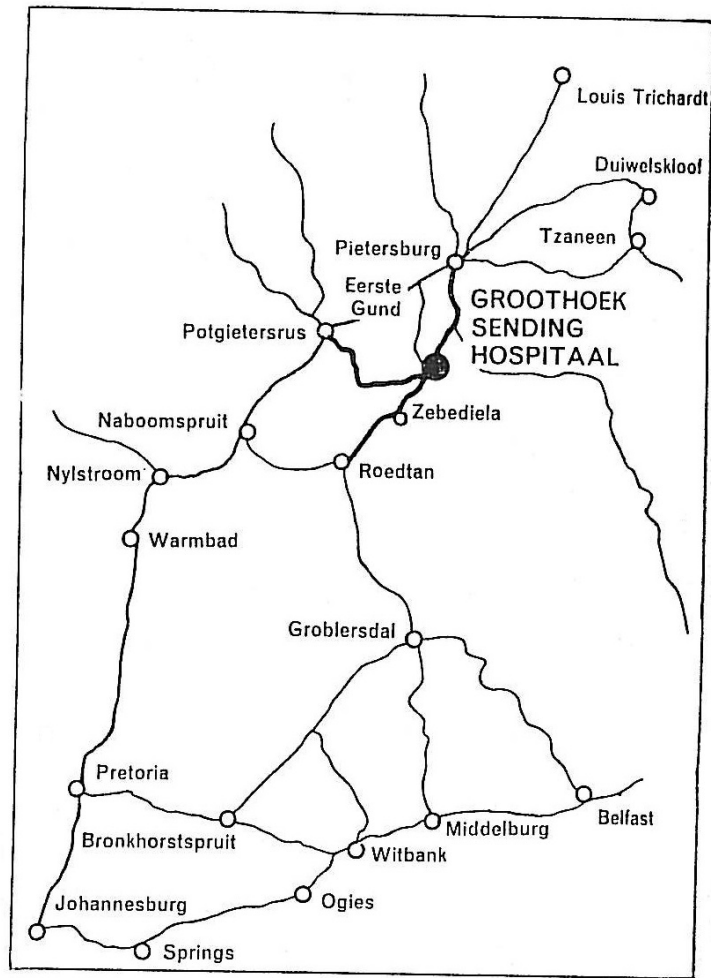
Rev Conradie and his wife had four children, Nico, Pieter, Johan and Annemarie all born at Matlala. He was busy building the church at Leeuwfontein in 1975 when he received a call from the DRC of Marble Hall, the congregation that was responsible for his salary while he was the missionary of the NGKA congregation of Lepelle, with Matlala as its main base. In the 14 years that he was at Lepelle he received more than 40 calls to different congregations. The congregation of Marble Hall allowed him to complete the Leeuwfontein building project while Lepelle was vacant. The salary of the missionary was used to fund the building of the new church at Leeuwfontein. Being minister of Marble Hall as well as building contractor, Mrs Conradie wrote, he worked for long hours without a day off and proper rest for two years till the end of 1967. He was a dedicated worker with a love for carpentry. During his time, he worked with Rev JS Phetla, who was stationed at Strydkraal and Rev VWM Magagane, who succeeded Rev Phetla. Rev Conradie also worked for many years with Rev ME Moloto, who was stationed at Moos Rivier. He worked with evangelist S Rhatabeng, ES Nonyane, A Makakaba and DM Phala at the hospital. Evangelist HH Mohatle was at Mataphisa and evangelist John Nkgadima at Mohlalaotwane (Tokkie Conradie: Correspondence).

#### **14.7 DRC MARBLE HALL AND THE DRC LYTTTELTON EAST**

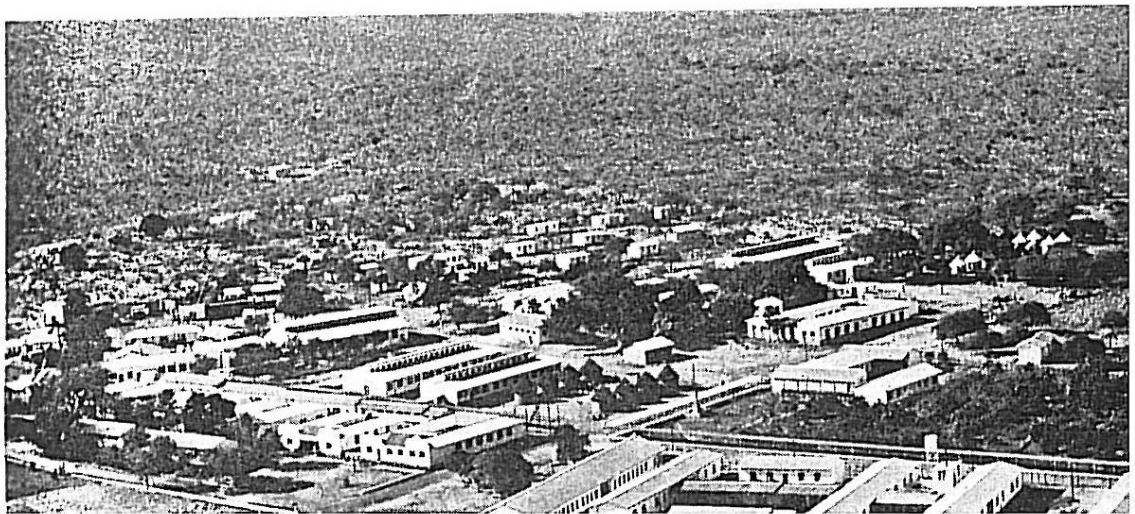
Soon after Rev Conradie arrived, the congregation of Lyttelton East started supporting the missionary effort at Matlala. The two congregations, Marble Hall and Lyttelton East, formed a joint commission for mission work. The women of both congregations were responsible for the salary of the social worker at Matlala Hospital. The joint mission commission usually met twice a year at the mission station. Some members of Lyttelton East regularly brought youth groups along and assisted with local projects such as visiting wards and supporting the aged. They also contributed financially.



DIE SENDINGBLAD, Oktober 1963



DIE SENDINGBLAD, Oktober 1968



## **15. THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE PRESBYTERY OF BURGER**

### **15.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GROOTHOEK MISSION: SEBETIELA MISSION CONGREGATION**

As early as 1862, mission work was contemplated in the vicinity of Zebediela (Ring van Burger 1966:13). It became a reality in 1945 when Rev VW Fick of the DRC congregation of Potgietersrus started mission work in Zebediela and surrounding areas. The Zebediela Citrus Estate was the centre of organized mission work because of the labour force from Nyasaland, the local Southern Matabele and the Bapedi. Another important factor was the very small beginning of a mission hospital at Groothoek, next to Zebediela in 1941.

The Zebediela DRC Mission congregation was established in 1947. In 1950 this mission congregation consisted of 1 200 people, of whom 130 were members. Rev GC Olivier arrived in 1949 (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1950). In 1951 the following evangelists were recorded in the *Jaarboek* (Year Book): A Ntaopane, J Molahloe, E Mojapelo and M Chibwana. In 1953 the names of the following evangelists were added: I Mpé and N Khomo. More names appeared in the 1955 edition: M Kadiaka, S Molefi and E Modike, serving a congregation of 1 700 people with 220 members. After the congregation's name was changed to Potgietersrus East, the last entry (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1958:571) mentioned 384 adherents and 130 members, with the following evangelists: P Mabuza, T Chunga, M Kadiaka and L Kekana. Rev Gerrit Cornelis Olivier retired in 1957 (Maree 1962:196). During his time at Zebediela, Rev Olivier worked hard for the construction of a small church building within the hospital grounds of Groothoek. Today it still stands as a monument to this man's life and work in the mission through many years in the Transvaal (*Die Sendingblad*, Oktober 1968:340 – author's own translation).

The inscription on the cornerstone of the church building reads:

*DRC MISSION CHURCH – THY KINGDOM COME (Matt 6:10).*

Laid by Rev GC Olivier – 05.05.1956.

## **15.2 THE DRC MISSION CHURCH OF POTGIETERSRUS EAST**

Rev Olivier was succeeded by Rev SZ Venter in 1958. He continued the work done by Rev Olivier as minister of Zebediela DRC congregation. These two ministers served both the DRC and the mission congregation. As from 1957 the mission congregation was called Potgietersrus East. It fell under the presbytery of Seleka (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1960:518). In 1960 the evangelists assisting the ministers were T Chunga, M Kadiaka, S Molefe and S Sepuru. From 1962 a new black minister, Rev RM Kgatla, also served the congregation. Rev Venter left in 1961 (Ring van Burger 1966:13). The evangelists working with Rev Kgatla were T Chunga, J Ntjie, L Ledwaba, J Moloantoa and P Mahlobogoana (*Jaarboek* 1964:551). In 1965 a second minister, Rev MP Mabotja, was appointed to assist Rev Kgatla. He left in 1966. Rev Kgatla remained, with evangelists JDS Moloantoa, P Nkomo and P Mahlobogoana and ZM Maredi (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1966:457).

In 1967 another three evangelists joined: SP Ramaipadi, S Mathabatha and A Metsileng (*NG Kerk Jaarboek* 1967).

### **15.2.1 The First Full-time Missionary**

A new era started for the Groothoek mission when the synodical mission committee and the Harmonie congregation of the DRC guaranteed the salary of a missionary for Groothoek. Rev JPM Stapelberg accepted the call to become the first missionary as from 1967. He was ordained as minister of the Potgietersrus East NGKA congregation (Crafford 1982:331). His parsonage was directly opposite the church in the grounds of the Groothoek hospital.

At the Circuit meeting of Burger, which started on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1968, his call was approved and he was declared a member of the NGKA Circuit of Burger. On 13 January 1974 he accepted a call to the NGKA congregation of Irene, Pretoria (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1975:EI 61).

### **15.2.2 The Congregation of Lerato NGKA**

Careful planning was done by Rev CH Delpont of Sekhukhuneland congregation (NGKA) and Rev P Conradie of the Marble Hall congregation (NGKA), presbytery of Burger, in



1965. Border alterations were suggested which included the outposts of the minister's post of Mphahlele, which still fell under the Burger congregation (Burger Planning Commission). Another important change came when the commission suggested that the names of Potgietersrus East and Marble Hall be changed to Lerato and Lepelle respectively. The new names were approved at a meeting of the presbytery on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1968, which was in session at Goedvertrouwen (Matlala Mission Hospital).

### **15.2.3 Groothoek Mission Hospital**

Ever since 1940, when he had discussions with Dr Piet Quinn, the manager of Zebediela Citrus Estate, Rev JM Stofberg, mission secretary of the DRC of the Transvaal, had plans for the erection of a mission hospital. In 1943 the Estate contributed to the establishment of a small hospital with 12 beds. Further developments took place on the initiative of the medical superintendent, Dr JN (Niel) du Plessis. In 1958 a TB hospital and in 1966 a hospital for the mentally ill were erected. More wards were added.

From small beginnings with 12 beds, one mission doctor and one nursing sister, the hospital grew to a 700-bed institution, with eight doctors. The hospital maintained a high academic standard for many years. Specialist services were rendered by visiting doctors from Pietersburg. Twenty-five years after the hospital was started, it had a staff of 56 European and 346 Black employees. There was also a nursing college. The hospital equipment for the use of the specialists and paramedical staff was of the highest standard.

Miss de Waal, a veteran who worked at Groothoek for 23 years, was responsible for the domestic department. She was also a spiritual worker who continued her spiritual ministry after her retirement. Most of the hospital staff contributed to mission work and towards the salary of an evangelist working in the congregation. Their contributions guaranteed the salary of a spiritual social worker. Some of the staff even helped with services at some outposts and in the wards, visiting patients and using MEMA-slides. Mr MC Botha unveiled a plaque on 14 September 1968 at the entrance to the new administrative building. When the hospital celebrated its 25 anniversary, the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, Dr O'Brien Geldenhuys, the moderator of the DRC North Synod was also present (*Die Sendingblad*, October 1968:340).

The Mission Commission placed an article in *Die Sendingblad*, dated October 1968, under the heading: **GROOTHOEK 25 YEARS OLD**. The following is quoted from the introduction:

*Groothoek Mission Hospital is situated on the road to the North, approximately 26 miles from Potgietersrus and approximately six miles from where the historical trek of Louis Trichardt and Van Rensburg passed through the Strydpoort Mountains. Also nearby is the well-known picturesque spot called Chuenespoort. (Author's own translation.)*

Words from the Bible *DAG NA DAG DRA HY ONS* (Day by day He carries us) appear on a plaque at the main entrance to the hospital. In 1968 it was testified that the truth of these words from Psalm 68:20 had been experienced during the previous 25 years. Today this is the biggest DRC mission hospital in the Northern Transvaal.

*Dr JN du Plessis said: "This institution is the result of the efforts of the staff. The personnel of the past as well as the present ones have done two principle jobs, caring in the first place for the body and also looking after the spiritual welfare of the patients. We believe that the Lord will also carry us day by day in the future." Matron de Villiers remarked: "Medical work is giving us unique opportunities in these days." (Author's own translation.)*

Reminding those present of their humble beginnings, Dr PJ Quin, Chairman of the Hospital board said:

*Groothoek, do you remember the days when you stood in the shadow of the old Marula tree? Today, after 25 years, this old tree is standing in the shadow of the Mission Hospital (Die Sendingblad 1968:338 – author's own translation).*

Eventually it became the biggest mission hospital in the country with 1 213 beds. Dr JS Roos succeeded Dr du Plessis and worked for many years. On 1 April 1975 this hospital became a state hospital. A year later, on 1 April 1976, it was transferred to the Lebowa Government along with Zebediela Citrus Estate. It is still one of the biggest hospitals in Sekhukhuneland. For many years the hospital was the centre of mission activities.

**15.2.4 POTGIETERSRUS EAST: Summary by The Planning Commission of the Presbytery of Burger – 1965**

1. The section around Mphahlele, West of the Olifants River, was to be added to Potgietersrus East congregation.
2. In co-operation with Potgietersrus East, the church council of Burger should consider transferring the minister of Mphahlele to Penge, which was vacant.
3. The placing of the evangelists around Mphahlele ward should be arranged between the two church councils of Burger and Potgietersrus East.
4. Seceding of the area around Zebediela was a possibility. After secession a certain portion would remain with the congregation of Potgietersrus in the presbytery of Seleka.

The section around Zebediela and Mphahlele formed a geographical unit. This was also the area which fell under the services of Groothoek Mission Hospital, i.e., between Chuenespoort Mountains, the Olifants River and eastward towards Mafafes location. The Groothoek mission station did not have a missionary.

5. The commission recommended that the borders of the congregation of Potgietersrus be altered so as to include Zebediela in the Potgietersrus East congregation. The consolidation of Potgietersrus East would fall under Burger presbytery and the remaining area of Potgietersrus under the presbytery of Seleka.
6. The commission recommended that one of the two ministers of Potgietersrus East be called to the congregation of Potgietersrus and the other moved to Mphahlele. Also, that a new post for a missionary be created for the congregation of Potgietersrus East situated at the Groothoek Mission Hospital.
7. The commission suggested that the Northern Transvaal Synodical Commission be responsible for the missionary's salary, and funds provided by the *TVSV* be used for the buildings at Mphahlele. The two evangelist posts which the *TVSV* subsidized within the Mphahlele ward would be taken over by the SSK (synodical mission committee). All subsidies, whether *TVSV*, SSK or congregational, would be under



the control of the PSK (local mission's commission) of the DRC congregation of Zebediela.

8. Following this 1965 report, the Planning Commission proposed that each church council within the presbytery of Burger should present a detailed report to the presbytery at their next meeting in 1966, containing the following data:
- a) The history of each congregation.
  - b) The population within the borders of the congregation.
  - c) The total number of full members, catechumen, Sunday school children, Sunday school teachers, women's movement (CVV) and youth movement (CJV) at each main station, outpost and preaching point.
  - d) The commission also required a report concerning the buildings at each post, their condition and who was responsible for maintenance; whether Bantu Administration had given occupation rights and to whom, the DRC or NGKA.
  - e) An assessment of funds required should stipulate whether for general needs or building projects.
  - f) A summary to be submitted of the evangelists' posts, where they were stationed and who was responsible for their salaries.
  - g) A report on the financial state of each congregation was required. These reports were to be presented to the presbytery at its next meeting and, thereafter, circulated to the PSK, the SSK and the *T/VS/V*.

Signed: CH Delpont and P Conradie 1965/6/18. (Author's own translation.)

#### **15.2.5 1965 – Suggested Borders for Potgietersrus East Congregation**

##### **Northern Border**

From the north-western corner of the farm Portugal 55, all along the northern and eastern borders of this farm to the north-western corner of the farm Highlands 60, and along the northern borders of Highlands 60, Meinhardskraal 61, Hartbeesfontein 62, Nooitgedacht

64, the northern and eastern borders of Vrederust 67, the eastern borders of Vrederust 75, and all along the northern borders of Farm 360, Kransrand 267, Tiegerkloof 268, Driekant 270, Farms 272, 274, the western and northern border of Driehoek 236, the northern border of Stylkloof 235, Farm 223, the eastern borders of Farm 223, Vaalpunt 228 and Farm 227. Farm 225, the northern borders of lots 120, 121, 123, 125, 126, Parker's Pass 292, Hooggenoeg 293, lot 280, Tubex 295, the western and northern borders of lot 301, the Northern borders of lots 302, 303, the western, northern and eastern borders of Bokhara 38, the northern and eastern borders of Fertilis 37 and Vallis 36.

### **Eastern Border**

From the eastern border of the farm Vallis 36 all along the eastern border (southwards) of Canyon 63, Gemini 62, Horn Gat 60, lots 291 and 292, up to the Olifants River.

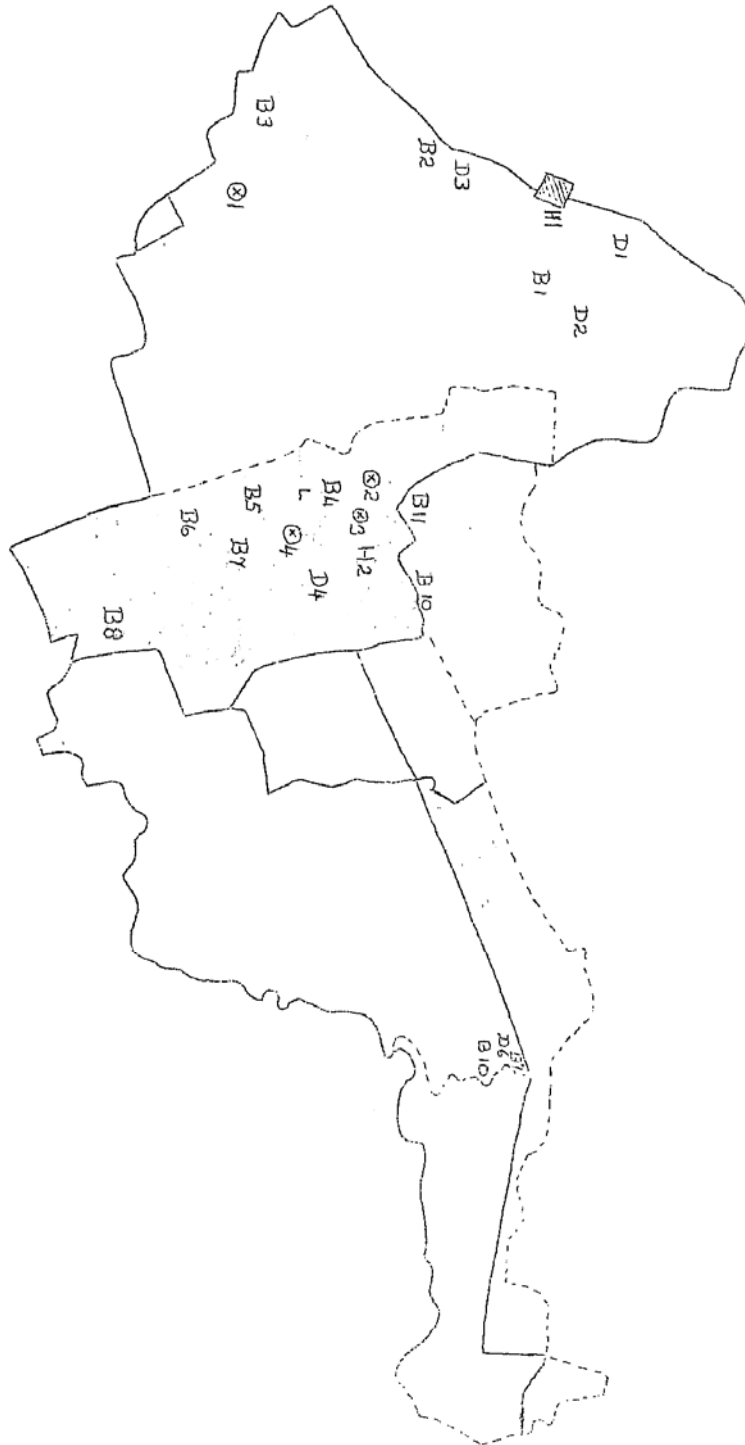
### **Southern Border**

From the point where the Pietersburg-Letaba district border meets the Olifants River at lot 291, westward along the Olifants River to the southern border at Adriaansdraai 759, further westward along the southern borders of Adriaansdraai and Byldrift 170, the northern border of Eerste Geluk 571, the southern borders of The Smugglers' Union 570, Charlotte's Lust 56 and Charlotte's Dale 568.

### **Western Border**

From the most southern corner of Charlotte's Dale 568 all along the western border of this farm and of Madras 566, Keulen 565, Gewenscht 165, Volop 164, Taaiboschlaagte 163, Ongegund 124, Zebediela Landgoed, Oostenryk 92, Schietfontein 58, Grootvallei 57 and Portugal 55.

**Chart 4: POTGIETERSRUS EAST**



## **POTGIETERSRUS EAST**

H1	-	Potgietersrus
H2	-	Groothoek
01	-	Blinkwater
02	-	Seksie 6
03	-	Pakhuis
04	-	Moletlane
B1	-	Planknek
B2	-	Drummondlea
B3	-	Zoetfontein
B4	-	Mogoto
B5	-	Manaileng
B6	-	Hlotlo
B7	-	Mamohashoa
B8	-	Molapo
B9	-	Platnek
B10	-	Doorn River
B11	-	Marsfontein
D1	-	Uitkyk (Amatava)
D2	-	Weenen
D3	-	Rooipoort
D4	-	Rakgwata
L	-	Hlakane

### **15.2.6 The Outposts of Mphahlele Minister's Ward of Burger Congregation (before some became Potgietersrus East NGKA in 1966). (Author's own translation.)**

#### **Mphahlele**

This ward was the centre of all the wards because the residing minister was responsible for the following outposts: Morotse, Malemati, Lenting, Mashite, Buildrift, Serobanang,

Lesetsi, Bewaarkloof, Voorspoed, Uitkyk, Mafafe, Mphayaneng, Malekopane, Marulaneng and Tjiane.

Mphahlele initially was a ward of the congregation of Kranspoort during the time of Rev Hofmeyr and later became part of Burger. The population of Mphahlele was 2 200.

### **Buildings**

There was a church building and a parsonage for the black minister, as well as a small one-roomed house for the missionary to be used during visits and festivals. The two deacons who were chosen in 1964 to support the minister as church council members, also served the congregation. The black minister was remunerated by the *TVSV*.

### **Youth Work**

The Sunday school consisted of 67 children and a youth group (MBB) was functioning. The first group of 10 young people was dedicated on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1965.

### **WARDS**

**Malemati:** This ward was created in 1932 during the time of Rev AJ Rousseau of Burger mission station. This is where he started with the help of Evangelist Thusane. Thusane was succeeded by Ev Kgopotjane. One of the first converted persons, Philemon Mphahlele, requested that a church building be erected. He donated the piece of land on which a small church was built. Rev JM Louw succeeded Rousseau and he erected a new church as well as a residence for the evangelist. The evangelist's salary was paid by the *TVSV*. The population was 300.

**Marulaneng:** Marulaneng was a new ward started by Rev ES Ramaipadi at the end of 1964. It consisted only of a school with a small Sunday school, and was served by the evangelist of Malemati.

**Serabaneng:** This was a new ward started by Rev ES Ramaipadi in January 1965. It had a Sunday school with 45 children, and was served by the deacon and the minister of Mphahlele. The village had a population of approximately 100.

**Buildrift:** This ward was started by Rev PN Kutumela in 1961. There were no buildings other than a small school. The population numbered about 50.

**Tjiane:** Work in this ward only started in March 1965. There was only a school and no youth work was being done.

### **Recommendation**

With a growing population at Mphahlele, the local minister recommended that another two or three evangelists be appointed to assist the minister and the two evangelists already working in that outstretched area.

Signed: Rev ES Ramaipadi. Date: 1965.

**Morotse:** Morotse was started in 1932. It had no church building, only a school and a residence for the evangelist. Approximately 386 people were living here. The evangelist was paid by the *TVSV*.

**Malekapane:** Malekapane consisted of a school with about 200 pupils. The Methodist Church worked here previously.

**Bewaarkloof:** This was a mining town and the missionary work was started by Rev JM Louw. A small thatched-roof church was erected by Rev Louw. Rev SG Njuweni worked here and from 1952 to 1965 resided in a mine house. Only one elder was assisting the minister. There were about 400 people and no youth work was being done.

**Voorspoed:** This was also a mining town served by two elders, one deacon and a Sunday school teacher.

**Uitkyk:** This mine ward was started by Rev ES Ramaipadi in 1963, with only one elder conducting a small Sunday school.

**Mafafe:** About 600 people resided here. The only elder started building a small church from clay and without a roof.

**Mphayaneng:** This ward was started by Rev JM (Koos) Louw (son of AA Louw). Rev PN Kutumela erected a small church, which was left incomplete. They had two elders, one deacon and one Sunday school teacher. There were about 200 people living in this village.

**Mashite:** This was a new ward started by Rev PN Kutumela in 1959. The village had a population of about 300. Only the Sunday school was functional.

**Lesetsi:** This was an old ward started by Rev Rousseau in 1932. The village, with a population of about 400, had only one school and a Sunday school. Two of our own members, Jan Mmowa and John Mankoe from this ward, studied at Stofberg Theological School to become ministers of the church.

### **15.2.7 Potgietersrus East**

#### **Statistics and Proposals**

The population living within the borders of the congregation was 40 000, of whom 27 000 were Bapedi, 10 000 Matabele, 2 000 Shangaan and 1 000 Zulu and Cinyanaja.

<b>Outposts</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Catechumen</b>	<b>Sunday school children</b>	<b>Sunday school teachers</b>	<b>Women's movement</b>	<b>Youth Movement</b>
Groothoek	73	5	28	3	1	14
Seksie 6	84	4	32	1	12	2
Pakhuis	32	6	41	1	8	5
Moletlane	77	1	49	1	34	1
Mogoto	35	6	62	1	8	2
Manaileng	22	2	-	-	13	-
Hloto	30	4	21	1	8	6
Mamogashoa	31	1	-	-	-	-
Molapo	25	1	24	1	-	-
Platnek	-	-	-	-	-	-
Doornrivier	4	-	42	1	1	-
Marsfontein	6	-	75	1	-	-



Matome	34	6	39	1	12	-
Mphahlele	42	11	65	2	16	10
Malemati	12	1	25	1	3	-
Morotse	12	-	-	-	6	-
Mashite	9	5	25	1	3	-
Letsetse	1	-	35	1	1	-
Bewaarkloof	3	-	15	1	-	-
Voorspoed	19	3	19	1	4	-
Lenting	10	-	45	1	2	-
Uitkyk	2	-	-	-	1	-
Serobaneng	1	2	48	1	-	-
Malekapane	1	-	-	-	-	-
Maralaleng	1	2	19	1	-	-
Tšiane	-	2	10	1	-	-
Mafafe	3	8	-	-	1	-
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>569</u></b>	<b><u>70</u></b>	<b><u>719</u></b>	<b><u>23</u></b>	<b><u>134</u></b>	<b><u>40</u></b>





<u>Ministers:</u>	Vacant	:	Groothoek
	Rev RM Kgatla	:	Mphahlele
<u>Evangelists:</u>	APM Matsileng	:	Malemati
	P Matheba	:	Morotse
	Z Maredi	:	Moletlane
	JDS Moloantoa	:	Pakhuis
	P Malobogoane	:	Seksie 6

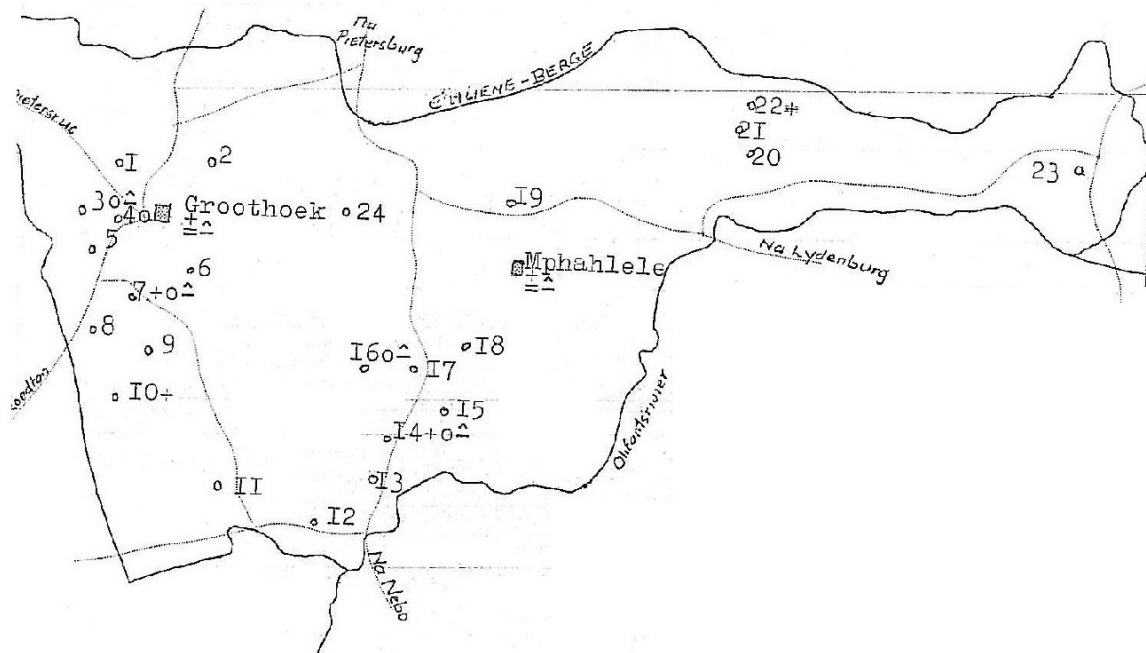
<u>Buildings</u>		
Groothoek	Church	Residence
Seksie 6	Church	Residence
Hlotlo	Church	
Moletlane	Church	Residence
Matome	Church	
Mphahlele	Church	Residence
Malemati	Church	Residence
Morotse	Church	Residence
Bewaarkloof	Church	

### Proposals

1. The missionary post at Groothoek to remain as is.
2. The Bantu minister's post at Mphahlele to remain as is.
3. A second Bantu minister's post to be created at Moletlane.
4. The evangelist posts to be decreased to four.

5. The missionary and evangelists to be mainly responsible for reaching out to non-believers and those not belonging to a church.

**Chart 5: CONGREGATION: POTGIETERSRUS EAST**



+ : Church  
 = : Minister's Post  
 o : Evangelist Post  
 ^ : Residence

- |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Marsfontein | 13. Tsiane      |
| 2. Doorn River | 14. Malemati    |
| 3. Section 6   | 15. Mararaleng  |
| 4. Pakhuis     | 16. Morotse     |
| 5. Mogoto      | 17. Lenting     |
| 6. Rakgoata    | 18. Malekapane  |
| 7. Moletlane   | 19. Seroboneng  |
| 8. Manaileng   | 20. Voorspoed   |
| 9. Mamohashoa  | 21. Uitkyk      |
| 10. Hlotlo     | 22. Bewaarkloof |
| 11. Molapo     | 23. Mafafe      |
| 12. Byldrift   | 24. Platnek     |

### **15.3 EVALUATION OF PART ONE**

This section described the history of the pioneer phase of the DRC mission work in Sekhukhuneland. Phillipus Mantsena was converted under the ministry of a Dutch minister at Tulbagh and when he returned to his hometown he started a congregation. His loyalty towards the DRC originated from his relationship with the DRC congregation of Tulbagh.

The role that the pioneer lay preacher, Phillipus Mantsena, played was very important. His approach led the DRC to become involved, which eventually led to the establishment of the first mission station of the DRC in Sekhukhuneland at Mooiplaats, which was called Burger. Mantsena's approach can be seen as a small step towards a partnership in mission work. He worked alone and he needed support.

It was indicated how he obtained support from the DRC congregation of Middelburg. His son, Michael, and another young man, Johannes, received basic education from Mrs AP Burger, the minister's wife. They stayed at home until their education was on a level where they could continue further training as evangelists (Nchabeleng brothers, Louw 1972:11).

The second phase of the pioneering stage described how the first missionaries were placed and mission stations were erected.

The author has indicated that the church was planted in Sekhukhuneland. The strategy which was followed is generally called a *comprehensive approach*, which means that schools, clinics, mission hospitals, farms and mission stations were established. They were headed by the missionaries.

Their co-workers were the evangelists, school teachers and staff of the hospitals. The available material and oral testimonies indicate that they had mutual respect for each other. I could find no indication of any conflict and animosity. The area the first missionary had served at Mooiplaats was surrounded by black settlements. There was no accusation from the white farmers around that the mission work could develop an attitude of equal rights. The only complaint Rev Rousseau had, was that he received little support from these farmers. All their farms were eventually bought by the Government and prepared for the settlement of the smaller tribes of Sekhukhuneland.

Can the relationship between the missionaries and their co-workers be described as a partnership? If partnership requires equality, it cannot be seen as partnership. It must be kept in mind however that during the era of the pioneering phase some white people disapproved of mission work among black people, because they feared that it would lead to equality between white and black. This opposition strongly manifested in the neighbouring area of Lydenburg. The fact that the missionaries continued the work and the education of children show that they accepted the possibility of equal relationships in the future. One could call this an era of preparation for partnership, or an era of laying the foundations of equal partnership.

## **PART TWO**

### **THE FIRST PHASE OF PARTNERSHIP AFTER THE NGKA WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1963**

#### **Introduction to Chapters 16 to 22**

Now that the congregations were established, the grouping of full-time workers and the determination of congregational borders had to be planned. This was the work of the Planning Commission of the presbytery of Burger. The purpose was to lead the young churches to become self-sufficient. It is clear that these guidelines which the commission had to follow were based on partnership and eventually full responsibility by the young church. Rev P Conradie, who was one of the members of the Planning Commission, was a strong supporter of the idea that the NGKA must become self-sufficient and independent. He was the missionary of Lepelle congregation from 1961 to 1975. When he became the new minister of the DRC of Marble Hall in 1975, he guided his church council to terminate the missionary post, which indeed happened in 1995.

#### **16. GUIDELINES BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE PRESBYTERY OF BURGER**

The Planning Commission requested each congregation to submit a report concerning their position, according to the guidelines given. At the following session of the presbytery at Klipspruit in October 1966, the commission's report was completed and in the introduction the commission stated the following:

In the report that was presented to the Presbytery on 18 June 1965, the Planning Commission declared that the planning of the congregations within the borders of the Sekhukhuneland geographical areas was a necessity for the following reasons:

- 1. The grouping of full-time workers and the determination of congregational borders.*
- 2. The placement of full-time workers and the organization of the different congregations. This planning would be divided into two phases, the first phase being to establish the borders as it was suggested in 1965, and the second phase was to consider the full-time workers, buildings and properties. Also to arrive at some deeper purpose-driven aims for each congregation. The NGKA was a young*

*denomination and the church needed to look at some guidelines in planning to become self-sufficient. The following guidelines were taken into consideration:*

- a) **Bantu ministers:** Each congregation should have a post for a minister from their own ranks, speaking their language and sharing their cultural background.
- b) **Missionaries and evangelists:** Missionaries and evangelists should be used primarily for reaching out to the non-believing nations and should concentrate on the enlargement of the congregation. The Black ministers should concentrate mainly on the upliftment of the congregations. As it was at the moment, the routine work of the congregation was a stumbling block in reaching out to other people.
- c) **Members and specifically the deacons** should be activated to manage the congregations and take full responsibility in congregational management. The commission felt that if members, church council members, leaders of the women and youth movements were fully equipped, the challenge of working amongst the non-believers would be more effective. This was also the way forward for a living church to become self-extensive and self-governing and eventually also self-supporting. To be able to reach this goal, a period of five years should be given in order to organize each congregation in reaching this goal.
- d) **General Remarks and Recommendations**
  1. The training of Black ministers was very expensive i.e., R400,00 per month for a married couple and R288,00 for a single student. A special fund had been established, called a Presbyterial fund for Theological Students.

A savings account had been opened and each congregation should make a yearly contribution of R20,00 (NGKA 1966).

It was suggested that a trustee should administer the funds and that rules should be drawn up for this purpose. Donations for the training of students were welcome.

2. The accommodation and transport situation of Black ministers were sometimes very bad and this was a great hindrance in the execution of ministerial duties. A suggested solution to this problem was that proper houses be erected for the ministers and that

their salaries be paid according to synodical scale. The transport allowance was increased from R40,00 to R45,00 per month.

3. The work of evangelists was appreciated. The commission noted that the work of evangelists may inspire many to become ministers. They therefore requested the evangelists in the presbytery of Burger to consider seriously enrolling for the ministers' course, and that the available funds be awarded to them.
4. The commission's recommendation was that evangelist and missionary posts should not be increased, and that vacant evangelist posts be left unfilled.
5. The church also had to strive for financial responsibility in each area. To start with, it was suggested that each congregation should endeavour to take responsibility for the yearly increase of salaries for their workers and that the salaries of the lay-evangelists be paid by the congregations themselves. The congregations should also contribute and plan for the erection of new buildings.
6. The work and responsibility of members should receive special attention, in order to improve growth and co-operation. To this end, it was suggested that conferences for church council members, Sunday school and the youth be organized, updating them on the work of the congregations.
7. The Commission for the Presbytery should take the lead in the above recommendations.

e) **Remarks**

1. Salaries for ministers to start at R864,00 per year.
2. Salaries for evangelists to start at R432,00 per year.
3. Transport per year for ministers to remain at R540,00 per year.
4. Salaries for lay-ministers to start at R336,00 per year.
5. In all cases any increases should be the responsibility of the congregation.

(Author's own translation.)

## 17. **BURGER CONGREGATION:**

The Planning Commission of 1965 reported as follows:

### 17.1 **REMARKS**

- a) The congregation overarches the congregation of Sekhukhuneland over an extended area between the Steelpoort River in the east, the Olifants River in the north and the Leolo Mountains in the south-west.
- b) The borders of the congregation are not clearly indicated.
- c) Practically, the congregation is divided in two because of the bottleneck in the area of Maliptsdrif at the Olifants River.

### 17.2 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- a) That the section around the main post, Mphahlele, west of the Olifants River be added to the congregation of Potgietersrus East.
- b) That the farms Blauwbloemetjeskloof 428 and Dal Josephat 461 be added to the congregation of Marble Hall.
- c) The borders of the congregation is to be as follows:

#### **Northern border**

From the point where the south-western border of the farm Diamant 422 meets the Olifants River, all along the Olifants River eastward as far as the spot where the Steelpoort flows into the Olifants River.

#### **Eastern border**

From the point where the Olifants and the Steelpoort Rivers come together, all along the Steelpoort River southerly up to the southern border of the farm Steelpoortdrift 365.



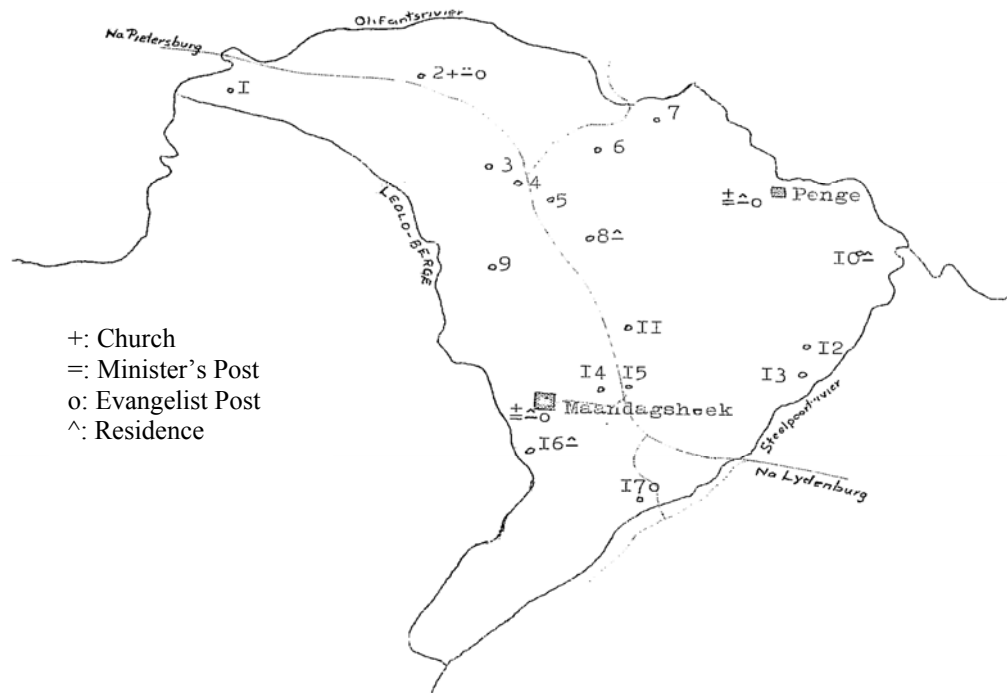
### **South-western border**

From the point where the southern border of the farm Steelpoortdrift 365 meets the Steelpoort River on its southern and western borders and further all along the Leolo Mountains in a northerly direction, i.e., along the western borders of the following farms: Landsend 364, Corndale 330, Het Fort 329, Nooitverwacht 324, Hoepakranz 291, Garatau 282, De Kom 252, Dsjate 249, Hackney 116, Twickenham 114, and the south-western border of Paschaskraal 466, Klipfontein 465, Brakfontein 464, Umkoeanestad 419, Middelpunt 420 and Diamant 422 up to the Olifants River.

- d) In co-operation with the church council of Potgietersrus East, the church council of Burger must fill the vacant post at Penge.
- e) The placing and moving of evangelists of the Mphahlale ward to be done by the two Church councils of Potgietersrus East and Burger jointly. (Author's own translation.)

## Chart 6: CONGREGATION: BURGER 1966

After the consolidation the congregation's borders are as follows:



- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Mphayaneng        | 9. Mashabela      |
| 2. Moeijelyk (Kwano) | 10. Kromellenboog |
| 3. Waterkop          | 11. Groothoek     |
| 4. Diphala           | 12. Naboomkoppies |
| 5. Masethe           | 13. Praktiseer    |
| 6. Mašhira           | 14. Mooihoek      |
| 7. Shai              | 15. Driekop       |
| 8. Mašiši            | 16. Hoepakrantz   |
|                      | 17. Steelpoort    |

### 17.3 STATISTICS

A population of 70 000 within the borders, consisting mainly of Bapedi and a small group of Swazi people at Hoepakrantz and Steelpoort. There were also mine workers from Malawi at Penge and other mines. Since mission work started here, these mine workers have played an important role in establishing the congregation of Burger and of mission work in general in Sekhukhuneland.



**Congregational statistics**

<b>Outposts</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Catechumen</b>	<b>Sunday school children</b>	<b>Sunday school teachers</b>	<b>Women's movement</b>	<b>Youth members</b>
Maandagshoek	100	31	106	6	10	25
Diphala	5	-	44	2	-	-
Hoepakranz	65	4	136	2	17	3
Kromellenboog	16	2	30	1	-	-
Kwano (Moeijelyk)	4	1	195	3	2	-
Mašiši	20	3	30	1	4	8
Mashabela	8	-	-	-	-	-
Masethe	6	4	40	1	-	-
Mooihoek	16	18	-	-	5	-
Mašhira	13	2	-	-	-	2
Naboomkoppies	1	-	-	-	-	-
Penge	20	2	-	-	-	-
Praktiseer	1	3	30	1	-	-
Shai	2	-	20	1	-	-
Steelpoort	30	2	-	-	-	-
Waterkop	2	-	50	2	-	-
Mutlani	2	2	20	1	-	-



Weltevrede	1	-	-	-	-	-
Mphayaneng	10	2	60	2	3	-
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>322</u></b>	<b><u>76</u></b>	<b><u>761</u></b>	<b><u>23</u></b>	<b><u>41</u></b>	<b><u>38</u></b>

**Labourers**

Ministers: Rev IM van der Merwe : Maandagshoek

Rev ES Ramaipadi : Penge

Evangelists: P Moatshe : Maandagshoek

P Phahlamohlaka : Penge

S Ramaipadi : Steelpoort

H Maphanga : Kwano (Moeijelyk)

Lay workers: J Mashabela : Hospital

<b><u>Buildings</u></b>			
Maandagshoek	Church	Evangelist Residence	School
Hoepakranz		Evangelist Residence	School
Krommellenboog		Evangelist Residence	School
Kwano	Church	Evangelist Residence	
Mašiši		Evangelist Residence	School
Masetho			School
Penge	Church	Ministers Residence	
Shai			School

#### **17.4 PROPOSED PLAN FOR THE CONGREGATION**

##### **Staff**

- 1) The Missionary's post is to be kept.
- 2) The Bantu minister's post at Penge is to be maintained.
- 3) A second Bantu minister's post is to be created.
- 4) This new position is to include the following posts:

Maandagshoek, Mooihoek, Groothoek, Hoepakranz and Steelpoort. The minister must reside at Maandagshoek. The other minister is to be responsible for the rest of the congregation (main station at Penge).

- 5) The missionary and the evangelists is to concentrate mainly on non-believers and those who do not have a church affiliation as yet.

##### **Remarks**

Ministers' salaries are to start at R864,00 per year and evangelists' salaries at R432,00 per year. The lay worker's salary is to start at R336,00. The minister's transport and travelling expenses are to remain at R540,00 per year. All salary increases are to be the responsibility of the local congregation. The evangelists posts are to be decreased to two only.

##### **Buildings**

Funds were available for the building of three new churches. Another residence at Steelpoort was now being erected. No other funds were required.

## **18. CONGREGATION OF SEKHUKHUNELAND**

The Planning Commission of 1965 reported as follows:

The borders of this congregation are not clearly indicated. Secondly the Sekhukhuneland congregation and the congregation of Marble Hall need restructuring so as to ensure effective ministry.

### **18.1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- a) A part of the northern section of Sekhukhuneland, as indicated on the drawing, be added to Marble Hall.
- b) The farm Leeuwlaagte 18 be added to Marble Hall and that Farms 20 and Potgietershoop 758 be transferred from Marble Hall and added to Sekhukhuneland.
- c) That the farms Varkenskraal 119, Varschwater 23, Welverdiend 24 and a section of Diepkloof be added to Philadelphia.
- d) The borders of the congregation are demarcated as follows:

#### **North-Eastern border**

From the northern beacon of the Farm 507, southward all along the top of the Leolo Mountain, along the north-eastern border of the farm Balmoral 508, Quartzhill 542, Fernkloof 539, Zwemkloof 283, Groot Vygenboom 284, Genokakop 285, Hoogstepunt 290, Houtbosch 323, Soupiana 325 and from there along the south-eastern border of Schoonoord 326, GG and Ironstone 847 and the north-eastern border of Aapjesboom 884, up to the Steelpoort River.

#### **South-Eastern border**

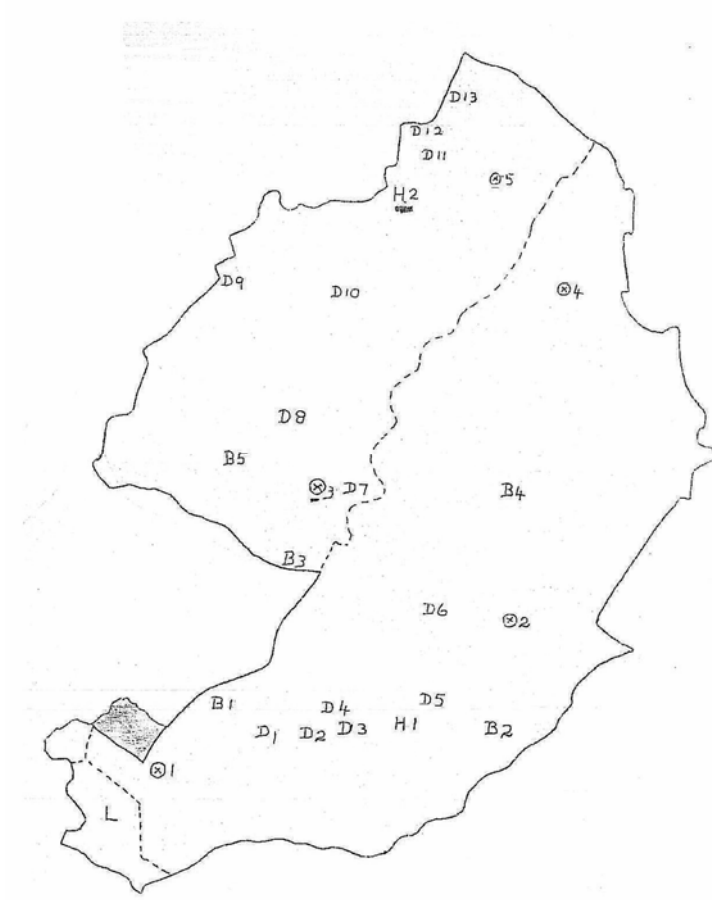
From the point where the northern border of the farm Aapjesboom 884 meets the Steelpoort River, all along to where the Diepkloof stream flows into the Steelpoort River and along the Diepkloof stream westward until it meets the western border of the farm Probeeren 164.

### **Western border**

From the point where the Diepkloof stream meets the western border of the farm Probeeren 164, northwards with the western border of the farm Mooiplaas 121, the southern border of Tusschenin 21, the western and northern borders of Potgietershoop 758, the northern border of Farm 20 and the western border of Buffelskloof 861, Vaalbank 862, Boekenhoutlaagte 865, Doornspruit 853, Goedgedach 836, Weltevreden 822, Mooifontein 826, Loopspruit 825, Kanaän 783, Doornveld 781, Zoetvelden 780, Paradys 773, Malekskraal 509 and De Kamp 507.

- e) The minister's post at Strydkraal to be discontinued.
- f) The placing of the evangelists to be sorted out by the Church councils of the two congregations. (Author's own translation.)

**Chart 7: SEKHUKHUNELAND**



**SEKHUKHUNELAND**

- H1 : Klipspruit
- H2 : Strydkraal
- 01 : Tafelkop
- 02 : Leeuwkraal
- 03 : Eensgevonden
- 04 : Phaahla
- 05 : Mothopong
- B1 : Buffelskloof
- B2 : Spitskop
- B3 : Klipspruit
- B4 : Jane Furse



B5	:	Hopefield
D1	:	Lakau
D2	:	Frischgewaagd
D3	:	Gemsbokspruit
D4	:	Enkeldoorn
D5	:	Vierfontein
D6	:	Nebo
D7	:	Zoetvelden
D8	:	Korenkopje
D9	:	Nooitgezien
D10	:	Magalies-lokasie
D11	:	Apel
D12	:	Apel
D13	:	Indië
L	:	Varschwater

## **18.2 SEKHUKHUNELAND – 1966**

**Medical work:** The building for the clinic was erected by funds which were collected by the *Kindersendingkrans* (a movement of children of the DRC which specifically aims to promote mission work). This clinic opened in 1964 and the first sister-in-charge was Sister MJC Boucher. At present a sister of the Matlala Mission Hospital is in charge and resides there.

**Education:** Onane School at Klipspruit serves the children in the vicinity. It was erected by the *TVSV*. The Bosele School for the Blind has 95 pupils. It was opened in 1957 with Miss O Morrison as principal and three blind children. The current principal is Mr HR Lemmer.

## **Statistics**

**Population:** The population within the borders of this congregation is approximately 80 000. These are mainly Bapedi, with 16 000 Ndebele.

## **Labourers:**

Minister	:	Rev PJ Joubert	:	Klipspruit
Evangelists	:	NS Hlabeng	:	Klipspruit
WM Mathabathe	:	Leeuwkraal		
J Lebodi	:	Phaahla		
L Mogaladi	:	Tafelkop		
Nkwane	:	Gemsbokspruit		

### 18.3 CONGREGATIONAL STATISTICS

Outposts	Members	Catechumen	Sunday school children	Sunday school teachers	Women's movement	Youth members
Klipspruit	44	6	107	8	7	-
Luku/Enkeldoorn	15	2	-	-	2	-
Spitskop	9	1	-	-	-	-
Frischgewaagd	19	2	24	1	-	-
Gemsbokspruit	35	5	67	2	7	-
Vierfontein	13	-	-	-	-	-
Tafelkop	10	2	36	2	-	-
Buffelskloof	4	1	-	-	-	-
Leeuwkraal/Nebo	58	5	194	4	4	-
Jane Furse	6	1	-	-	1	-
Phaahla	13	1	48	2	-	-
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>226</u></b>	<b><u>26</u></b>	<b><u>476</u></b>	<b><u>19</u></b>	<b><u>21</u></b>	-

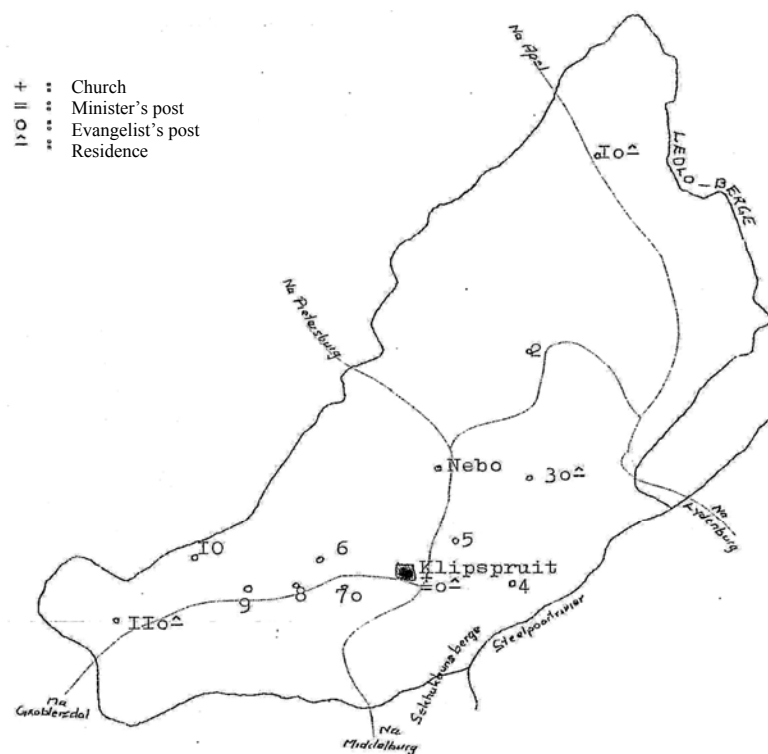
<b><u>Buildings</u></b>			
Klipspruit	Church	2 Evangelist Residences	School
Tafelkop		Evangelist Residence	
Leeuwkraal		Evangelist Residence	
Phaahla		Evangelist Residence	

### 18.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission suggested:

- a) That the missionary's post remains;
- b) That two posts for Bantu ministers be created, for Phaahla and Tafelkop and
- c) that the evangelist posts be decreased to three.
- d) That the missionaries' and evangelists' main responsibility be to work among the non-believers and those people not belonging to a church. (Author's own translation.)

### Chart 8: SEKHUKHUNELAND CONGREGATION



- |    |            |     |               |
|----|------------|-----|---------------|
| 1. | Phaahla    | 7.  | Gemsbokspruit |
| 2. | Jane Furse | 8.  | Frischgewaagd |
| 3. | Leeuwkraal | 9.  | Lukau         |
| 4. | Spitskop   | 10: | Buffelskloof  |
| 6. | Enkeldoorn | 11. | Tafelkop      |

## **19. MARBLE HALL CONGREGATION**

### **19.1 THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF 1965 MADE THE FOLLOWING REMARKS:**

- a) The congregation consists of a section of the Trust and also a section of the Loskop irrigation scheme around Schoeman Farms at Moos River and Marble Hall.
- b) The medical work of Matlala Mission Hospital at Goedvertrouwen mainly focuses on the villages of the Trust outside the borders of the Marble Hall congregation. This means that the clinics of the mission hospital cannot exploit mission follow-up work around those villages.
- c) A certain section also includes the farms of Roedtan.
- d) The Northern border against Sekhukhuneland congregation seems unpractical and ineffective. Some outposts are only a few miles from the Goedvertrouwen mission station and much further from Klipspruit.
- e) A big village and border industrial development will be established on the northern border in the near future.

### **19.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- a) The section near Roedtan to be included in the Roedtan congregation.
- b) The section as indicated on the map to be added to Marble Hall.
- c) The farms Potgietersshoop 758 and Farm 20 to be added to Sekhukhuneland and the farm Leeuwlaagte 18 to be transferred from Sekhukhuneland to Marble Hall.
- d) A section of the congregation north-west of the Potgietersrus-Groblersdal district border to be added to the congregation of Elands River.

### **19.3 THE NEW BORDERS**

#### **Northern border**

From the point where the Olifants River meets the northern border of the farm Blauwbloemetjeskloof 428, along the Northern border of this farm eastward, with the northern border of Schoonoord 462, Himelaya 463 and Avoca 472.

#### **Eastern border**

From the north-eastern corner of Avoca 472 all along eastward of Avoca 472, Fesant Laagte 506, Driekop 540, Moskow 772, Scheepersrust 771, Drakenstein 784, Probeerer 785, Meerlust 804, Zoetvelden 821, Goedehoop 824, Klipspruit, Welgelegen 834, Welkom 854, Goedertrouwen 860, Paardenzoek 859, to the southern corner of this farm.

#### **Southern border**

From the southern beacon of Paardenzoek 859, with the south-western border of Paardenzoek and western border of Paardenzoek and Welgelegen 756, the eastern border of Brakfontein 761, Leeuwfontein 750, and the eastern border of Leeuwlaagte 18, up to the Olifants River, and with the Olifants River northwards as far as the southern border of the farm Ramshoorn 15, the southern border of Ramshoorn 15, the eastern border of Wolvenkraal 13, the eastern and southern borders of Loskop Noord 12 up to the main canal and all along the main canal up to the Elands River at the farm Toitskraal 6.

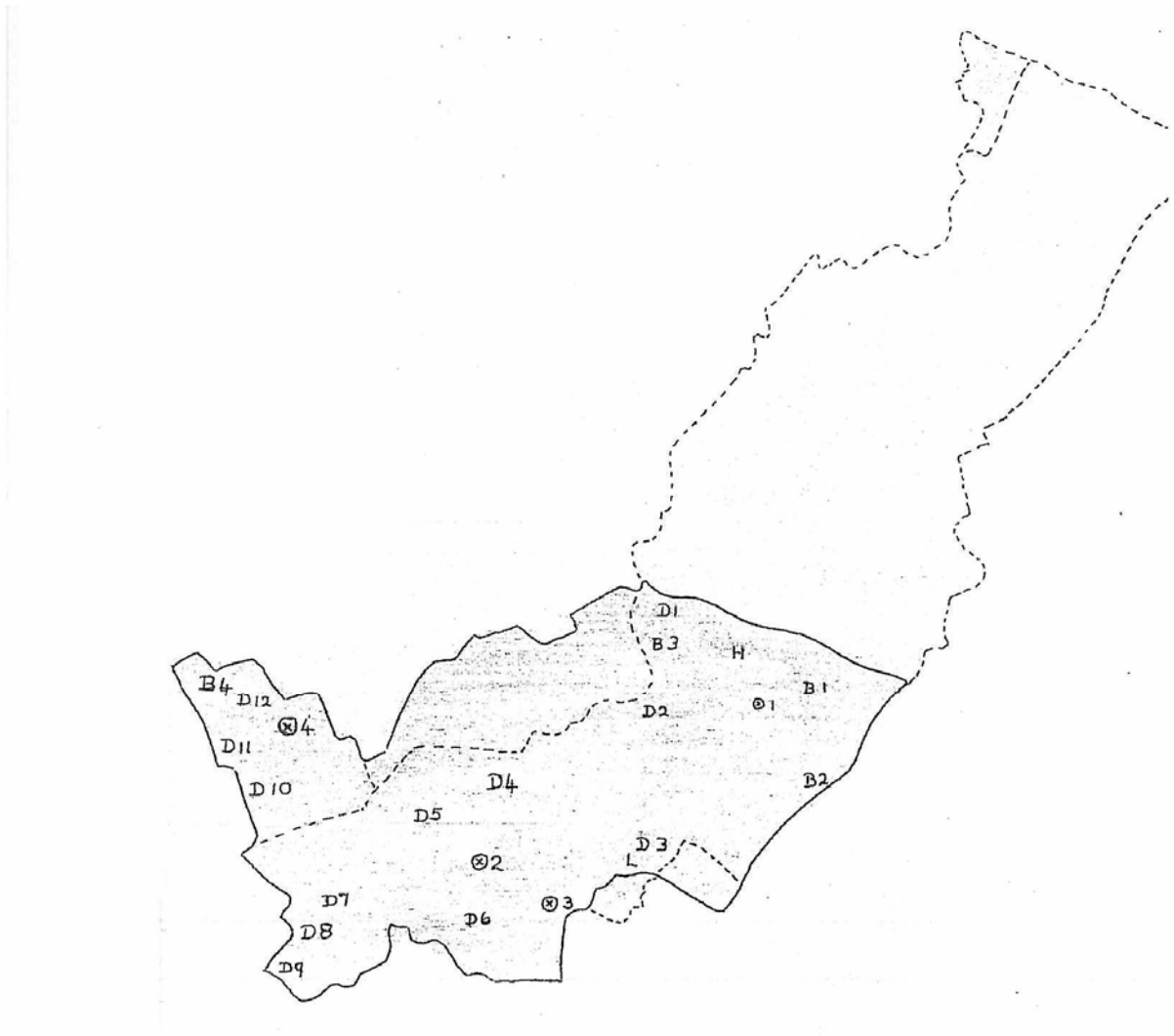
#### **Western border**

From the point where the main canal meets the Elands River, northwards along the Elands River to the southern border of Slagboom 7 and the south-western border of Tambotielaaagte 733 as far as the district borders of Potgietersrus and Groblersdal, and all along these district borders northwards until it meets the Olifants River, and further north along the Olifants River to the northern border of the farm Blauwblommetjeskloof 428.

- e) The minister's post at Strydkraal to be taken over by Marble Hall from Sekhukhuneland.
- f) This post to be subsidised by the *TVSV*.

- g) The salary of the missionary at Matlala Mission Hospital to be subsidised by Marble Hall DRC.
- h) The placing of evangelists to be organized by the two congregations, Marble Hall and Sekhukhuneland.

**Chart 9: MARBLE HALL**



**MARBLE HALL**

H	:	Goedvertrouwen
1	:	Vooruitsicht
2	:	Marble Hall-location
3	:	Moos River
4	:	Onverwacht
B1	:	Monte Video
B2	:	Goedertrou
B3	:	Arabie
B4	:	Doornfontein
D1	:	Hindustan



D2	:	Klipspruit
D3	:	Brakfontein
D4	:	Uyskraal
D5	:	Elandsdrif
D6	:	Wolwekraal
D7	:	Slagboom
D8	:	Vlaklaagte
D9	:	Toitskraal
D10	:	Spoedwell
D11	:	Bultfontein
D12	:	Doorn Pan
L	:	Leeuwfontein

#### **19.4 MARBLE HALL – 1966: (LEPELLE CONGREGATION)**

##### **19.4.1 Statistics**

##### **Congregational statistics**

<b>Outposts</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Catechumen</b>	<b>Sunday school children</b>	<b>Sunday school teachers</b>	<b>Women's movement</b>	<b>Youth members</b>
Goedvertrouwen	41	3	20	1	3	16
Mohlalaotwane	31	2	45	1	4	3
Mabitsi	8	-	38	1	-	-
Monte Video	8	-	30	1	2	-
Arabie	10	4	-	-	-	-
Brakfontein	-	-	120	1	-	-



Moos River	40	-	126	1	9	6
Marble Hall	38	-	47	1	7	4
Onverwacht	18	-	42	1	1	1
Gareagopola	26	1	10	1	6	-
Eensgevonden	34	4	10	1	9	-
Hopefield	18	4	-	-	-	-
Nooitgesien	1	-	-	-	-	-
Strydkraal	20	5	19	2	2	5
Mothopong	40	1	23	1	9	-
Indië	5	4	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>338</u></b>	<b><u>28</u></b>	<b><u>530</u></b>	<b><u>13</u></b>	<b><u>52</u></b>	<b><u>35</u></b>

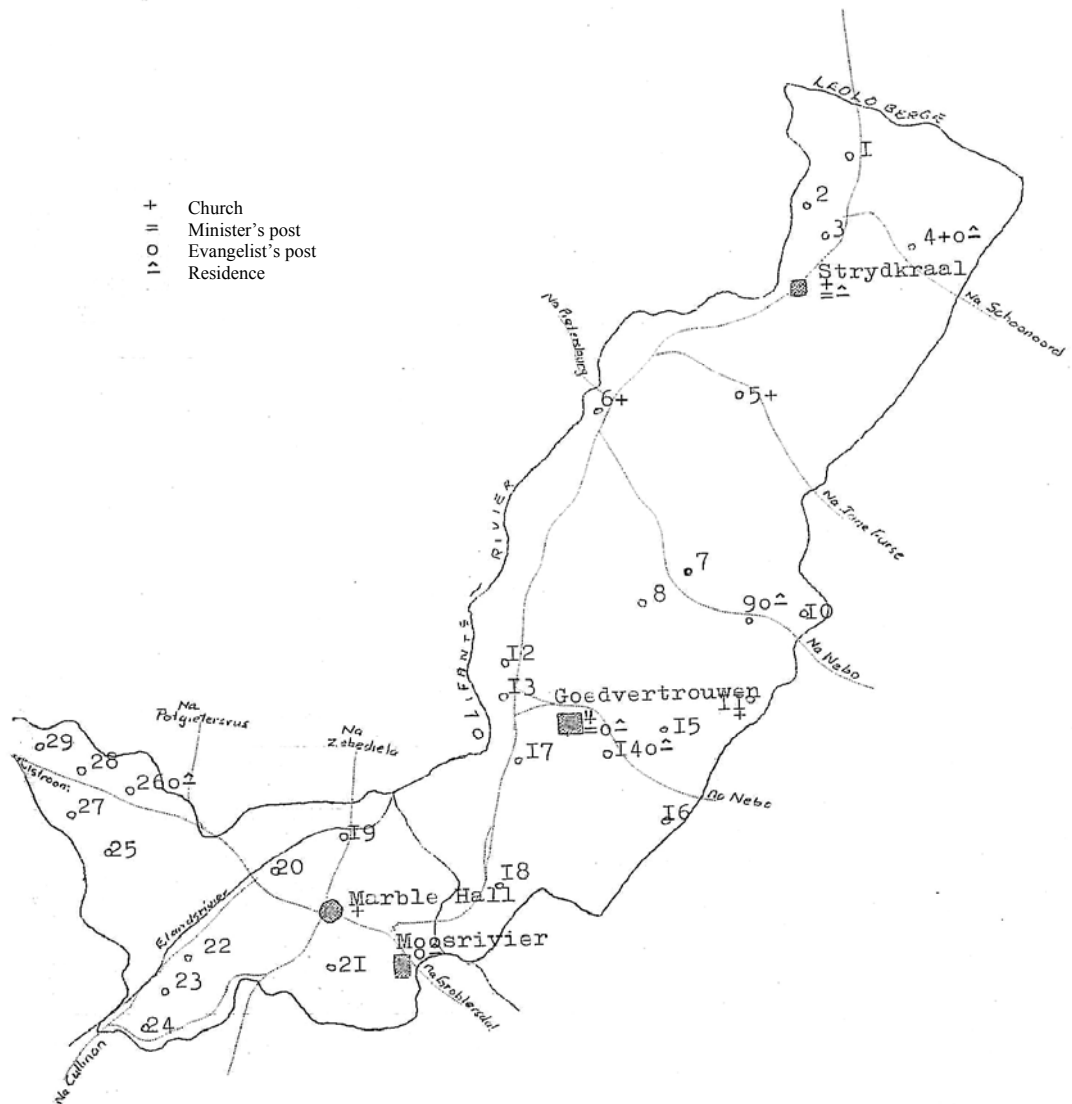
### **Staff**

<u>Ministers:</u>	Rev P Conradie	:	Goedvertrouwen	(Mission hospital)
	Vacant	:	Strydkraal	
	Vacant	:	Moos River	
<u>Evangelists:</u>	S Rathabeng	:	Goedvertrou	
	ES Nonyane	:	Onverwacht	
	S Molefe	:	Moos River	
	J Matemane	:	Mothopong	
	J Madiba	:	Eensgevonden	
<u>Lay workers:</u>	A Nkgadima	:	Mohlalaotwane	



<b><u>Buildings</u></b>		
Goedvertrouwen	Church	Residence
Mohlalaotwane		Residence
Moos River		Residence
Marble Hall	Church	
Onverwacht		Residence
Gareagopola	Church	
Eensgevonden		Residence
Nooitgezien	Church	
Magalies	Church	
Strydkraal	Church	Residence
Mothopong	Church	Residence

**Chart 10: MARBLE HALL CONGREGATION**



- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. Indië          | 16. Mabitsi      |
| 2. Apel           | 17. Klipspruit   |
| 3. Mooiplaas      | 18. Brakfontein  |
| 4. Mothopong      | 19. Uyskraal     |
| 6. Magalies       | 20. Elandsdrift  |
| 7. Nooitgesien    | 21. Wolwekraal   |
| 8. Korenkopje     | 22. Slagboom     |
| 9. Hopefield      | 23. Vlaklaagte   |
| 9. Eensgevonden   | 24. Toitskraal   |
| 10. Zoetvelde     | 25. Spoedwel     |
| 11. Gareogopola   | 26. Onverwacht   |
| 12. Hindustan     | 27. Bultfontein  |
| 13. Arabie        | 28. Doornpan     |
| 14. Mohlalaotwane | 29. Doornfontein |
| 15. Monte Video   |                  |

### **19.4.2 Recommendations**

1. The missionary's post at Goedvertrouwen to remain.
2. The minister's post at Strydkraal and Moos River to remain.
3. That a third minister's post be created for Mohlalaotwane.
4. That the evangelist's posts be decreased to four only.
5. The lay preacher to remain.
6. That the missionary and the evangelists mainly concentrate on reaching out to unbelievers and those outside the church.

### **Buildings**

It is recommended that the planned church building at Goedvertrouwen be erected. Funds for the church building of Mohlalaotwane as well as for a house and a church building at Leeuwfontein to be raised and that the buildings be erected soon. (Author's own translation.)

## **20. PHILADELPHIA MISSION**

The mission work at Philadelphia is important, because since the first beginnings by Rev GF Endemann of the congregation of Erasmus (Bronkhorstspuit) it played a major role in the history of the congregations of Sekhukhuneland and Marble Hall (Lepelle). Philadelphia is still one of the congregations of the presbytery of Burger. To understand the history of Motetema congregation, which is situated near Groblersdal, it is important to know that it was seceded from the Philadelphia congregation. Marble Hall congregation (now Lepelle) also started with a small group consisting of 60 members mainly working on the Moos Rivier, Marble Hall and Toitskraal irrigation farms (NGKA Verslag van die Beplanningskommissie, 1966:16).

### **20.1 EARLY HISTORY**

Rev GC Olivier and Rev GF Endemann first visited this area in 1927. They contacted Mr Gert Erasmus, one of the elders of the congregation of Erasmus. It was through him that the DRC became involved in mission work here, in which he was assisted by Rev CA Neethling, the minister of Erasmus. They requested that the church create a full-time missionary post. The Synodical Mission Committee had already budgeted for an amount of £100 for his salary (Endemann 1961:11).

Further investigation was done by Rev Endemann and others who travelled with him by ox wagon. They visited the chiefs of some groups, like Kerneels Mapoch and the Mapoer clan of chief Mashung.

### **20.2 FIRST MEMBERS**

Hosea Apane, who worked for Erasmus, became one of the first members. Alfeus Mahlobogane who worked at Toitskraal (Marble Hall) was also a member. These two and their wives erected a small church of clay where the first services were conducted. Further plans were made to obtain a place for the building of a mission station. Rev Endemann wrote:

*We were given a small piece of land – about 15 morgen – by Rev AP Rossouw, the missionary of Burger Mission station. This was near the place towards Sekhukhuneland where the Bantwane group lived. A start was made to fence the place off, but the Berlyn*

*Mission was not happy that another church group had moved into their area. The fencing was stopped immediately, but we discovered later that it was a false report, because the group they served had already left to go somewhere else (Endemann 1961:11 – Author’s own translation).*

### **20.3 FIRST EVANGELIST**

Rev Endemann could not find sufficient funds to sustain an evangelist. The PSK of Erasmus did not even have enough money to pay the missionary’s salary. The presbytery of Pretoria promised £30, of which Pretoria East contributed £10. The rest of the money, to total £36, was contributed by Rev Endemann. The evangelist worked on the farm of Mr Erasmus’ sister. From the Stofberg Memorial School a young man, Lude Ramatsui, was sent as evangelist. He had to erect his own house with the help of unbelieving women, who were paid with maize. He married Naomi, but unfortunately contracted malaria and had to relocate to Pretoria. Lude was succeeded by Stefanus Molatana. He immediately started with a church building, which also served as a school. Another evangelist arrived when the necessary funds were obtained from the Students Christian Movement, and friends in Pretoria provided the salaries of two more evangelists: one worked at Kekanes village, one at a place near Marble Hall and the other at Paledistad. The latter was the village of Piet Mathebe, the chief who had requested a school from the government. Eventually, however, the school was started by the mission, with the evangelist as school master. Thus the mission managed to gain entrance to his village.

### **20.4 REV GF ENDEMANN**

In order to serve this whole new area as well as his own congregation, Rev Endemann decided to obtain permission from the PSK of Erasmus to relocate to a more central place.

He did this because he wanted to find a location where a mission station could be built, as well as to persuade the DRC to seriously consider such a move. Not long after moving into his new residence he contracted a serious form of malaria and was forced to return to Onverwacht, his main base. A major problem was that the hearts of the non-believers were still not susceptible to the Gospel.

## **20.5 MISSION HOSPITAL**

In order to find a more effective way of changing the attitude of people, a medical mission was considered by the presbytery of Pretoria. A meeting of the presbytery was held at the home of Mr Erasmus, following which they approached a certain Mr Dennil of Dennilton. He not only agreed to a medical mission, but also sold his farm to a company that subdivided the farm into 15-morgen plots. Later another 10 morgen was added for the needs of the hospital. They could not obtain the necessary funds, but on the advice of the inspector of schools, Mr GH Franz, the chairman of the presbyterial mission commission, Rev CD Murray, approached the government and managed to obtain the required funds. A clinic was erected first; followed by 20-bed hospital. The builder was a Mr Fourie. When the corner-stone was laid at the official opening of the hospital, Dr William Nicol, then chairman of the presbyterial mission commission, named the hospital *PHILADELPHIA*. Chief Piet Mathebe also made a small donation of £10.

## **20.6 THE FIRST MISSIONARY**

The mission was handed over to the synod as its responsibility. Under the guidance of the moderator, Dr Nicol, it was developed into a full mission station with a full-time missionary, the first of whom was Rev GF Endemann. He was there for six months only before he received a call to Lichtenburg. Rev MJD Jacobsohn succeeded him.

Rev Jacobsohn worked here for twenty years. The congregation of Philadelphia was established in 1943. This mission station became the responsibility of the *Manne Sendingbond van Transvaal* (The Men's Mission Association of Transvaal). The congregation mainly included the Groblersdal irrigation area. A new Bantu village was established at Varschwater towards Klipspruit mission. Since it was cut off from Sekhukhuneland congregation, this village has fallen within the borders of Philadelphia, with a minister of its own since 1965. The name of Varschwater was changed to Motetema. Rev Jacobsohn left in 1961 and was succeeded in December 1961 by Rev WA Rossouw. He left in 1963. As from 1968 to 1974 the congregation was served by Rev AJJ Labuschagne and from 13 October 1974 by Rev CM Büchner until the time of his death in 1991 (Crafford 1982:329).



## **20.7 THE 1965 PLANNING COMMISSION**

The planning commission of the presbytery of Burger NGKA investigated further developments and changes of borders.

They reported as follows:

### **20.7.1 Remarks**

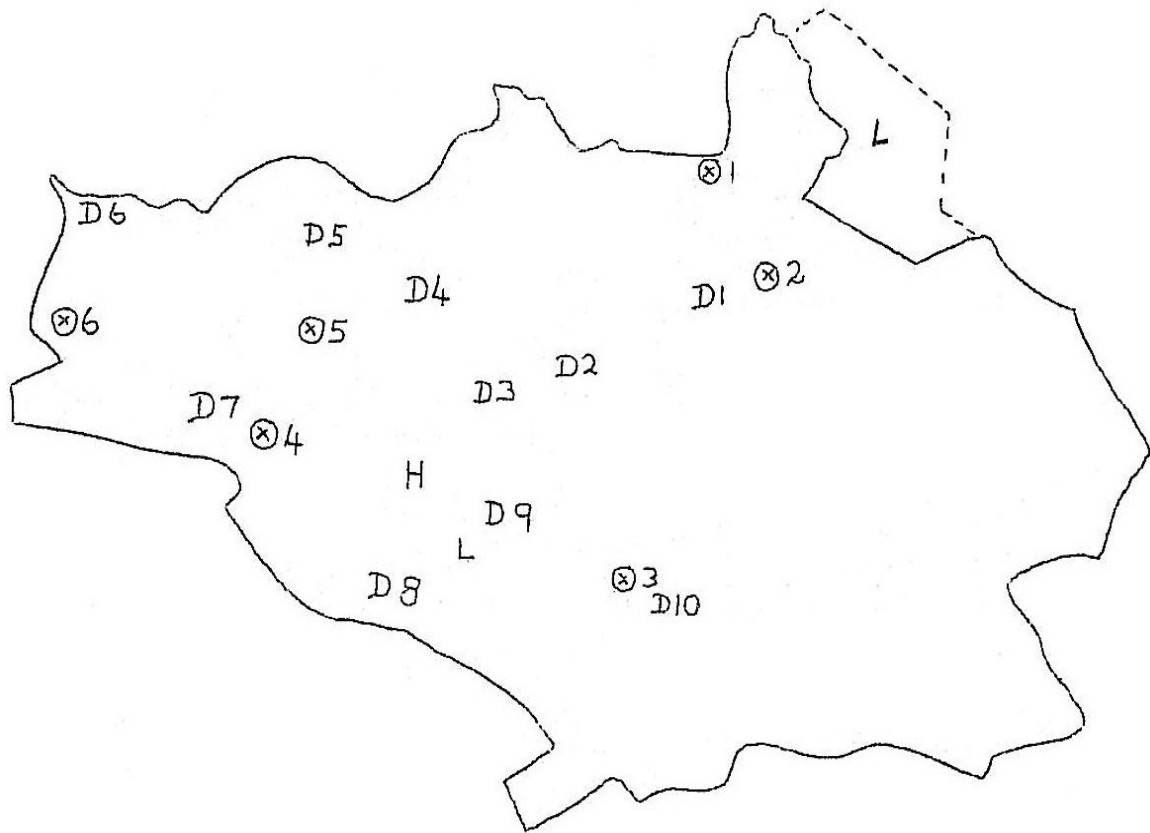
*This congregation consists of an area of Bantu-Trust and the Loskop Irrigation scheme. One section is the responsibility of the Men's Mission of Northern Transvaal and the other of the local mission commission of the DRC of Groblersdal. Two big villages are now being planned, one at Dennilton and the other near Groblersdal.*

### **20.7.2 Recommendations**

*The Planning Commission suggested:*

- a) The Northern section (including the location which will be moved in the near future to Varschwater, which is within the borders of Sekhukhuneland) to be included as ward of Philadelphia with a view of upgrading this post to become a minister's post.*
- b) The borders of the congregation remain as is, except for the northern borders which will be altered as follows: From the point where the northern corner of the farm Blaauwildebeestfontein 16 meets the Olifants River, southwards all along the river as far as the northern border of the farm Varkenskraal 19, and then with the northern and north-eastern border of Varschwater 23 and the north-eastern border of Diepkloof up to the northern beacon of Weltevreden 165, where it connects with the existing border.*
- c) That a second minister's post is created and a minister be called.*
- d) That the local missions commission of the DRC congregation of Groblersdal be responsible for this post.*
- e) That the estate of the deceased Mr Grobler as stipulated by him, be used for mission work, and that it furthermore be utilized for the establishment of the post at Varschwater (see map included). (Author's own translation.)*

**Chart 11: PHILADELPHIA**



**PHILADELPHIA**

- |    |   |                       |
|----|---|-----------------------|
| H  | : | Philadelphia          |
| 01 | : | Vaalfontein           |
| 02 | : | Groblersdal location  |
| 03 | : | Kwarrielaagte         |
| 04 | : | Zoetmelksfontein      |
| 05 | : | Walkraal              |
| 06 | : | Wolvenkraal           |
| D1 | : | Oude Stad van Meleeuw |
| D2 | : | Witpenskloof          |
| D3 | : | Bloempoot             |
| D4 | : | Zondagsfontein        |
| D5 | : | Valschfontein         |

D6	:	Rhenosterkop
D7	:	Klipplaatdrift
D8	:	Maloek Zijn Kop
D9	:	Elandsdoorn
D10	:	Rietfontein
L	:	Dennilton

## **20.8 THE 1966 PLANNING COMMISSION**

### **20.8.1 Medical Work**

Shortly after the outbreak of World War II a beginning was made with medical work at Philadelphia. On 11 October 1939 the cornerstone of the hospital was laid by Rev GF Endemann. In 1950 the hospital had 26 beds, which increased to 500 in 1966. A TB section called JHM Stofberg was added on 3 October 1964 to mark the 25 anniversary of this Mission hospital. Dr PJP Stofberg was the Medical Superintendent.

### **20.8.2 Statistics**

The population within the borders of the congregation numbered 42 000, of which 20 000 were Bantwana, 18 000 Bapedi and 4 000 of other population groups.

### **Congregational statistics**

<b>Outposts</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Catechumen</b>	<b>Sunday school children</b>	<b>Sunday school teachers</b>	<b>Women's movement</b>	<b>Youth members</b>
Philadelphia	170	11	140	6	27	3
Kwarrielaagte	35	3	30	2	7	-
Groblersdal	80	10	110	4	10	-

Walkraal	34	12	50	2	4	-
Wolfenkraal	12	2	20	1	4	-
Vaalfontein	6	-	-	-	-	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>337</u></b>	<b><u>38</u></b>	<b><u>350</u></b>	<b><u>15</u></b>	<b><u>52</u></b>	<b><u>4</u></b>

<u>Ministers:</u>	Rev WA Rossouw	:	Philadelphia
	Vacant	:	Varschwater
<u>Evangelists:</u>	S Molatana	:	Philadelphia
	P Mophete	:	Kwarrielaagte
	A Malope	:	Walkraal
	A Matebe	:	Vaalfontein
	G Matsipe	:	Groblersdal
	E Mokhoabong	:	Wolfenkraal
<u>Lay preacher:</u>	Jesaja	:	Hospital

### **20.8.3 Recommendations for future Planning**

These recommendations were important, since the creation of a minister's post at Varschwater and the development of this post led to the establishment of a new congregation. In its report the commission recommended that a new church building as well as a house for the minister should be erected at Varschwater.

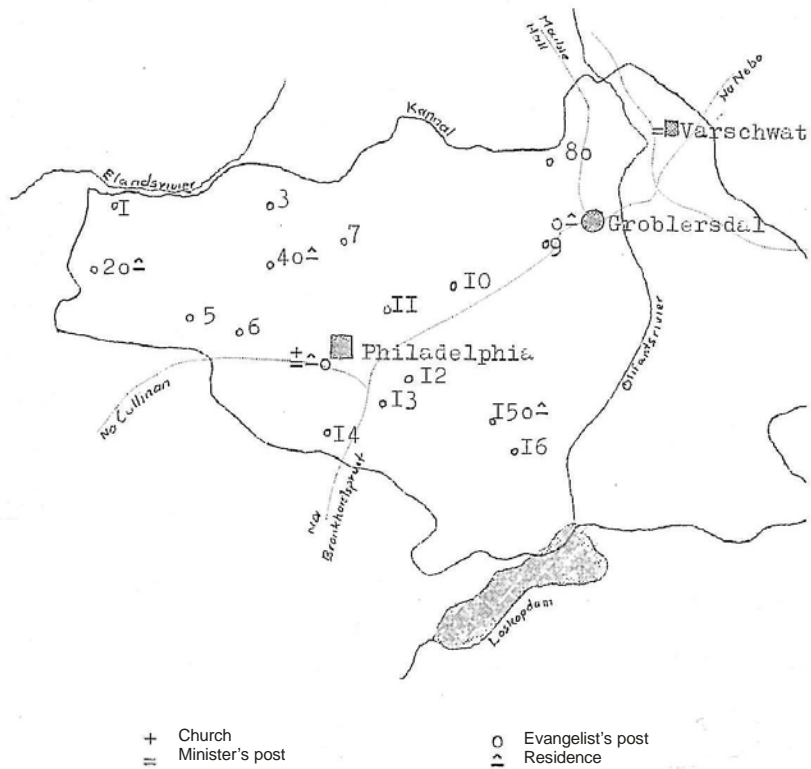
This indeed happened when Rev Attie Labuschagne built a very serviceable building. The evangelist, ME Morifi, furthered his studies and was ordained as minister in 1986. He succeeded Rev ND Legodi, who had left in 1984. The congregation was named Motetema when it was established in 1977.

### **20.8.4 Motetema Congregation**

Motetema, previously called Varschwater, seceded from Philadelphia in 1977. The borders include the Loskop irrigation farms around Groblersdal as well as the village itself. The

road to Klipspruit mission station passes through the town. Its western border is Schoeman Boerdery, which fell under Lepelle at that time (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek 1978, 1987*).

**Chart 12: PHILADELPHIA CONGREGATION**



- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Rhenosterkop     | 9. Oude stat van Mele |
| 2. Wolfenkraal      | 10. Witpenskloof      |
| 3. Valschfontein    | 11. Bloempoot         |
| 4. Walkraal         | 12. Elandsdoorn       |
| 5. Klipplaatdrift   | 13. Dennilton         |
| 6. Zoetmelksfontein | 14. Maloek Zijn Kop   |
| 7. Zondagsfontein   | 15. Kwarrielaagte     |
| 8. Vaalfontein      | 16. Rietfontein       |

## **21. THE CONGREGATIONS OF BURGERSFORT AND ROOSSENEKAL**

On 30 August 1968 the planning commission of the presbytery of Burger reported to the presbytery meeting in session at Goedvertrouwen mission station (Lepelle congregation), that the borders of the two new congregations were not very clear. The commission assured the meeting that they would endeavour to obtain clear guidelines from each congregation (Ring van Burger 1968:15).

### **21.1 REMARKS**

*The commission of the presbytery also reported that the congregation of Potgietersrus East had applied for a name change to Lerato. The congregation of Marble Hall also requested that its name be changed to Lepelle. This was approved by the meeting (Ring of Burger 1968:4).*

*Signed as members of the commission: SW Burger, P Conradie and JS Phetla.*

*At the 10<sup>th</sup> General Meeting in session at Groothoek in the congregation of Lerato on Friday, 26 September 1969 and following days, it was recommended by Rev SW Burger, the relieving minister of Burgersfort congregation, that this congregation be dissolved and included as part of Burger Congregation. The church council of Burgersfort and the local commission for missions of the DRC of Burgersfort supported the recommendation. (Author's own translation.)*

## **22. THE GENERAL SITUATION OF THE CONGREGATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF BURGER**

(as reported at the General Meeting in session at Groothoek in the congregations of Lerato on Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> September 1969 and following days – author’s own translation)

<b>Congregation</b>	<b>Ministers</b>	<b>Primarius</b>	<b>Secundus</b>
Burger	SW Burger	JM Kobe	AJ Motau
	ES Ramaipadi	JL Madigoe	MG Phalane
Lepelle	P Conradie	J Laka	M Thobejane
	ME Molato	AL Nchabeleng	JP Ngwašeng
	JS Phetla	S Nchabeleng	HM Mabogwane
Lerato	JPM Stapelberg	HS Ledwaba	J Ledwaba
	RM Kgatla	F Ntsoane	S Ramaipadi
Philadelphia	AJJ Labuschagne	AW Malope	E Ledwaba
	Vacant	D Motsele	
Roosenekal		W Magaele	
Sekhukhuneland		D Mphuti	S Tlou

### **22.1 REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN: REV SW BURGER**

Rev Burger reported that not a single missionary post was vacant.

He was thankful for the fact that Rev AJ Labuschagne was the new missionary of Philadelphia congregation.

Rev PJ Joubert of Sekhukhuneland was very ill.

The commission of the presbytery regretted the many cases where evangelists were guilty of misconduct.

## **22.2 REPORT OF THE COMMISSION FOR PLANNING**

Members: P Conradie, JS Phetla and PJ Joubert.

Their full report to the presbytery deals with the uncompleted task of the mission.

## **22.3 REPORT OF THE RELIEVING MINISTER OF ROOSSENEKAL**

Rev SW Burger reported that four church council meetings had been held. The sacraments were also served four times at two different posts. The local commission of the DRC congregation of Burgersfort decided that another two evangelists had to be called, as the congregation was divided into three sections.

## **22.4 THE REPORT ON THE STATISTICS OF THE DIFFERENT CONGREGATIONS**

<b>Congregation</b>	<b>Converts</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Ministers</b>	<b>Members per minister</b>
Burger	9 522	513	2	256.5
Burgersfort	542	138	0	
Lepelle	2 000	334	3	111.3
Lerato	896	520	2	260
Philadelphia	3 600	556	1	556
Roosenekal	210	54	0	
Sekhukhuneland	1 180	410	1	410
	<b><u>17 950</u></b>	<b><u>2 525</u></b>	<b><u>9</u></b>	



Congregation	Church council members	Elders	Deacons	Members per elder	Members per deacon
Burger	21	15	6	34.2	85.3
Burgersfort	7	3	4	46	34.5
Lepelle	38	30	8	11.1	41.7
Lerato	26	20	6	26	86.6
Philadelphia	21	11	10	50.5	55.6
Roossenekal	4	2	2	27	27
Sekhukhuneland	21	12	9	34	45.5
	<b><u>138</u></b>	<b><u>93</u></b>	<b><u>45</u></b>		

Congregation	Sunday schools	Teachers	Sunday school children	Children per teacher
Burger	13	21	869	41
Burgersfort	1	2	110	55
Lepelle	16	43	1 600	37
Lerato	25	27	823	30
Philadelphia	11	22	400	18
Roossenekal	1	2	54	27
Sekhukhuneland	5	11	375	34
	<b>72</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>4 231</b>	<b>33</b>



Congregation	Reception of new members	Baptism of Adults	% from the Unbelievers	Catechumen
Burger	78	63	80.76	173
Burgersfort	6	4	66.66	7
Lepelle	60	41	68.33	42
Lerato	42	35	83.33	79
Philadelphia	56	35	62.50	10
Roosenekal	9	5	55.55	16
Sekhukhuneland	49	36	73.89	49
	<b><u>300</u></b>	<b><u>219</u></b>	<b><u>73</u></b>	<b><u>376</u></b>

Congregation	Members previous years	Present members	Growth	Transfer	Growth	Loss
Burger	401	513	89	101		12
Burgersfort	145	138	6	13	7	
Lepelle	334	334	66	6	60	
Lerato	420	520	46	22	24	
Philadelphia	556	556	79	10	69	
Roosenekal	50	54	10	8	2	
Sekhukhuneland	380	410	88	53	35	
	<b>2 286</b>	<b>2 525</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>12</b>

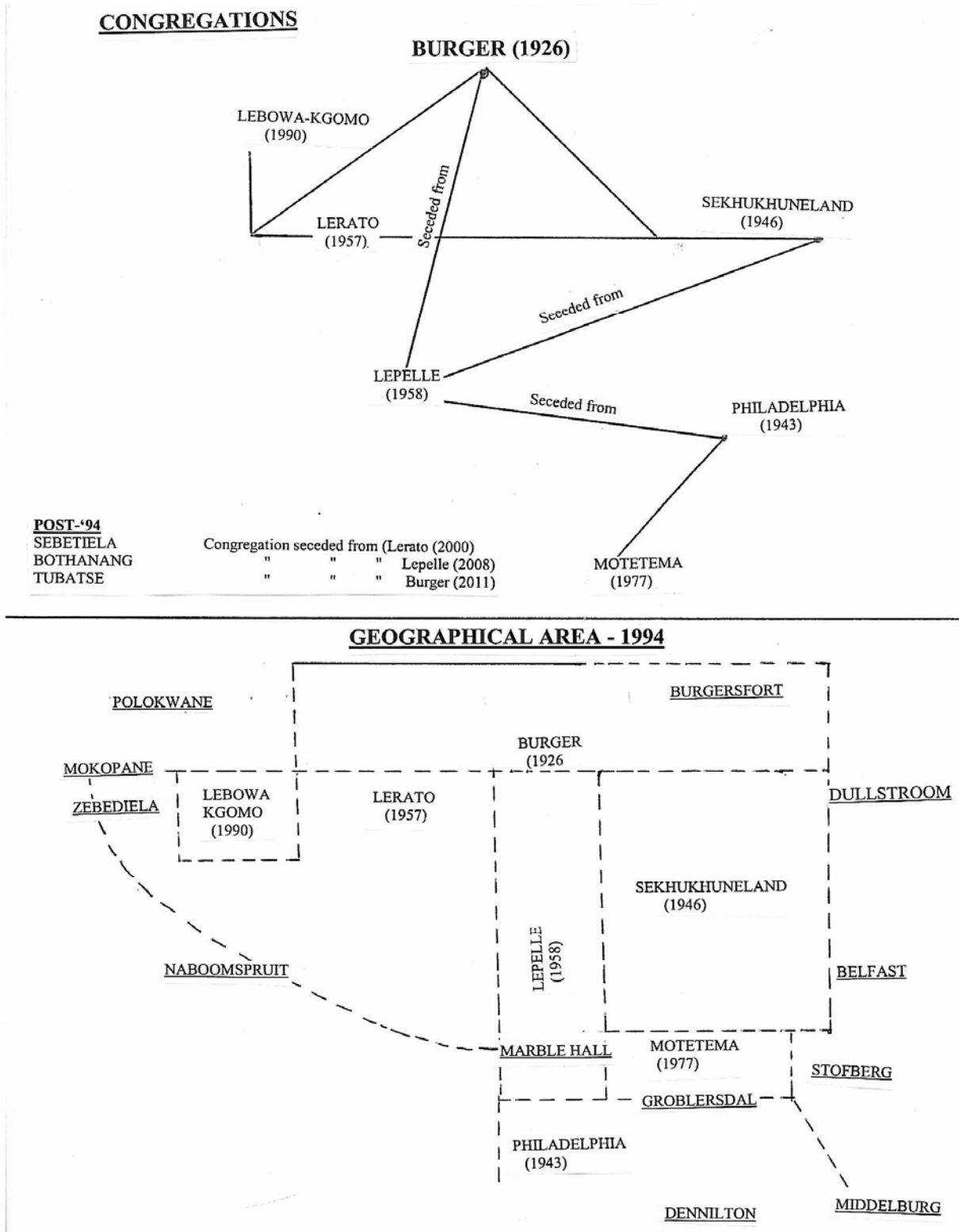
Congregation	Missionaries	Bantu Ministers	Evangelists	Youth Members	Women Members	Choir
Burger	1	1	5	29	63	25
Burgersfort	0	0	1	0	6	0
Lepelle	1	2	5	25	64	0
Lerato	1	1	6	10	123	0
Philadelphia	1	0	6	7	101	3
Roosenekal	0	0	1	0	6	1
Sekhukhuneland	1	0	5	0	49	110
	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>139</b>

## **22.5 POINT FOR DISCUSSION**

The Church council of the congregation of Burgersfort requested the presbytery of Burger to consider the fact that Burgersfort congregation wanted to be dissolved and integrated with the Burger congregation. This request was supported by the DRC church council of Burgersfort, the local mission commission of Burgersfort and the management committee of the *TVSV* (The Transvaal Women's Missions Association). It was approved (*NGKA 14 – Ring van Burger 1969*).



**Chart 13: PRESBYTERY OF BURGER: 1994**



### **A Note on the Geographical Position of Lepelle Congregation**

After consolidation this congregation geographically touches the borders of all the other congregations except Lebowa-Kgomo. Lepelle seceded from Sekhukhuneland, Philadelphia and Burger. The first mission work in 1926 done from Burger mission station by Rev AL Rousseau and his co-workers took place within the northern area of this congregation. The history of the development of the presbytery of Burger since Lepelle and Lerato congregations were formed, is an integrated unity. Discussing the problems and development of the individual members of the presbytery, whether by the missionary, minister, evangelist or congregation was of common interest as partners of the two churches, the DRC and the NGKA.

### **23. LEBOWA-KGOMO**

The documents of the church council of Lerato congregation in which they applied for the division of the congregation were put before the presbytery of Burger.

At its meeting held at Klipspruit on 25 August 1988, the presbytery of Burger approved the forming of a new congregation. All the documents pertaining to the application by Lerato were found to be in order. The name of the congregation was Lerato-Bohlabelo (Resolution 7 of the Presbytery). The Presbytery gave instructions to the newly formed commission of the presbytery to guide the new Lerato-Bohlabelo congregation in its secession from Lerato. The minister who played a very important role in this development was Rev IM van der Merwe of Lerato. Under his guidance as chairman of the church council of Lerato, the new congregation of Lerato East (Bohlabelo) was established on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1988 in accordance with the stipulations of the Church Order (Regulation 47:1&2). He was guided by the strong ward church council of Lebowa-Kgomo in the new congregation.

A certain group was not satisfied with the formation of a new congregation. This group was mainly from the ward of Mphahlele. They wrote a letter dated 14<sup>th</sup> September 1988 to the registrar of the Synod, stating that:

1. The presbytery failed to consider that according to Reg 45.1 this congregation would not be able to function financially without outside assistance.
2. One of the delegates who took part in the formation of the new congregation, Mr ST Kgatla, was not a full member of the congregation.
  - a) According to Reg. 5.3 each person had to provide proof that he was a full member, failing which he could not enjoy any privileges.
  - b) Reg 36.4 indicated that nobody could become a member of the church council without proof of membership.

Therefore, the signatories requested the decision of the presbytery to be declared invalid. On 16 October 1988 they again wrote a letter, wanting to know what had happened to their request of 14 September, since Rev van der Merwe at a church council meeting dated 15 October 1988, stated that he had heard from the secretary of the synod that the judicial

commission was unable to do anything about their request and that the church council therefore was continuing with the formation of the new congregation. The protestors also stated that the meeting, at which it was decided to secede, was irregular, because five of the members had already left and out of the 24 members needed for a quorum, only 21 were present.

Rev LS Mataboge replied in writing, with copies to the church council of Lerato, the scribe of the presbytery and the chairman of the presbytery, indicating that the judiciary commission had not approved the formation of the new congregation and was referring the matter back for proper reconsideration in accordance with the stipulations of the Church Order (Reg 46).

As a result, Rev Sakkie van der Merwe referred the case to the commission of the Presbytery. He wrote to me as follows:

“All the members of the present Commission of the presbytery are from the congregation of Lerato and therefore the appeal of certain members who asserted that the formation of Lerato-Bohlabelo is irregular is now referred to the secundi members of the Presbytery of Burger. They are MJ Mankoe (chairman), MP Mojapelo and GJ Jordaan (scribe).” A special meeting of the presbytery was convened for 4 March 1989. It was held at the new Lebowa-Kgomo church building. All the documents were put before the meeting, as well as a letter from the protestors containing the allegation that Mr ST Kgatla was not a member of the church council and therefore requesting that he should not be present. However, the documents before the presbytery clearly showed that since 1986, ST Kgatla had indeed been a full member of the congregation. He was also a lawful member of the church council of Lerato. It was further decided that as there was no indication of any reconciliation on the part of the protestors, the case be referred to the Moderature of the Synod (NGKA 1989).

Another special meeting was held on 22 April 1989 with the Moderature of the Synod, the presbytery of Burger and the church council of Lerato. The Moderature found that some procedures were not in order; the main objection being that Form 12 had not been completed. On this form the names of all the wards of the newly formed congregation should appear, together with the signatures of all the members and the amount of money promised by each. This form should have been presented to the presbytery. The matter

was therefore referred back to the presbytery. The Moderature did not make any decision whether to reject or accept the formation of Lerato-Bohlabelo.

As a result of this, the presbytery decided to recall their previous decision as invalid, and the congregation of Lerato was asked to start afresh with due regard to the procedures stipulated by the Church Order.

Rev MJ Mankoe reported as follows:

“At the annual meeting of the presbytery of Burger in July 1989, Rev PJ Etsebeth was chosen as the new scribe for the presbytery of Burger together with Rev MJ Mankoe who remained as chairman. The developments of the formation of a new congregation from Lerato were now on the shoulders of the new Commission of the presbytery. The presbytery has decided to return Form 12 to Lerato congregation and to advise them that Lerato-Bohlabelo is cancelled.”

### **23.1 THE FORMING OF LEBOWA-KGOMO**

The church council of Lerato agreed that there would be no compromise with the objectors against the forming of Lerato-Bohlabelo. They therefore decided to work only with one ward: the main ward of the congregation called Lebowa-Kgomo. The suggested borders for Lerato-Bohlabelo were cancelled and no longer valid.

“After this the Lebowa-Kgomo ward decided on 28 May to establish a new congregation, called Lebowa-Kgomo. Form 12 was completed with the names of 260 members. At a meeting held on 21 September 1989 the new application was approved by the church council and put before the presbytery. On 27 September 1989 the presbytery allowed Lerato to continue with the arrangements for establishing the new congregation. On 28 October 1989 the commission met again with the church council of Lerato. A total of 47 members were present. The application was approved by the presbytery and Rev MJ Mankoe was the relieving minister (Mankoe 2009b).

They referred the case to the Supreme Court in Pretoria. The court found that every detail of the Church Order and the stipulations for an independent congregation had been fulfilled, and approved their application. On the 18<sup>th</sup> February 1990 the congregation of Lebowa-Kgomo was established.



At the next meeting of the General Synod, the synod confirmed the court's decision. This happened in September 1990. From that date the congregation of Lebowa-Kgomo was recognized as one of the congregations within the presbytery of Burger. Since then it has played a major role in the NGKA. Their first minister was Rev PG Rakgalekane, who was ordained on 7 December 1991. The new church building was opened on 19 May 1990.

### **23.2 THE CONGREGATION OF SEBETIELA**

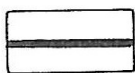
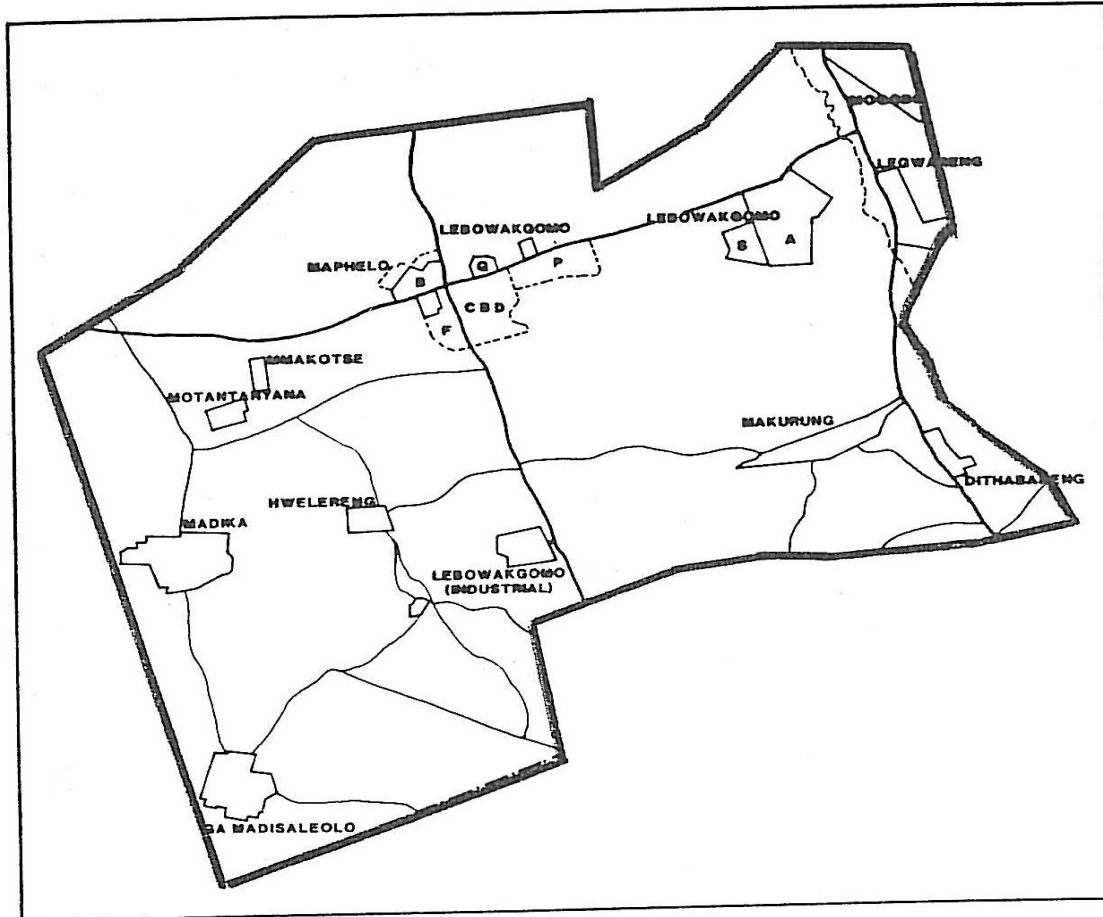
This is a new congregation which seceded from Lerato congregation in 2000. Its wards include the oldest wards from the era of the DRC mission and the building of the Groothoek Hospital. It also includes Zebediela Orange Estate as well as Moletlane. Its borders extend towards the Olifants River in the east and Lebowa-Kgomo and Lerato in the north.

### **23.3 THE CONGREGATION OF BOTHANANG**

This new congregation seceded from Lepelle in 2008, when five wards were excised from Lepelle and the Marble Hall farming area. These wards include Leeuwfontein, the main ward where the minister will stay, and also Marulaneng, Elandskraal and Tsansabella. Plans are being made for this congregation to combine with Motetema

Chart 14: THE CONGREGATION OF BOTHANANG

### STUDY AREA



STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

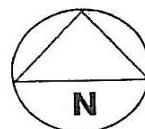
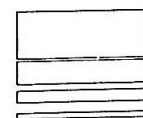


FIG. 1

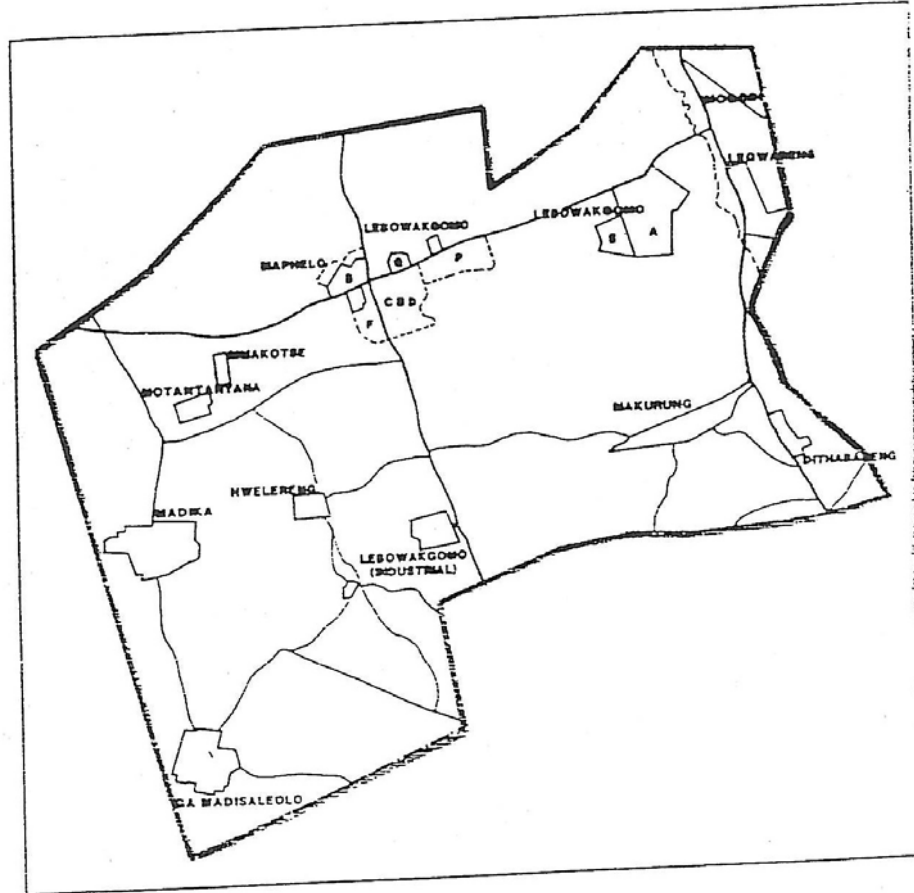


PLAN



Chart 15: LEBOWAKGOMO

# AFSTIGTING Lebowakgomo NGKA Grense

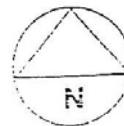


 GRENS

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VAN DIE OORSPRONKLIKE

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COMMISSIONER OF OATHS  
KOMMISSARIS VAN EDE  
PRACTISING ATTORNEY  
PRAKTISERENDE PROKUREUR  
LEGNUM PARK  
20 MARKET STREET/ MARKSTRAAT  
PIETERSBURG P.S.A.

225





BESKRYWING VAN GRENSE VAN LEBOWAKGOMO N.G.K.A.

Vanaf die plaas GA-MADISALEOLO in die suidweste oor die plase HWELERENG; MADIKA tot by MONTANTANYANA in die noordweste en van daar oor die plase MMAKOTSE, MAPHELO LEBOWAKGOMO (CBD), LEBOWAKGOMO (S.A) tot by MOGODI in die noorde en van daar oor die plaas LEGWERENG tot by die plaas DITHABANENG Suid-Ooste en van daar oor die plase LEBOWAKGOMO (INDUSTRIAL) tot by die plaas GA-MADISALEOLO in die Suid-Weste.

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PIETERSBURG R.S.A.

### **23.4 EVALUATION OF PART TWO**

The work of the Planning Commission, its suggestions and recommendations as described in this section played a major role in preparing the NGKA Presbytery of Burger for self-governing, which was done in co-operation with the DRC missionaries. This formed the base of the future partnership between the NGKA and the DRC as described in Part Three. The borders of all the congregations were established, in order to move away from the hierarchical structure. The wards were grouped in such a way that black and white ministers had their own wards on an equal footing. This move needs to be seen in the context of the DRC's desire for the NGKA to become independent.

The DRC was conscious of the language and culture of each cultural group. In any interpretation missionaries respected the difference in culture and did not force anyone to reject their traditional culture in exchange for a Western culture. They left it to the black Christians to adjust their traditional rites according to Biblical terms. The DRC mainly focused on a partnership with the unfinished task of mission in view. Moving away from an attitude of superiority, several DRC missionaries have worked towards partnership on equal footing and church unity in which race would not be a dividing factor.

The partnership automatically started to function on equal footing when the structures of the congregations were designed in such a way that there was a movement away from a hierarchical structure, where the white minister was at the top. It was changed to a structure where white and black ministers were on an equal level of authority. The white ministers remained for a period in a position as the contact person of the sending body. The funds for the support of his co-workers and many projects like the building of new churches and the maintenance of buildings and other subsidies were channeled through him.

In this phase the process of building a partnership on equal footing was taken a step further. Equality was reached, at least in principle as far as the authority in the congregations was concerned. The task of achieving equality in terms of financial resources was of concern and still had to be achieved. An element of inequality that remained, which became more important in the next phase, was the inequality between a black minister and an evangelist. An evangelist was in a lower position, for example he could not administer the sacraments and he received a lower salary.

## **PART THREE**

### **THE ERA OF CO-OPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP**

#### **24. THE DRC AND NGKA PARTNERSHIP IN SEKHUKHUNELAND – 1970 to 1994**

##### **24.1 INTRODUCTION**

The planning and establishment of the congregations of the presbytery of Burger described in the previous chapters, led to a new phase of development. In four congregations surrounding the main mission stations in Sekhukhuneland, Maandagshoek (Burger), Grootshoek (Lerato), Klipspruit (Sekhukhuneland) and Matlala (Lepelle), Dutch Reformed missionaries worked in partnership with the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa. The church has now moved out of its pioneering phase to the phase of missionary/evangelist partnership. These congregations were divided into minister's wards. A minister's ward consisted of a few outposts in a specific region which the black minister or missionary had to serve. Each minister's ward had its own ward church council representing the outposts within that ward, which usually reported to the general church council of the congregation. With the assistance of the DRC, each minister was provided with a church residence and gradually ward churches were erected at the main stations.

Slowly the church became self-sufficient. The training of evangelists at Stofberg was discontinued and many evangelists went for the minister's course while others carried on until retirement. These men were the church planters during the pioneering phase of the missionary history in Sekhukhuneland. They were the missionary partners. I managed to obtain life-sketches from some of them although information on their lives and work were inadequate. The church had phased out the office of evangelist (Agenda, NGKA, 5 Vergadering van die Algemene Sinode, Umgababa 1979:262).

These chapters also deal with the so-called white missionaries from the DRC in the service of the NGKA. During this period, the missionary posts at Lerato, Burger and Lepelle were terminated. Only Klipspruit remained open until 2001.

Their life-sketches show the role they played in assisting the NGKA members. The missionaries paid special attention to progress within the different wards by soliciting

funds for the construction of ward churches. They assisted the church with administrative skills. They served with and helped their black colleagues in the general ministry and with the Sacraments. Under their ministry, more wards were established. The DRC, who was the sending body, maintained contact with the NGKA and took note of their special needs, thus they could still speak of a partnership in missionary work. When the missionaries left, the local mission commissions also lost their vision and zeal.

These chapters also include sketches of black ministers who worked in partnership with their white DRC colleagues. These men were part of the DRC missionary history. They rendered outstanding service because their training at Stofberg was of a high standard and they were driven by their call to the mission from God. After 1994, these ministers remained and continued to serve the members of the church. Knowing the culture and language of their own people, their ministry was very effective.

## **24.2 REPORT OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION (Agenda 1969:P3)**

*To the Presbytery of Burger, meeting at Groothoek, Congregation of LERATO, 26 September 1969 and following days.*

*Chairman and brothers,*

*The Planning Commission would like to report as follows:*

*Members: Rev P Conradie, Rev PJ Joubert and Rev JS Phetla.*

*The Commission would like to accentuate the importance of the UNCOMPLETED TASK of the Mission Action in the report.*

*It is well-known that thousands of people are still outside the Light of the Gospel. Much more can be done. The situation needs to be researched and addressed. We must obey the calling in Matthew 28: "Go ... and make disciples ... baptize them ... and teach them."*

*Our purpose is the Christianization of the heathendom (the world) and the progression of an independent church. This is the task of the DRC (mother church) and the NGKA (daughter church). The establishment of an independent church is not the end of the road. For these two churches a new experience of joint mission work lies ahead. We are partners and each church has an important role to play. The NGKA must accept the*



*continuous assistance with grace. The main purpose is to extend the Kingdom of God in partnership. The channels between these two churches must remain open and that requires a positive attitude on the part of both churches. This means mutual planning, advice and regular contact. AT THE MOMENT THERE IS A SHOCKING ESTRANGEMENT WHICH IS ALARMING. In the light of the present PARTNERSHIP between the MOTHER AND DAUGHTER CHURCHES the commission has the following recommendations:*

- a) Closer contact with the DRC.*
- b) Each Church council of the NGKA should have a commission to contact the PSK (Local Missions Committee).*
- c) That the Planning Commission of the Presbytery of Burger should contact the Commission of the DRC Presbytery of Middelburg. That these commissions should jointly plan for the different regions.*
- d) As in the past the PSK Commissions and the RSK of the DRC be invited to have an advisory vote at the presbytery's meetings.*
- e) 1970 is the year of the youth and this commission recommends that each congregation should make special efforts to reach and encourage the youth.*

*Signed: P Conradie and JS Phetla.*

### **24.3 GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PARTNERSHIP**

Although there was tension, the DRC and the NGKA generally agreed to continue support and sustainment of the so-called missionary posts. The two churches still respected the general guidelines of the Federal Council of the DRC Churches. These are the guidelines regarding joint mission work (Agenda Umgababa 1979:176) (Author's own translation):

- 1. Method of approach:** The task of all the churches concerned: Bringing the Gospel to all non-Christians is the task of all member churches of the Federal Council of DRC churches.
  - 1.1. It is a command given to all churches by the Lord Jesus Himself in Matthew 29:19; John 16:15 and Acts 1:8.



- 1.2. The activation of the members of all churches as a fulfillment to bear witness is an act of necessity.
- 1.3. The task is too big for any church to withdraw. Only when the Church takes full responsibility can God's command, to spread the Gospel to all of mankind, be fulfilled (Mark 16:15).
2. **The necessity of the agreement:** Where churches belong to the family of the DRC, as in the case of the Federal Council of the DRC, and they desire to do spiritual work among the same groups of people, it is necessary that an agreement of co-operation should exist. The good result of this will be:
  - 2.1. An orderly arrangement of co-operation among the collaborating churches.
  - 2.2. Activation of all churches to propagate the extension of the Kingdom of God among all people.
3. **General:** All churches could contribute significantly to the joint mission effort.
  - 3.1 **Mutual acknowledgement:** The churches must co-operate in the same area by honouring their respective positions. Therefore, if the members of one church want to do practical mission work in the same region they first have to obtain the consent of that particular church council. The churches undertake to do everything possible to consider such a request favourably, to provide them, if possible, with a suitable site where they can work, and to provide them with the necessary advice and guidance. It is important to have regular contact with one another and report to the various councils regularly.
  - 3.2 **Planning and financing:** Joint planning and financing of such a mission undertaking could be done.
  - 3.3 By means of activating church members to take part in practical mission work as witnesses of Jesus Christ.
  - 3.4 By providing a labour force.
  - 3.5 By introducing the converts to fellow Christians.

#### **4. Regular Contact:**

4.1 Locally: The local church councils of the churches concerned must meet on a regular basis and the following aspects must receive attention:

4.1.1 To obtain as much information as possible about non-Christians.

4.1.2 What could be done to reach non-Christians with the Gospel?

#### **4.2 On Presbytery and Synodical Level:**

4.2.1 How to reach non-Christians within the precinct of the presbytery and synodical borders.

4.2.2 The commencing of specific mission undertakings in the RSA, e.g., at mine compounds, hospitals, correctional institutions and industries. Also to attend to social and economic dissimilarities and activating charity services.

#### **24.4 THE JOINT TASK OF THE OLD AND YOUNGER CHURCHES**

I have described how highly the DRC valued their relationship with the younger churches by adhering to the mutual agreement as regimented in the Federal Council of the DRC. At the conference, *Kerk en Wêreld* in 1978, Dr HM Beets dealt with the topic THE EXECUTION OF THE MISSION CALLING IN A CHANGING WORLD. All the speakers dealt with topics regarding the DRC mission strategy in a CHANGING world. Dr Beets also stressed the joint task of the old and younger churches. He said that the joint mission task is based on Scriptures 1 Cor. 12:12 and Eph. 4. (These Scripture references regarding structural unity and how it refers to the Body of Christ must also be discussed later when looking at the DRC's obligation toward the URC and vice versa.) He referred to Bavinck who warned that the mother church must not keep the expansion of the Kingdom of God only to itself and let the younger churches suffer trying to survive financially. He also pleaded for effective joint operations on presbyterial and synodical levels, such as (Beets 1978:49 – author's own translation):

24.2.1 How to reach non-Christians within the precinct of the presbytery and synodical regions.

24.2.2 Joint operations with regard to specific mission activities.

24.2.2.1 Grateful recognition of the DRC work in mine compounds, industries, evangelization campaigns, prisons and hospitals.

24.2.2.2 Joint mission work in the homelands and outside of the RSA.

24.2.2.3 Attention to abusive circumstances such as inadequate wages, insufficient housing and other governmental issues.

24.2.2.4 Assisting the deacons of the DRC and younger churches in charity work.

## **25. MISSION PARTNERSHIP IN THE CONGREGATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF BURGER**

### **25.1 LERATO CONGREGATION**

#### **25.1.1 MR Kgatla**

Moshe Richard Kgatla was ordained in the congregation of Phalaborwa after he completed his studies at Turfloop in 1962 (Jaarboek 1974:EI 62). In 1963 he accepted a calling to Lerato which was still known as Potgietersrus East. He served the Mphahlele minister's ward while staying at Mphahlele (Molsgat) (*Verslag van die Beplanningskommissie* 1966:13). He was the co-minister to Rev JPM Stapelberg. During his time the congregation of Potgietersrus East became Lerato (Ring van Burger: Agenda 1968:4).

#### **25.1.2 KM Leshilo**

Malerotho Klaas Leshilo finished his studies at Turfloop in 1965 and his first congregation was Warmbad (Jaarboek 1973:439). His next congregation was Lerato (Jaarboek 1974:EI 62). He was stationed at Mphahlele (Molsgat) near Lebowa-Kgomo. Rev Leshilo retired in December 1979 (Lerato Church Council: 1 December 1979). For many years his wife, Mrs Leshilo, acted as secretary to the CVV of the Circle of Burger. (The Christian Women's Movement was called *CIRCLE* when all the branches of the presbytery gathered.)

#### **25.1.3 Rev PJ Etsebeth**

Petrus Johannes Etsebeth, born 1942/03/05, served as missionary at Lerato from 1976 until 1980. He accepted a call to the *NG Sendingkerk* at Niekerkshoop and after that to Prieska in 1984. He accepted a call to Sekhukhuneland in February 1987. He married Mariana Breugem on 16 July 1972 and the couple had two sons and one daughter. The congregation of Lerato had three minister's wards. During his ministry at Lerato, Rev KM Leshilo was his co-minister at the Mphahlele minister's ward, also called Molsgat. This is the oldest ward, previously under the Kranspoort mission of Stefaans Hofmeyr and later under Abraham Rousseau of Burger mission.

Traditionally the Groothoek-Zebediela section had to be served by the missionary, who also lived in the parsonage directly opposite the church within the hospital grounds. It is

here where I met Rev Etsebeth for the first time. There was also another minister's ward, called Moletlane, on the way to Roedtan, but at the time the post was vacant. This section was served by the missionary at Groothoek. During his term, he also worked with the following evangelists: JL Tladi, J Khoopo, SP Mahlobogoana, AM Banda and F Saka (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1975). Rev JS van der Westhuizen of the Zebediela DRC used to pastor the European members working and living on the hospital grounds. These members assisted the missionary and evangelist by ministering to the nurses and patients. At the time Groothoek was the biggest hospital in Lebowa and able to obtain the services of many specialists from Pietersburg on a part-time basis.

The Moletlane ward mainly consisted of South Ndebele-speaking people, integrated with the Pedi, who were the majority group. A large number of Malawian labourers at the Zebediela estate were served by the Chechewa-speaking evangelists such as Banda and Saka. The Malawi mine workers, who worked in the mines and on the farms, played an important role in the history of the Sekhukhuneland Mission. They were faithful and many of them married Pedi women.

Rev Etsebeth worked in close co-operation with the Zebediela PSK. This local commission for mission work also co-operated with the collective mission commission when the Harmonie local commission of Pretoria came to Groothoek for a general meeting with the representatives of the Lerato NKGKA and the missionary. Rev John van der Westhuizen was the minister of the Zebediela congregation and Rev Hanekom was the minister of the Harmonie congregation. Rev Etsebeth acted as secretary at these meetings. He usually reported on the circumstances in the congregation and his report also contained statistical information. He reported on 14 May 1979 that Lerato congregation had 20 outposts for Holy Communion and that Sunday school classes were held at 30 places, involving 1 500 children.

The church council of Lerato NGKA met regularly. According to the minutes, Lebowa-Kgomo, also known as Phatudi-stad, which was the capital of the Lebowa Homeland of the Pedi nation, was expanding at a fast rate and the church council was planning to build its own church. The congregation used to gather in a local school hall. The local and collective mission commissions, in co-operation with the church council, appealed to the Synodical Mission office of the DRC in Pretoria for the necessary funds. Rev J Theron was the secretary at the time. An amount of R9 660,00 was paid by Rev Theron for the

erection of a steel structure. At a church council's meeting dated 12 November 1977, it was decided to prepare for the future seceding of Lebowa-Kgomo and the Mphahlele wards. Regular fêtes were held to fund the church building of Lebowa-Kgomo.

Rev Etsebeth reported to the PSK on 19 November 1979 that the Moletlane ward gained 84 members that year, Mphahlele 7 and Lebowa-Kgomo 20. The total number of members at Moletlane was 150. Mphahlele had 80 and Lebowa-Kgomo 120 members.

Rev Etsebeth also assisted me in finding out whether the new ward which I served, and that was developed at Tsansabella, fell under Lerato, Lepelle or Potgietersrus. We visited the area extensively and discovered that all the farms from Marble Hall on the western side of the Olifants River fell under Potgietersrus, about 50 to 80 kilometers from the nearest post, Roedtan, where an evangelist was stationed under the congregation of Potgietersrus. Tsansabella is only 30 kilometers from Matlala. Through the presbytery of Burger it was organized that these farms would fall under Lepelle as from 1980. Rev Etsebeth had a call to NGSK Niekerkshoop, which he accepted in 1980 (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1987).

#### **25.1.4 Life and History of Ev Alex Matembo Banda**

1. Full names: Alex Matembo Banda.

Date of Birth: 2 July 1914.

Place of Birth: Ngala Kamukondo Village (Malawi).

2. He was the second of two children and the only son of Tinkhani and Kamusari Banda. His sister is named Samu.

Alex Matembo came to South Africa in 1935, working as a cook in hotels and mines. God called him to the Lord's service and he completed his evangelist's course in 1972. Lerato Congregation called him to the Lord's service to start at Pack House ward on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1973. He served Lerato congregation from 1973/01/01 to 1985/07/15. He died after a short illness due to complications brought on by Appendix Vermiformis.

His outposts were Pack House sections 1, 2 3<sup>a</sup>, 3<sup>b</sup>, 4, 5, 6, 7<sup>a</sup>, 7<sup>b</sup>, 8<sup>a</sup>, 8<sup>b</sup>, 9<sup>a</sup>, 9<sup>b</sup>, 10, 11 and 12.

3. Ev AM Banda was married to Rosah Matjie Rangata. She was born on the 1 January 1924, the fourth child of Sanah Mokgadi Rangata and John Matome Rangata. In accordance with the old ways of paying taxes, her date of birth was registered as 1 January 1935. She was not a Malawian but a Northern Sotho speaking woman. Matjie died on 12/02/1999. The family had four daughters and four sons, of which Rev TM Banda was the fifth child. That he was a hard working man, is evident from the number of wards he served. Excellent in counseling, he also had good organizing skills.

### **25.1.5 Rev Ockie and Alma Olivier**

Rev Ockert Jacobus Olivier was legitimated in 1955 at the University of Pretoria. He was ordained in the NGKA Seleka congregation. In 1958 he went to England and studied at the Selley Oak Mission College. After his return he was ordained as minister of the NGKA Pietersburg congregation. He married Alma Christina Sonnekus on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1966. The Lord blessed them with three sons: Ignatius, born 12 November 1967; Marthinus, born 17 January 1969; and Jacobus born 9 November 1971.

In 1969 the family moved to Saulspoort to work among the Bakgatla. On 1 October 1974 they moved to Malawi, where Ockie became a lecturer and later principal at the Nkhoma Theological School. At the end of 1980, on the eve of the New Year, they arrived at Grootboek in Sekhukhuneland. He was ordained as minister of Lerato early in January 1981. I was relieving clergyman for Lerato congregation at the time.

Ockie and Alma were very hard-working people. Ockie was well versed in Sepedi. With funds obtained by him, he managed to pay for a steel structure for the Lebowa-Kgomo church building. The architect was Mr Dries Kühn of Pietersburg. Ockie also arranged for a new minister to be called as co-pastor for the Mphahlele ward. This meant that the old parsonage at Mphahlele had to be renovated. As relieving clergyman, I helped him with the renovations. We worked for weeks on end because this historic old house, in one of the oldest wards in Sekhukhuneland, had been occupied by the previous minister, Rev MK Leshilo since 1965. He retired in 1979. Since then the post had been vacant. Ockie was assisted by evangelist LJ Tladi and evangelist SP Mahlobogoana.

### **25.1.6 Mosimanegape David Madimabe**

He finished his theological studies at Turfloop in 1980. He was ordained by me as the new minister for Lerato Congregation by the laying on of hands on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1981 at Moletlane near Groothoek. He and his wife moved into the old parsonage at Mphahlele. The couple only stayed for eight months before Rev Madimabe accepted a call to Daveyton, where he is still serving the Lord faithfully.

Ockie received a call in die middle of 1983 to the *NG Sendingkerk* Westenburg (Pietersburg) in combination with Mara. It was the only congregation in the North for coloured people, including the Buys group situated at Mara near Louis Trichardt. In 1985 he returned to the NGKA and became minister of Lebone. This time he preferred to live in Pietersburg. He studied at UP and received a Master's degree in church history. He also studied the Old and New Testament and held temporary positions as lecturer at the Theological School of Turfloop and the Faculty of Theology at the University of the North.

Ockie was very musical and joined the symphony orchestra of Pietersburg. He played the violin as well as the piano. His friend and colleague, Prof Francois Malan, joined him there. He retired in 1993. During the 1994 election he was co-chairman for the Peace Commission in Pietersburg. Unfortunately, Ockie became ill in 1996, when he suffered a stroke which left him unable to walk and speak. This was the end of his musical career as well as his ministry. They continued living in Pietersburg, but relocated to Pretoria in 1998. Alma cares for him herself, something for which she is greatly admired by everybody. They reflect a new kind of ministry – to glorify God in the midst of suffering.

### **25.1.7 PHC Albertyn**

He was ordained in Lerato at Groothoek in 1984, but left after six months when he accepted a call as youth minister for the synod at the NGKA of Phororo. In June 1985 he was ordained as minister of DRC Vanderbijlpark South (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1987).

### **25.1.8 Izak Marais van der Merwe – Groothoek Mission – NGKA Lerato**

Isak and his wife, Maona, arrived at Groothoek in February 1986. He started his ministry at Maandagshoek in 1964 after many years in Zimbabwe. His coming to Groothoek saw



the continuation and also the completion of his work in Sekhukhuneland. During the years he worked at Groothoek, he tried to expand the congregation and to make it financially self-supporting. Throughout the presbytery of Burger, he organized training sessions for treasurers of various congregations to improve stewardship of the members.

In the Lerato congregation he also started several building projects. His first project was the Lebowa-Kgomo church. His predecessor, Rev Ockie Olivier, had already obtained the plan for the building from an architect, Dries Kühn, in Pietersburg. Sakkie had the steel structure erected and continued enclosing it with funds he obtained. Lebowa-Kgomo was at that time the capital of the homeland of Lebowa. The synodical office of the DRC in Pretoria contributed amply. A parsonage was also built next to the church.

Rev van der Merwe also erected a small church at the Malemati-Mphahlele outpost as well as at Magatle. The builder at Magatle did not complete the work. His helpers bungled the roof and Sakkie worked for days to straighten the corrugated iron. During this time he lost 5 kilos in weight because of the heat. He also helped evangelist LJ Tladi to build a 5-roomed house, with a bathroom and a toilet for himself and his family. He wrote on 12 March 2009: “I am still grateful to Sakkie van der Merwe. Everyday I appreciate what he did for my family so that we can enjoy the benefits.”

The Mphahlele minister’s ward of the Lerato congregation was served by Rev PW Mashabela, who arrived in 1986. Rev van der Merwe served the minister’s ward of Groothoek, Zebediela and other wards. He was assisted by evangelist SP Mahlobogoana, who went for further training at Turfloop Theological School and after finishing his studies, was ordained in 1987 as co-pastor of Lerato. When Rev van der Merwe retired in 1990, the missionary’s post, as the position held by the DRC ministers who served in a daughter’s church denomination was known at the time, was discontinued. Rev Mahlobogoana moved into the missionary’s house on the hospital grounds directly opposite the church.

### **25.1.9 Cyril Mabitsele Mpe**

After serving as youth minister for the NGKA Northern Transvaal Synod since 1975, he became the new minister for Nylstroom in 1980, but in 1984 he moved to Lerato, where

he served for two years. In 1986 he accepted a call to Malonga (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1994).

#### **25.1.10 PW Mashabela**

Pakeng Widas Mashabela completed his studies at Stofberg, Turfloop, in 1984. Rivoni was his first congregation in 1985 (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1978:255). In 1986 he accepted a calling to Lerato (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1991:249). He was co-minister to Rev Sakkie van der Merwe and Rev SP Mahlobogoana of Groothoek minister's ward. Rev Mashabela was the minister for the Mphahlele minister's ward. However, he did not live at Mphahlele. He and his family decided to obtain their own residence at Lebowa-Kgomo. He came to Lerato at the time when plans were made for some of the Mphahlele wards, together with Lebowa-Kgomo ward, to secede from Lerato and to form a new congregation called Lerato-Bohlabelo. The local church council of Mphahlele objected to this move, supported by their minister, Rev Mashabela. The general church council outvoted them, but the opposition was so influential that the Executive Synodical Commission became involved. When they refused, the Lebowa-Kgomo local church council took their petition to the Supreme Court in Pretoria, where the matter was settled. The formation of the local ward Lebowa-Kgomo became a reality in 1990 (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1991:175). Mrs Mashabela, a teacher, also played an important role as secretary of the Christian women's movement of the presbytery of Burger. Both Rev Mashabela and Rev Mahlobogoana remained as ministers of Lerato. Rev Mahlobogoana retired here and Rev Mashabela died during his term of service. These two ministers were serving Lerato congregation at the time when the last missionary, Rev Sakkie van der Merwe, left. They were also involved with the formation of the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa.

#### **25.1.11 SP Mahlobogoana**

Serame Phineas Mahlobogoana was born on 05/03/1935 and grew up at Mokopane (Mahwelereng) near Potgietersrus. He married Edwina Maishela in 1964. The couple had one son and four daughters. He studied at Turfloop from 1960 to 1962. After completing his studies, he worked as an evangelist in Potgietersrus East congregation from 1963 to 1968, Bakenberg from 1970 to 1972, Naboomspruit in 1973, and moved to Lerato congregation in 1974. While serving as an evangelist, he started his theological studies at

Stofberg (Turfloop) in 1981. In 1987 he was ordained in Lerato congregation, where he worked with co-ministers W Mashabela from 1987 to 2002 and with Rev Sakkie van der Merwe from 1987 to 1990. During his term, the subsidising of the missionaries' posts was terminated. He moved to the missionary's house at Groothoek, and witnessed the phasing out of missionaries and the NGKA becoming the Uniting Reformed Church in 1994.

#### **25.1.12 Lesetja John Tladi**

Lesetja John Tladi was born on 10 August 1922. After finishing his training at Stofberg Gedenkskool at Viljoenskroon in the Free State in 1951, he worked as an evangelist at Koedoesrand (Swartwater) till 1952. In 1952 he took up the same position at Naboomspruit (Roedtan), where he worked for four years before moving to Klerksdorp in 1957. He worked with missionaries PM Stapelberg, Petrus Etsebeth, Ockie Olivier and Sakkie van der Merwe in Mamelodi until 1970. In 1971 he moved to Lerato, where he retired in 1985. His house was built by Rev Sakkie van der Merwe. He is still living in the same house. During his time as evangelist, he helped Rev Sakkie van der Merwe build the churches at Malemati-Mphahlele and at Magatle congregation ward. Evangelist Tladi married Maria Maja on 12 February 1947. The couple had nine children, three boys and six girls.

## **26. NGKA BURGER CONGREGATION**

### **26.1 DR AND MRS JJ KRITZINGER**

Dr Johan, better known as Dons, Kritzinger and his wife, Anneke, who was also a medical doctor, were the new missionary couple. Johan was ordained on 9 September 1972 as the new minister of Burger congregation by Rev Marcus Maphoto. He was very impressed with the natural beauty of the Leolo Mountains.

Maandagshoek, he said, is one of the most beautiful places in the mountain area. The motto of the mission hospital is JESU O A PHOLOSA (Jesus is [the] Saviour). He writes as follows: “The core of the work centralizes around the main gable church at Maandagshoek. It is the symbol of all church activities. Here at Maandagshoek, the minister is stationed. Here he received visitors, kept an address list of financial supporters, attended to the office administration, conferences were held here and new projects were planned and launched” (Kritzinger 1975:34).

Dons went through a very important phase in the mission of the DRC, which equipped him for his later service as researcher, tutor and author. He became lecturer at Unisa in 1980, and in 1981 research officer of ISWEN, lecturer at the theological faculty of the University of Pretoria and professor, while remaining director of ISWEN (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1991). He writes as follows in the preface of his book: *Rethinking Ministry* (2007): “In the 1970’s I served as a missionary minister in a traditional area in the present Limpopo province of South Africa. In our work, which was pioneered by Reformed missionaries, I was fortunate to have as colleagues wonderful people who ministered with me in an area of about 10 000 sq km. In this vast area we visited 36 outposts.”

#### **Transition Period**

Dons succeeded in creating a new period of mission strategy in the congregation of Burger. The old mission method of the pig-farm, building activities and bazaars were mainly the initiative of the white missionaries. Dons slowly transferred these activities to the Church council, the black ministers and evangelists. He accompanied and supported them in eventually taking the lead.

When Rev Jan Nieder-Heitmann succeeded him, he immediately started studying the Northern Sotho language. He was able to devote most of his time to a programme of church growth in the different wards. In this task he had a willing and able team of colleagues, evangelists and congregation ward leaders.

## **26.2 REV MJ MANKOE – HIS LIFE AND WORK IN SEKHUKHUNELAND IN THE CONGREGATION OF BURGER**

### **26.2.1 His Early Life**

He was born on 23 May 1932 at Mphahlele, the first outpost of the Kranspoort mission in Sekhukhuneland. Like all Pedi boys in rural areas, it was his duty as a small boy to look after his parents' cattle herd. In 1940, at the age of eight, he started school at the DRC Mission School at Lesetsi, but in 1944 he returned to look after his parent's cattle again. In 1945 he attended the traditional mountain school for manhood (initiation school). He then became a farm worker at Roedtan. In 1949 he worked at Zebediela Estates. In 1950 he decided to return to school. He was too old to be enrolled at the primary school. His parents and teachers solved the problem by changing his birth date from 1932 to 1935. In 1953 he passed Standard 6 at Ngwana Mohube Secondary School.

### **26.2.2 His Call to the Ministry**

In 1954 he became a full member of the NGKA under Rev Murray J Louw, who confirmed him. He matriculated in 1957 and started work at the Groothoek mission hospital. During this time he felt called to prepare for the ministry in the DRC mission as an evangelist. He started his studies at the Stofberg Memorial School in 1959. He completed the course and in 1961 was ordained as evangelist in the Sekhukhuneland congregation during the same year. The following year he married Deborah Mashiane, a young nurse at Matlala Mission Hospital. Rev Mankoe told the following story: "When he visited his girl friend at Matlala, he did not have a place to stay over. The mission doctor, Frikkie van Niekerk, suggested the mortuary as it was the only available place at the station. Fortunately for him, it did not contain any bodies". The Lord gave the couple three girls and two boys. The youngest boy died in 1968.

### **26.2.3 His Work as Minister**

In 1964 he returned to the Stofberg Memorial School to further his studies. After completion of his studies, he was ordained as minister in the congregation of Potgietersrus in 1967. He worked here for six years with Rev JH Robertze, who was minister of the DRC at Potgietersrus since 1949. In 1973, Rev Mankoe received a call to the Naboomspruit congregation where he worked for four years. In 1977 he returned to the congregation of his youth, Burger. He was ordained at Ga-Marota near Maandagshoek on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1977. He resided at the parsonage at Praktiseer, now known as Tubatse. He served this congregation for 23 years, until his retirement on 23 July 2000.

### **26.2.4 Burger NGKA Congregation**

During the time of Rev AJ Rousseau (1926-22/09/1940) the mission station of Burger was situated near the place where Rev Mankoe grew up, opposite the Olifants River.

**1940-1941:** On 27 October 1940, the same year in which Rev Rousseau left Burger mission which he had pioneered in 1926, Rev Hendrik Hofmeyer of the Kranspoort mission at Betel came to the assistance of the congregation until the end of 1941.

**1942-1943:** Rev LC van der Merwe served Burger Mission.

**1943:** Rev Mankoe wrote that, when he was a youngster of only eleven years old, he was also present when Rev Murray John Louw and Rev Moleke Edward Phatudi Mphahlele were ordained at Mphahlele under a tree. Maybe the Lord had already planted a seed in his heart, calling him to full-time service, on that occasion.

Rev MJ Louw stayed at Burger Mission Station, assisted by evangelist Alphons Mokoena. Rev Phatudi went to Gemsbokspruit near Klipspruit, where he stayed for three years until he received a call in 1945 to Heidelberg (Tvl).

**1943:** Rev MJ Louw closed the old Burger station and moved to the new station at Maandagshoek. Maandagshoek Mission became the new centre of Burger congregation. This was also the place where old mine buildings were used to start the first mission hospital of the DRC.

<b>OTHER MINISTERS WHO WORKED WITH REV MJ LOUW</b>		
Rev EM Phatudi	1943-1945	Klipspruit
Rev SJ Njuweni	1954-1959	Ward Bewaarkloof
Rev PN Kutumela	1958-1962	Ga-Mphahlele
Rev JM Louw (AA son)	1959-1983	Maandagshoek
Rev ES Ramaipadi	1961-1976	Worked with Rev JM Louw, son of AA

<b>OTHER MINISTERS WHO SERVED IN BURGER CONGREGATION</b>		
Rev JP Zeeman	1962-1964	With Rev ES Ramaipadi
Rev IM van der Merwe	1965-27/11/66	With Rev ES Ramaipadi
Rev ES Ramaipadi	1961-1976	Died in a motor accident
Rev SW Burger	1967-1971	With Rev ES Ramaipadi
Rev JJ Kritzinger	1972-1980	With Rev ES Ramaipadi
Rev MP Mojapelo	1976-1991	With Rev JJ Kritzinger
Rev MJ Mankoe	01/77-07/2000	With Rev JJ Kritzinger Rev MP Mojapelo Rev JH Nieder-Heitmann Rev JPJ Koen
Rev JH Nieder-Heitmann	1982-1991	
Rev JPJ Koen	1992-1994	
Rev TM Banda	Was ordained on 30 <sup>th</sup> March 1993 as minister of Burger. He is still serving as tent-making minister.	

### **26.2.5 Rev Mankoe's Work as Chairman of the Presbytery of Burger**

Rev Mankoe was a born church leader. Soon after his ordination in his first congregation at Potgietersrus, he was elected chairman of the presbytery of Seleka. The same happened at Burger where he was elected to serve on the presbytery commission shortly after his arrival and took over the chairmanship in 1981. During his 23 years of service on the presbytery they dealt with many disputes in the different congregations. The most important was the secession of the congregation of Lebowa-Kgomo from Lerato. Both the synods of the region of Northern Transvaal and the General Synod decided against the secession. Eventually the case was brought before the Supreme Court in Pretoria, which resulted in the secession of the new congregation in 1990.

Rev Mankoe retired in 2000 and has since been living with his wife in Lebowa-Kgomo. He still preaches and assists the congregations of Lebowa-Kgomo and Lerato. He led the service at the 50 anniversary of Matlala Mission in 2007.

### **26.3 REV JH NIEDER-HEITMANN**

Rev Jan Nieder-Heitmann came to Burger congregation in 1982. He lived in a house on the hospital grounds, as the old parsonage for missionaries was occupied by evangelist Maduane. Like his predecessors, he continued with the Burger congregation newsletters. In the Easter 1985 issue he wrote as follows:

*Autumn here at Sekhukhuneland is most beautiful. It is the time when all the different shades of yellow, orange and red of the Magaba trees flow into the colours of the moss-grown rock-slopes of the Leolo Mountains. This year the sorghum is red in the ear. After three severe droughts, the rain has come and local people could plough and produce food once more which is a great help especially during this time of inflation. With so many unemployed men, another year of drought would have been severe.*

*Evangelists L Chaba and LJ Makwana are making progress with their minister's course. Evangelist Makwana has severe problems with the tribal authorities concerning initiation. Because of this situation he could no longer stay in the Riba parsonage on top of the mountain and therefore moved to his own house at Driekop. Shortly after this move he lost*



*two of his brothers as well as a sister. The wife of evangelist JP Mokoena who works on the farms and also at Alverton in the homeland where the couple stay wrote the following: 'We are doing a great job among the people teaching them how to work together. We teach the Bible, cooking, knitting, household tasks and rearing children. On the farms the work is difficult, because the farm workers are only available in the evenings and during week-ends. Alcohol plays a very negative role in spreading the Gospel.'*

Rev Nieder-Heitmann concentrated mainly on equipping the members by organizing youth and church council members' conferences. He even tried, as he said, to revive an old tradition which is called congregation conferences, on Pentecostal Sunday. He also did a lot of teaching aimed at improving members' stewardship. In his 1985 newsletter he reported that he was busy building the conference centre with the support of the Meyerspark Youth (KJA) and that it would hopefully be completed during the same year.

When he finished his newsletter he signed on behalf of the following evangelists and pastors of the Burger congregation: LP Chaba, MT Maduane, LJ Makwana, MJ Mojapelo (minister), MB Shaku, MJ Mankoe (minister), JP Mokoena, JH Nieder-Heitmann (minister) and MP Phaahla.

#### **26.4 MP MOJAPELO**

He was ordained as minister of Hlatjane in 1970. He accepted a call to Burger in 1976. In July 1992 he accepted demission to study further. He was stationed at Tampe (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1991).

#### **26.5 JPJ KOEN – LIFE SKETCH**

When Rev Jan Nieder-Heitmann left, Rev Koen started as the new minister in February 1991. He was officially ordained in February 1992. The couple stayed at Maandagshoek, but because of political threats moved into a mine house. In 1993 the church council of Burger succeeded in calling Rev TM Banda, who was ordained by Rev Koen on 3 March 1993 as his co-minister. The local mission commission of the Burgersfort congregation was contemplating mission work in Mauritius. Rev Koen was called for this task and he accepted. He obtained demission from Burger in January 1995. The subsidy which had been approved by the synod of the DRC Eastern Region stopped. His pension and medical fees were paid by the congregation of Burgersfort. Other subsidies for the evangelists and

the black minister came from Meyerspark in Pretoria and Burgersfort, which was the nearest town to Maandagshoek.

During 1995 Rev Koen studied French and in 1996 relocated to Mauritius. This mission initiative ended in 2001, when the Koen family returned to Burgersfort. In September 2001 he was ordained as co-minister for Rev Hennie Grobler as tent-maker (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 2010). All subsidies were terminated. The interest shown in Burger over many years also came to an end. Rev Koen was elected co-ordinator of Eastern Transvaal Mission Projects of the synod. The term *Mission* was also abandoned in favour of *The Ministry of Witnessing Services*.

## **26.6 TM BANDA**

1. Rev TM Banda was born in South Africa  
Date of birth: 12-06-1961  
Full Names: Thomas Moses Banda
2. Rev TM Banda was ordained as a minister on 3 March 1993 in Burger congregation.

In 1990 he obtained a Higher Education Diploma and in 1991 he was employed at Sogane Senior Secondary School. In the same year he passed the remaining two theological courses required for a BTh Honours degree, which he was awarded in June 1992. Rev Banda married Mmapula Lydia Makoela, born on 16 September 1963. He thanked God for giving him a strong wife, who supported him throughout his career.

This family is blessed with five children:

Nakedi Ezekiel 10/12/1988

Tinkhane Sanah 02/03/1993

Mmapula Agnes 26/09/1994

Mathukhwane Marriam 07/09/1999

Matjie Rosah 30/05/2005

### **Portfolios in the Presbytery of Burger**

Chairperson of the presbytery of Burger from 1998 to 2002.

Presbytery scribe: 2003 to 2006.

Chairperson: 2007 to 2008.

Primarius member of the *Ringskommissie* 2009.

“The congregation of Burger has a membership of approximately 900 adults”, says Rev Banda. “It is a big congregation with four evangelists and three ministers’ posts. I am now the only minister remaining in this big congregation. Finances are viable but the church council keeps on postponing calling a minister to come and assist me. With the tireless efforts I am putting into this congregation, membership is fluctuating but we hope to secede the congregation into two districts in due course. We hope GOD will help us in this regard.”

## **27. LEPELLE CONGREGATION**

### **27.1 GJ JORDAAN – 1977 TO 1995**

I accepted a call after completing my studies at UP at the end of 1976. The church council of Lepelle's first call went to a classmate, theological candidate Abe Cloete, who was unable to accept the call because of prior obligations. (I received the second highest total of votes. The council's rule was when the first call was not successful, the candidate with the second highest total was called.) I was living in Kempton Park with my family. On 3 January 1977, I arrived at Matlala with my wife, Mariën and our four children, Stefan, Jeanne, Marien and Gawie and on 16 January I was ordained as missionary and minister of Lepelle in the big church at the mission station. I was 41 years of age.

At the reception one of Lepelle's elders, Mr Seatiel Nchabeleng of Mothopeng, was master of ceremonies, a man with a sharp, strong voice who did not need a loudspeaker. Rev Hennie van Niekerk of the DRC congregation of Kempton Park led the service and Rev Corrie Brits of Kempton Park West conveyed good wishes on behalf of the family's home congregation.

The first task was to visit all the outposts of Lepelle and to meet the leaders of the congregation. I travelled with the evangelist who was stationed at the hospital, Daniël Phala. The roster had been drawn up for the whole year so that each post could at least have Holy Communion every three months. There were 26 posts of which only Leeuwfontein, Moos Rivier and Marulaneng were served by the co-minister, Rev ME Moloto. That meant that at least two outposts were to be visited per Sunday. I found that, following Rev Conradie's departure, many catechists needed confirmation and many children had to be baptized.

Coming from Kempton Park, I found the Lowveld climate very hot. When conducting services, the minister had to wear a jacket and when serving the sacraments, a gown. I also learned that at the services the offerings for the three-month period would be handed to the minister. All the members had a yellow card which was called the *kabelo*. When the minister paid a visit, these cards were filled in with the contributions made. Receipts for all these were made out, whether it was offerings, contribution, baptism or confirmation. When hymn books and Bibles were sold, a receipt was completed for each sale.

The money handed to the congregation treasurer was deposited regularly and a report was given to the church council.

At the end of the financial year a financial statement (the FK form) had to be submitted to the presbytery (*Ring*). The wards were far apart and every ward functioned as a small congregation, each with its own elders, deacons, youth and women leaders who, on special occasions, wore uniforms prescribed by the synod. Elderly persons were usually called ‘elders’ and younger persons ‘deacons.’ The wards were far apart and travelling was usually rushed. It reminded me of Prof Carl Boshoff’s words: “A missionary is a racing-driver on Sundays and during the week he is a pack-donkey”.

The congregation of Lepelle had three ward divisions. The Strydkraal ward division was approximately 50 kilometers from Matlala and its five wards were the responsibility of the minister stationed at Strydkraal. The Tsimanyane ward division was the responsibility of the traditionally called missionary and consisted of eight wards. In 1977 the Strydkraal division was vacant. The Leeuwfontein ward division was served by Rev ME Moloto. He taught the new minister much about the different aspects of the NGKA way of ministry.

Evangelist Phala usually travelled with the missionary and served as a translator. It was very important that the missionary learn to speak Sepedi, because the women members were not able to speak Afrikaans or English. Only high school children and teachers were able to communicate in English. I enrolled at Unisa for a course in Sepedi, also known as Northern Sotho. I further followed the method Brewster suggested, namely learning the language culturally and repeating phrases continuously. I also spent a week with Rev Koos Louw at Dendron who helped me with the basics of Northern Sotho.

## **27.2 MURRAY PHATUDI**

The first church council meeting was held in February 1977. A new minister was needed for the Strydkraal ward division. A theological student, who had completed his studies in 1976, was called. He was candidate minister Murray Phatudi.

On 27 March 1977 candidate minister Murray Louw Seputule Phatudi was ordained with the laying on of hands in the church at Tsimanyane. More than 600 people attended. His father, Edward, who was minister of the NGKA congregation of Tshwane, delivered the

ordaining sermon. Rev Gawie Jordaan, the local minister, undertook the ordination. The younger Phatudi began his ministry in 1977 where his father had started in 1943.

### **27.2.1 The Old Parsonage at Strydkraal**

For many years after Rev Magagane left in 1975, the parsonage was empty because the Strydkraal divisional ward section was vacant. This parsonage had to be renovated in time for Rev Phatudi's arrival. Fortunately the money was provided by the DRC of Marble Hall. We laboured for several weeks to get the place in order.

Rev Phatudi received a call to Mokopane in 1981, which he accepted. The Strydkraal members were upset when he left, because they knew from experience that ministers were inclined to avoid the place, because of the heat and poor infra-structure. The Phatudi couple were loved and appreciated by the whole congregation. For many years Mrs Phatudi was the chairlady of the Christian Women's Mission of the Northern synodical regional area. Mrs Mariën Jordaan acted as her secretary until 1995.

### **27.3 THE NEED FOR CHURCH BUILDINGS – THE NEW CHURCH AT LEEUWFontein**

Most of the members of the wards gathered in school class-rooms, even under trees or in a small room built of clay. The first project for the new missionary was to finish the church building at Leeuwfontein in time for the inauguration ceremony. It took Rev Conradie, the previous minister, and the then minister of Marble Hall two years to complete the building. Only the wooden cross, church bell, wooden window shutters, window panes and other small items still needed attention. On Saturday, 9 July 1977, the building was inaugurated and handed over to the local church council as a place of worship. The service was led by Rev Adam Boshoff, Rev Conradie's colleague. The architect, Mr Anton du Toit, the chairman of the PSK (local commission for mission), and Mrs Adelaide Boshoff of the Marble Hall Women's Service also addressed the congregation.

Mrs Boshoff handed a gift of Holy Communion utensils to the church council. Rev ME Moloto, the local minister of the ward, thanked the congregation of Marble Hall and specifically Rev Conradie for the work he had done. He said that the mother was caring and the child said "Thank you". He mentioned that Rev Brink taught him to say thank you

with both hands. He prayed the benediction and the guests and members went outside, where the memorial stone was unveiled by Mrs Tokkie Conradie.

#### **27.4 A NEW WARD – MALOPE**

The second project that was attended to was the small church building at Malope of which the roof had blown off. We learned that at Malope there were no members of the NGKA and that the building was built in 1964 by Rev Grobler of Klipspruit Mission. The building was used as a hospital clinic. We started with house-to-house visits in the village, searching for any members of our church or anyone that would be interested in joining the NGKA. We identified a dire need for a primary school for the village children, who had to walk eight kilometers to the nearest school every day. We decided to start a school. I took the chief of the *kgoro* (village council) and some of his council members with me to the Department's office, where the circuit inspector assisted us in completing the necessary forms. He enquired about a name for the school and we gave three possibilities; the first of which was Malope, the name of the village, when Mr Masemola, the chairman of the *kgoro*, suggested 'Tutu'. The inspector wanted to know what the Anglican Church's connection was. After discussions, we found that Mr Masemola had worked for the previous owner of the farm, Mr du Toit. So it could have been the Du Toit Primary School. Eventually the name of the school was to be Malope Primary School.

With the assistance of Jack Mampolo and Johannes Nkogatse, we restored the church building. We laboured for weeks to put everything in place, but did not have the necessary funds for furniture and window panes. We made small wooden benches and used split poles for window shutters. A temporary teacher by the name of Hendrik Kgaditse was appointed. He was still at school, but lacked the funds to continue his education. We started with 30 children in Grades A and B. Hendrik helped with a Sunday school-class and catechism.

The first church service, held on 7 August 1977, was attended by 55 children and eleven adults. Its first member was Mr Pius Masemola. His father was a member in the days of the missionaries of Klipspruit (Sekhukhuneland). Pius, who in the meantime had become a Roman Catholic, felt that he would rather join the NGKA, the church of his father. The service was also attended by Harry Nchabeleng who lived about five kilometers away with

his family. They were already members, but the children needed catechism. I used to fetch them for the services.

There were no trees around the church building. The heat was unbearable for the children. We therefore replanted lilac trees taken from the mission station at Matlala. Soon there was ample shade and when the Lebowa Government supplied two teachers in 1978, one of the classes gathered outside in the shade of the trees. Hendrik went back to school and completed his studies. He was offered a position in Pretoria, but he and his family remained faithful members of the NGKA at Masemola.

With the assistance of the Lebowa government, we were able to build a new school. When some of the children reached Grade 7 (Standard 5), they could continue their secondary school education.

By this time, a small congregation had taken shape, with quite a few families like the Masemolas, the Nchabelengs and the Malekas who were prepared to help with further improvements. The church building was equipped with proper church benches in 2004. The DRC congregation of Silverton donated the necessary funds for a small group of volunteers to paint the building and render further assistance. The church council of Lepelle regularly held its meetings here at Malope because of its central position (Jordaan 2006:15).

#### **27.4.1 Evaluation: The Trees around the Church**

The practice of planting a tree and caring for it until it is big may distract the reader from the main theme, but trees play an important role in the environment of the church members and the community. The shade of these trees is enjoyed by the members before the service starts and those who have cars will be glad to have parked their cars under the shade of a tree, especially if the temperature for that day may be around 35 to 40 degrees. Trees also protect the church building against strong winds during a storm. The cutting of trees in Sekhukhuneland for firewood and kraals is still in practice and this area that was once called *bushveld* is becoming desolate. The church has a task to become involved. Ott and Strauss (2010:149) reminds us that: “In missionary work, the creation mandate require maintaining underlying ethical values such as protecting human dignity, stewardship of



environment, justice and compassion.” In Lepelle congregation we have 23 church buildings alone.

### **27.5 MASEMOLA**

The same strategy was followed at Masemola, only ten kilometers from Malope, where Rev Grobler had built a small church in 1964. The building was renovated and the local primary school was able to use it as a class room. The mother-in-law of elder Johannes Diphofa of Strydkraal was living here with his daughter Klasina. He started a class for new catechists. Every Sunday he would travel from Strydkraal where he lived, and in the same year (1977) some catechists were baptized. Masemola also became a new post for Holy Communion where a local church council was put in control.

The missionary learned from elder Diphofa that before any church could start in a village, the chief had to be consulted first. The elder took me to Chief Tseke Maboe, the local chief of one of the Tau groups. One could not negotiate directly with the chief; his spokesman had to be consulted first. He was usually available at the entrance to the Kgoši's lapa. He would go to the chief on your behalf to find out if an audience had been granted. The spokesman had already informed the chief who we represent and the reason for our visit, but during the meeting he would once more explain it to the Kgoši. Then the Kgoši would welcome us and show his pleasure.

I was introduced by the elder, his subject. “He is now our new moruti and we are very grateful that after two years we have a moruti once again.” The Kgoši expressed his gratitude and wished the moruti well. If there was anything that needed his attention, I could feel free to visit him.

### **27.6 MATLALA HOSPITAL**

On a plaque at the entrance of the hospital the following words appear: “Transferred to the Lebowa Government on 1 April 1976. Superintendent Dr FJ van Niekerk 1959 to 1965; Dr MVJ van Vuuren 1966. Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come!” (Rev 1:4).

When Dr Frikkie van Niekerk left, Dr Martin van Vuuren became superintendent in 1966. He left at the end of 1978. For two years, 1977 to the end of 1978, I experienced the full

reality of a mission station. The missionary took over the pig-farm, and the hospital staff was released from caring for the pigs. I consulted a veterinary surgeon and after inspecting the pig-sty, he suggested that I seriously reconsider the viability of this venture. Dr Goosen suggested that in view of the needs of the Lepelle congregation – the spiritual needs of the population and attending to the sick in the hospital – any further attention and money spent on the pig-farm would be detrimental to the missionary’s calling. I informed the hospital management and they agreed. A farmer of Marble Hall, Mr Theuns van der Nest, came and bought the whole lot. After that I started a small business selling coffins. The income had to pay for two handymen, Jack Mampolo and Johannes Nkogatse, who had worked for the previous missionary for many years. It also enabled us to buy material for the building of small ward churches as well as restoration work.

### **27.6.1 The Mission Hospital Staff**

All the staff, the doctors and their spouses, the sisters and the administration staff, helped with ward visits, showing slides and assisting with morning devotion before the day’s work began. They all knew that the Government of Lebowa expected them to train new staff for the administrative posts. The doctors also realized that they were now in the service of the government; they were no longer mission staff of the DRC. They were also planning for their children to obtain the best possible education, so as to secure their own future. All of them were grateful that the Lord called them into His service for a while.

### **27.6.2 1979 to 1982 – Transformation**

The hospital superintendent, Dr Martin J van Vuuren, left at the end of 1978. He became superintendent when Dr Frikkie van Niekerk left in 1965. Under Dr van Vuuren’s guidance, the staff of the hospital felt secure, because of the binding effect his leadership had on them as a mission team. Many chiefs of Lebowa, including chief MM Matlala, attended his farewell function on Sunday, 17 December 1978 and thanked Martin and Fébé for their work at Matlala hospital over a period of 14 years. Mr QwaQwa, the minister of Health of Lebowa, thanked the Van Vuuren family on behalf of the government. They were given many gifts in appreciation of their service. Dr van Vuuren became a professor at the medical school of Bloemfontein in the Free State (Jordaan 2006:50).

The rest of the medical staff gradually left the mission. Miss Polla Danhauzer, who was in charge of the Nurses' Home and kitchen, retired after many years. Mr Martiens Prinsloo and his wife, Grieta, were transferred to the South Ndebele local government. Grieta was in charge of the laundry and Martiens of the store-room. Together they had 15 years of service at the mission. The secretary of the hospital, Kerneels Lourens, left after 14 years. He was appointed to the synodical office of the DRC in Pretoria. He kindly managed the books of the local NGKA congregation at Lepelle. At his farewell function, Mr SM Nchabeleng thanked him for the work he and his wife Annatjie did for the congregation of Lepelle and the local community as a whole. Mr Hennie Briel, who was in charge of the workshop, left after 14 years. His wife, Marie, also worked at the hospital, taking care of the food supplies. Oom Hennie, as we all knew him, helped with the establishment of the Mogaladi ward. One of the members of that ward, Lukas Senong, had been converted under the ministry of pioneer missionary Abraham Rousseau. He also witnessed the conversion of the leader of the Mogaladi clan, John Mokomane. When Hennie left, there were 160 active converts in the congregation of Mogaladi. At the workshop each working day started with devotion and prayer, a tradition which is still being upheld. Mrs JA Strydom, the matron, also retired. She and Dr van Vuuren kept the hospital going for 14 years. The bookkeeper, Mr Chris van Aardt, kept going for a few more years but left in 1981. He was known as Rev Mokopa (mamba). He and his wife, Bessie, looked after the Masanteng outpost 10 kilometers from the hospital. When the new church was inaugurated in 1980, Tannie Bessie presented the congregation with a beautiful embroidered pulpit cloth, a collection plate and a cupboard for the church requisitions. The last of the mission staff left in April 1982. Dr and Mrs Mich Veldman moved to Modimolle (Nylstroom).

### **27.6.3 The Closing of the Mission Era**

When Dr Veldman left, I wrote an article for *Die Sendingblad* to indicate that the medical mission era of the DRC had come to an end (Jordaan 2006:146). For six years Mich Veldman and his wife, Saartjie, were faithful witnesses. They conducted a Bible study group, ward services, film and slide shows and services for children, and distributed literature. This was the type of evangelization that was faithfully carried out since the establishment of the hospital in 1957 until 1982. At his farewell function many people gathered in the church. A drum and dance brigade of the Bapedi of Sekhukhuneland gave

a ‘thank you’ performance and Matron Choga made a farewell speech. Rev Jordaan spoke and pointed out that the last of the mission doctors in the medical mission era had left.

Dr JM Cronjé was quoted (Cronjé 1981:392) about the medical mission of the DRC: “The church has lost a great opportunity in terms of the specific call for Christian medical service according to the norms of God’s Word.” He asked the question: “Must the church not consider the erection of a hospital in the RSA where nurses, doctors and paramedical staff will have the opportunity to witness and experience training in effective discipleship in the medical profession?” (Not directly translated – author.)

The DRC had always viewed medical mission as proclaiming the Gospel. In the set of general mission rules it is stated as follows: “The church makes use of different services such as medical school education, literature and other charity services, as far as such services could give rise to the proclaiming of the Gospel through Word and action.” The problem is that the government had changed its policy since the Tomlinson Report was published suggesting that all health services be taken over by the local government. The administrative and financial expenditure for the church was of such a magnitude that the church had to work co-operatively in handing over all their mission hospitals to the central government which in turn, worked in co-operation with the local black government (Jordaan 2006:82).

### **27.7 GAWIE JORDAAN: 1982**

In October 1982, when the moving of hospital mission staff had been completed, the Jordaan family was in a critical position as all their support groups had left. Some of their children were at Ben Viljoen High school in Groblersdal, while others were still at Marble Hall and had to travel daily. The youngest, Gawie, was in Pretoria HF Verwoerd Hospital with nephritis. The church council of the DRC congregation in Marble Hall suggested to the Lepelle church council that the minister of Matlala be transferred to Marble Hall. In October 1982, after six years at what was then known as the Goedvertrouwen Mission, the Jordaan family left the old parsonage at Goedvertrouwen and the Matlala hospital and relocated to Marble Hall moving into the old parsonage next to the DRC in Skool Street. Marien and Jean enrolled at the primary school just across the road while Stefan could stay at the boarding school in Groblersdal. The mission buildings at Matlala were used as store-rooms and for visiting groups.

## **27.8 NEW MISSION STRATEGY**

The move meant that he now had to focus more on the Marble Hall Loskop irrigation farms, their workers and the farm schools.

### **27.8.1 The Shangaans of Mozambique**

Many of these people were contract workers who came through the Komatipoort border post to work on the tobacco farms in Southern Africa. This was an opportunity to reach them with the Gospel. Evening services were held in many farm compounds. Bibles, hymn books and other literature were distributed.

### **27.8.2 Farm Schools**

When I started with my ministry in 1977, I realized that many of the farm labourers' children were not attending school. The Moos Rivier Primary school was only for the children of Mr Hendrik Schoeman's farm workers; the Onverwacht Primary school on the farm of his brother, Andries Schoeman, only catered for the farms around Onverwacht. The Roman Catholic Church operated three schools in the area, and there was also a school on the farm of Mr Willem Engelbrecht. The Kamp F, Wolwekraal, Slagboom and Krokodil farms did not have any school facilities other than a small Roman Catholic school at Wolwekraal.

The farmers of Wolwekraal, with Mr Thinus Barnard as chairman, consulted with the Roman Catholic office in Groblersdal regarding the building of a school with four rooms and the necessary sport facilities. In 1977 they built a school called Madikoti on a five-acre piece of land. I was appointed as manager. The school opened in 1978 with 200 pupils and 4 teachers. The teachers lived on the property. Over the years new development and improvements took place: a borehole was sunk and water was pumped to a tank; proper ablution facilities and a sports field were provided. The improvements even included a school garden. In 1978 I started with Sunday services and managed to appoint a retired evangelist to stay on the property to assist with religious instruction and to visit farm labourers in the Wolwekraal region.

### **27.8.3 Other Schools**

So many children arrived in 1980 that a second school was started in the Vaalfontein region on the farm of Mr Stefaans Bouwer. The inspector from Middelburg would not allow more than 200 children per school. He was kind enough to approve this school in order to provide schooling for the children. Even children 10, 11 and 12 years old were allowed to enroll.

More schools were built during the years 1978 to 1990 (Jordaan 2006:160). Salieslout, Slagboom, Krokodil, Tshepe and Kamp F were all added. At Salieslout and Kamp F, I built personally. Farmers helped to build the other schools on their farms. I implemented the Bible teaching programme of Rev Jan Hofmeyr of Kagiso for Sunday schools in all these schools.

### **27.8.4 Salieslout Farm School**

One Sunday afternoon the school teacher at Salieslout decided to visit her friend on a neighbouring farm. The police arrested her and on Monday morning my teacher did not report for duty. I was informed that she was being held at the police station in Marble Hall. I paid R60,00 bail to free her. When I tried to be courteous towards the arresting policeman, I was told: “Sir, it is my duty to obey your government’s laws of trespassing.” I even talked to the farmer and asked for an explanation. The school was nearly destroyed when thieves removed half of the roof during the night. They also stole the school furniture. The farmer assisted us to relocate the school to a safer spot. Another setback was when the Department of Water Affairs informed us that the school had to be closed because it was in an area designated for the building of a big dam in the Olifants River at Arabie.

## **27.9 TENT-MAKING MINISTRY**

Based on an agreement with the local NGKA congregation of Lepelle, the congregation of Marble Hall was responsible for my salary. However, the latter started to experience financial difficulties and the yearly budget of the congregation could not be met. One reason for this was that since 1985 the Loskop dam had received less water due to a decrease in rainfall on the Highveld, and farmers could not get their full quotas of water. A further blow came when a third of the congregation members formed a new church called

the *Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk* (Afrikaans Protestant Church). It was during the time of political turmoil when Dr Andries Treurnicht formed his own party, called the Conservative Party. Many DRC members were perturbed by the fact that the DRC had opened its doors to black people. They were inspired by the leader of the break-away group, Dr Willie Lubbe. At Marble Hall, many of the approximately 170 members who broke away from the DRC congregation were financially strong and their leader, Mr Manie de Jager, had no difficulty in forming a new congregation (Jordaan 2006:135).

I was informed by the church council of the DRC Marble Hall that financially the congregation could not cover the salary of the two ministers as well as taking full responsibility of a missionary. I discussed the problem with Dr Karel van Rensburg, who was a member of the mission committee, and rector of the Ndebele College of Education at Siyabuswa. He asked me to consider taking up a teaching post which was vacant at the time. I was to teach Bible and Philosophies of Life, which was a compulsory subject. On 1 September 1987 I started as lecturer in the department of Religious Education. We informed the church council of Lepelle that I would only be available during weekends. The rector, a devout Christian who previously served as a teacher in Malawi, said: “The work among the students may be seen as part of a part-time business, but actually it is building a place for the Kingdom of God” (Jordaan 2006:135).

My aim was to show the students the uniqueness of the Bible as the inspired Word of God. Reading and studying Scripture brings knowledge of the Bible and its authors, and knowledge of the Word of God leads to knowledge of salvation in Christ (Jordaan 2006:164).

Approximately 450 pupils took the abovementioned course. I am grateful for the devoted Christian teachers who assisted with this project (Jordaan 2006:173).

Meanwhile, the situation at the DRC Congregation of Marble Hall improved when one of the ministers, Rev Andries Louw, accepted a call to Faerie Glen in Pretoria. Moreover, the farmers were once again receiving their full water quotas from Loskopdam after good rains fell, and the church council decided to resume full responsibility for the missionary’s post as from 1 January 1990.

The Campus Satellite dated November 1989 reported as follows:



*Rev Jordaan leaves us at the end of this year. He is going to become a full-time minister of an African Church in Lebowa of the Nederduits-Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika. The congregation is called Lepelle, named after the Olifants River. This congregation stretches from the Schoeman farm, Moos River, right along the Olifants River including the whole area of Ga-Nchabeleng (Leolo Mountain region). Pastoring a congregation entails home visits, conducting services, guidance, caring for the sick and bereaved. He will be sponsored by the DRC of Marble Hall.*

## **27.10 GOVERNMENT FEEDING SCHEME**

Another development was that the government of Mr de Klerk made funds available for a feeding scheme in schools. Funds were also obtained to start school gardens. These projects took an enormous amount of time and a lot of administrative work had to be done. Regular meetings were held with the Department of Bantu Education at their Witbank offices regarding the feeding schemes. Ironically enough, it happened that my Toyota bakkie was stolen while I attended a meeting in Witbank on behalf of the Groblersdal District Council to discuss the government's projects for assisting the poorest of the poor and to give feedback on the scheme. I had to buy a secondhand bakkie to return home that afternoon (Jordaan 2006:206).

## **27.11 THE ERECTING OF SMALL WARD CHURCH BUILDINGS**

I started early in 1978 with the building of small ward churches, the first of which was at Gareagopola, about 15 kilometers from Matlala, where the congregation gathered in a small room built of clay. The Marble Hall DRC donated R1 000,00. The bricks were made by Johannes Nkogatse and Jack Mampolo at Matlala during the previous year. This church building was opened in April 1979. During 1979 we also started building a church at Mogaladi, which was completed in 1980. Previously the congregation had gathered in the primary school.

### **27.11.1 The Rand Afrikaans University**

In 1979 I received an invitation to visit the DRC congregation of Auckland Park. The visit was arranged by Mr Barnard, a member of the congregation and father-in-law of Dr Mich Veldman, one of our mission doctors. Rev Madder Steyn was the minister at the time.



Slides were shown in the hall to the students after evening service. The next year the theological students planned a visit to Lepelle. They called themselves *Admissiebond* (those studying theology in order to become a minister). I had managed to buy a secondhand steel structure and provided the students with transport and the necessary material. We built a small church at Masanteng, about 10 kilometers from Matlala (Jordaan 2007:61). The following year, July 1981, the students returned for two weeks during the July holidays. They gave us a good start by laying the foundation and erecting the walls. With the assistance of two Christian handymen, I finished the building. In 1982 the student team from RAU returned once again. They helped to build a small church at Tsansabella, about 30 kilometers from Matlala. No bricks were available this time, but we planted concrete poles and filled them with dagha in between (Jordaan 2007:67).

In 1983 the students wanted to come again, but we lacked the necessary funds. We came to an agreement that they would obtain sponsors to pay for the material needed. This rule inspired them to obtain the funds required to cover the costs of their building projects.

I kept a record of their visits, the cost of each visit, including the material used, as well as the names of the students and their leaders. Some characteristics of these visits were also noted. Other Christian students also showed an interest and eventually the Christian student movement known as CHRISTU became involved in these outreach camps during the July holidays. They came every year, even in 1986 when the army was active in Sekhukhuneland, trying to control the ‘comrades.’ We had to visit the police station on a daily basis to obtain the necessary permission to be in the area. The cost of material used during the 10 visits from 1980 to 1989 amounted to R21 000,00, excluding food supplies. During their visits the local chiefs were contacted for advice and permission to build structures in their area. We also visited the schools in the community. The church members interacted well with the students, and the youngsters often helped mixing dagha. The students also helped with restoration work. At three of the church buildings, they only managed to lay the foundation and leveling the floors. The buildings were then completed during the year by local building contractors. At the Mothopong church building the following statistics was recorded for the work involved in the preparation of the foundation and the floor:

Kilometers by lorry: 2 186

Loads of soil for filling the floor: 30

Loads of sand: 7

Loads of stone: 9

Loads by wheelbarrow: 2 400

Liters of water used: 6 300

Pockets of cement: 47

During the ten years up to 1989, a total of 150 students committed themselves for two weeks each year. From 1990 to 1994 another 60 students came. The final visit by students of RAU took place in 1994. They laid the foundation of the Mathkuthela church building and levelled the floor. The following year this building was completed by local builders. I was delivering a load of sand one day when the old Nissan lorry caught fire. I extinguished the fire with sand and towed it to the church site.

## **27.12 THE RIOTS**

The riots of 1986 were severe. Schools were closed and homes and shops were burnt down. Lorries with food and materials from the Marble Hall and Groblersdal suppliers were also set on fire. Several people lost their lives. Administrative offices, schools and the properties of policemen were targeted. The church suffered because members were afraid of attending. People could not sleep at night because of the noise. Although some youngsters were unwilling to participate, they were forced to do so in support of the struggle (Jordaan 2007:116).

### **27.12.1 Solomon Marumo was Killed**

Solomon Marumo was an elder of Lepelle congregation and primary school teacher at Krokodilheuwel, where we started a Sunday school and held classes for the catechists. These young people were baptized a few years later. Unfortunately he was transferred to the Tsimanyane Primary School at Matlala. He bought himself a car and on 3 March 1986 six comrades demanded that he transport them to Ragoadi, about 10 kilometers from where chief Matlala lived. He was stopped on the road by the principal of the school who had recognized his car. While explaining the reason for the trip, the police arrived. The comrades jumped out of the car and ran into the bushes, while they were fired upon. The principal shouted to the police to stop the shooting, but it was too late for Solomon, and he was killed. The church council considered it too dangerous for me to assist with the

funeral because of the riots in the Mokopane district, and evangelist Philip Mokone led the service. I continued with Sunday services, although I was warned from time to time not to travel anywhere.

### **27.12.2 Elder David Debeila**

David Debeila was the principal of the secondary school at Apel. He was a devoted Christian and faithfully led the church services on Sundays. I had the privilege to baptize both his sons. He was also in charge of the students' Christian movement at the school. When I visited him in February 1986, he informed me that the comrades had already killed 16 people, using the 'necklace' method. During the night the young people would sing their freedom songs. On 10 April they 'necklaced' 35 people, fifteen of them were killed at 4 o'clock, only 300 meters from the chief's kraal (*moshate*) at Apel. The same evening, on the 10<sup>th</sup> April, Mr Debeila was called to appear before the people's court in the school hall next to the NGKA church building where he preached every Sunday. This was at the request of four students whom he had expelled early in 1982, and who, with money provided by the SA Council of Churches, took their case to the Supreme Court, but lost their case. The court of the comrades did not allow the accused to speak or to defend himself, but had a rule that all should be in agreement. If any one dared to disagree, he would also be sentenced with the accused. At the trial, his own pupils were against the death sentence and demanded that Mr Debeila, their principal, be allowed to speak in order to defend himself. The comrades refused and they convened till early that morning, when they finally dispersed. On the 11 April 1986, the Lebowa police started to arrest some of the leaders. Mr Peter Nchabeleng, chairman of the UDF of Sekhukhuneland, was also arrested. He died of a heart attack at the police station on the day of his arrest. Mr Debeila continued his duties as teacher and school principal, but he and his family slept at undisclosed venues at night (Jordaan 2007:118). On the walls of our small church building at Masemola the following was painted by the comrades: *NO SCHOOL UNTIL 05/05/1988*.

### **27.12.3 The Riots brought Hardship and Blessings**

The people in the Dennilton area in the Philadelphia congregation experienced the riots first-hand. The Sotho-speaking group and the Ndebeles did not see eye to eye, and they often clashed. The Pedi group co-operated with the government in relocating to a farm

near Marble Hall called Krokodil, which belonged to Mr Dup du Plessis. Elandskraal, the next farm, was also occupied by the Pedi group from Dennilton, who received compensation for the properties they left behind. These people at Elandskraal and Krokodil were accommodated in small green tents and corrugated iron houses. A Primary school and a high school were built; roads and stands had already been demarcated. Corrugated iron toilets were supplied and water tankers used to provide water. Assisted by the army, some 20 families were relocated on a daily basis. It was very dry and the water level of the Olifants River was extremely low – the river consisted of waterholes infested with crocodiles. The village was covered in dust and I felt the need to support these new inhabitants. I visited each tent in an attempt to locate any DRC members. I found 24 families, many of them without proof of membership. They told stories about the missionaries of Philadelphia, the names of Rev Jacobsohn, Labuschagne and Büchner were mentioned, as well as those of evangelists such as AW Malope, TM Masekela, EM Mokgoabong, DJ Ngwenya, DM Ramasetse and T Nkabinde. I filled out new cards and membership certificates. The children were put in ‘class’ (catechism) and services were held at the primary school. The principal was very co-operative. His mother belonged to our church and she was one of the first to be ‘clothed’, i.e., to be confirmed as member of the CVV (Christian Women’s Association). Two elders were confirmed as well as two catechists. I also requested Rev Koos Beukes to send his evangelical tent team. He did so and we were able to obtain a stand from the Department of Co-operation and Development. They also provided us with a corrugated shelter (*zozo*) and two corrugated iron toilets. The Evangelical team of Rev Koos Beukes erected their tent on this stand during May 1987 (Jordaan 2007:69). Rev Beukes also sent five evangelists, who went from house to house. The children met in the afternoon and the women in the morning while the big tent was filled to capacity at night, with villagers attending the evening service.

After the campaign, several people were baptized and plans were made to build a small church. That same year the builder of a big shopping centre, Mr Willie Venter, undertook to build a small church, which was appreciated very much by the congregation. On Sunday, 30 August 1987, Mr Venter handed the keys of the church to the congregation. The congregation added a small room in 1995, which serves as a vestry (Jordaan 2007:69).

## **27.13 EVANGELISTS OF LEPELLE – THE PHASING-OUT PERIOD**

### **27.13.1 HH Mohatle**

Evangelist Hofni Mohatle and his wife were stationed at Mathapisa since 1973. These two were a great encouragement to me. When I started my ministry in 1977, the evangelist travelled with me introducing me to his congregation, which was called Soetvelde. The villages of Mathapisa (Eensgevonden), Kgarathuthu, Thabeng, Marishane and Tisane fell under his ministry. At Marishane we used to meet at the Bopedi-Bapedi Secondary School. His wife, Bettie, was a coloured Afrikaans-speaking lady. Edwin, the eldest son, became a teacher, sponsored by the Dutch Reformed Synodical Mission office in Pretoria. Evangelist Mohatle lost his hearing and retired on 30 June 1987. He and his wife built their new home at Glen Cowie not far away from Mathapisa. They had four sons and one daughter (Jordaan 2007:6). After they left, the post was left vacant.

### **27.13.2 JM Matemane**

Evangelist John Moselane Matemane studied at Turfloop and finished his studies as evangelist in 1963. His first congregation was Nkhensani under Rev Eddie Bruwer. He came to Mothopong (Lepelle) in 1966 and worked with Rev Pieter Conradie and Rev Phetla of Lepelle (called Marble Hall in those days) till 1967, when he left for Rivoni.

The Schoeman Farms at Moos River, near Marble Hall, had many workers, especially during the orange harvesting season from June to September. The management arranged that the local mission committee of the Marble Hall congregation should co-operate with the NGKA Lepelle congregation with regard to the approval of an evangelist post under the supervision of the church council of Lepelle. They called evangelist MJ Matemane of Meetse-a-Bophelo congregation who, on 1 July 1985, was ordained by Rev JS Phetla of Bronkhorstspuit (Jordaan 2007:46). The couple stayed in one of the farm compounds. The congregation gathered every Sunday in the farm school. Evangelist Matemane was transferred to Strydkraal in 1996, where he worked until 2005 (Jordaan 2007:13). He was married to Sarena Makgane and the couple had two sons and four daughters. When they retired, they moved to Maandagshoek where his wife died not long after the move.

### **27.13.3 Amos Nkgadima**

Amos Nkgadima started as an evangelist at Buffelskloof in 1948 and worked with Rev Attie van Niekerk of Klipspruit mission. His work took him to places all over Sekhukhuneland. I asked him to write down the names of places where he had worked: Perdehoek, Tafelkop, Eensgevonden, Sterkfontein, Klipspruit, Vaalbank, Groenfontein, Boekenhoutlaagte and Goedvertrouwen. There were not many members, because these places had schools and the parents did not belong to any church. He knew of only 46 full members. He was transferred to Strydkraal in 1957. On a bicycle he visited the following farms: Mooiplaas, Haakdoringdraai, Wonderboom, Vlakplaas, Magaliesstad, Nooitgezien and Debarel. He knew of only 32 full members at all of these places (Jordaan 2007:51).

Rev Pieter Conradie transferred him to Mohlalaotwane in 1964. When I started my ministry in 1977, he was the evangelist with whom I worked. He was already old and sickly, but extremely willing and loyal. He held services in a small room at the old clinic of Matlala Mission Hospital, and requested me to build a proper church for his congregation of more than 60 members. We started in 1980 but, sadly, he died during the same year. His son, Moses, lives in his home next to the church and is of great assistance with repairs and all kinds of jobs.

### **27.13.4 Elias Nonyane**

Rev JT Jordaan wrote in his memoirs that the first evangelist who was appointed in 1957, was Elias Nonyane, who had just finished his evangelist course at Witsieshoek Stofberg Theological School (Koerier No. 99:18, in Jordaan 2007:7). He was placed at Moos River, where Mr Karel Schoeman had built a small church. This farm with its unique situation where the Olifants River and the Moos River meets, was to become, as far as citrus production is concerned, second only to Zebediela Estates, the biggest orange farm in Southern Africa. It had a ward of mostly Malawian workers under Philadelphia congregation. When Rev Jordaan started with the Goedvertrouwen mission, this ward became a ward of the newly established NGKA congregation, Marble Hall, on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1958.

Evangelist Nonyane was later transferred to Goedvertrouwen where he married one of the nurses, Kate Nonyane. She was a devoted Christian who played a leading role in the

pioneering stage of the new congregation. She helped the staff members of the mission hospital with their mission outreach among the nurses and patients. Wishing to become a minister, her husband applied for enrolment at Witsieshoek, only to learn on arrival, that his application had been unsuccessful. The Church council of Marble Hall NGKA had already given him demission, and he was refused permission to return to the congregation because of behavioral problems. What happened to him after this disappointment is a sad story. This albino man was a choir leader and in many ways the congregation lost a talented evangelist.

In 1977 he introduced himself to me. I listened to his story and felt very sorry for him. I had just begun to do evangelization work on the Marble Hall Wolwekraal farms and I needed somebody on a full-time basis. I discussed the matter with Mr Hendrik Schoeman of Moos Rivier and he immediately agreed to subsidise the project from the Christiaan Schoeman Trust. I gave Mr Nonyane a room at the Madikoti farm school. The Christian farmers of Wolwekraal also made use of his services. He immediately started to form a school choir which was very successful. I was warned by the church council of Lepelle that the appointment of Nonyane had to be approved by the church council and the presbytery. I obtained permission from them on a temporary basis on condition that a new ward was formed. I then placed him at Tsansabell, where a new ward for Lepelle started to show good results (Jordaan 2007:67). I also moved him at Mogaladi, where he served until he became so weak that he had to return to De Wetsdorp where his sister, Liza, cared for him. He died on 18 February 2002 at the age of 73. When looking at the pioneering work of the Goedvertrouwen mission, the establishment of Marble Hall congregation which later became Lepelle, and the Matlala Mission Hospital, now called the Matlala District Hospital; the contribution this evangelist had made cannot be ignored.

#### **27.13.5 PM Mokone**

Here in Mohlalaotwane, in earlier days called Vooruitzicht and later called Ragoadi, where evangelist Nkgadima worked, a house was built by Rev P Conradie with a view to creating a post for a black minister. This was never realized. In 1984, the church council decided once again to call an evangelist for Ragoadi. The funds were obtained from the church council of the DRC Marble Hall. Evangelist PM Mokone of Marikana was called and he accepted the call (Koerier no 81 in Jordaan 2007:97). A member of the DRC of Marble Hall, Mr Johan van den Heever, used to travel with his lorry to Rustenburg to sell



tobacco. I often accompanied him. On one of our return trips we went via Marikana to collect Mr Mokone's furniture and also his wife, Elizabeth. We arrived very late at Mohlalaotwane. The congregation and the (*Kgoši*) chief Maserumule Matlala were very happy.

Evangelist Mokone was a loyal and hard worker. He told me how he, as a very young boy, worked after school in the garden of the missionary Rev Jacobsohn, at Philadelphia. He told the missionary that he wanted to become an evangelist, but the missionary felt that he was still too young. However, he continued to work in the gardens of Philadelphia and made himself useful within the congregation until his application was approved and he became an evangelist. He completed his studies in 1952 and served the congregations of Krokodil River (1953) and Marikana.

Evangelist Mokone immediately started improving the church building. He organized the church members of his ward to contribute and he and a team of youngsters put in a new floor. Very early on Sunday morning, 9 November, he paid me a visit at Marble Hall. He informed me that a strong wind had blown the roof of his church off the day before. The entire roof had been ripped off, smashing into a big tree and landing against the fence about 50 yards away.

On that very same day the brackets were loosened and the corrugated sheets were collected and straightened. All the steel beams were bent and had to be repaired. Noticing that the wall behind the pulpit was unstable, we placed the corrugated iron around the wooden pulpit made of teak, a gift from the Reformed Church (*Gereformeerde Kerk*) in Marble Hall. When the wall fell over, our pulpit was unscathed. After two months the congregation could enter the repaired church with joy. Big trees were planted around the church buildings to protect it from the wind.

Evangelist Mokone had a strong youth movement and his wife, Elizabeth, did great work among the women. Several of them became members of the Christian Women's Movement. He also played a very important part during the riots in helping the young people to bear God's laws and obedience to His will in mind. Evangelist Mokone became ill and had to retire. He had already built his own home at Philadelphia where he grew up. He and his wife died within a week from each other, not too long after their retirement on 3 June 1990.



### **27.13.6 DM Phala**

Evangelist Phala was stationed at Matlala hospital. He lived in a house at Boputswa, the old age home, but when the government of Lebowa took over, he was placed at Ragoadi, about 10 kilometers from the hospital. In 1977 I found him at the hospital and he was the one who helped me, as the new minister, to learn the geographical region of the Lepelle congregation.

I was ordained on 16 January 1977. On Monday the 17<sup>th</sup>, Phala and I went to Strydkraal. We travelled through the Leolo Mountains to visit the most remote outstation called Mhaaneng, which was established by Rev Khutumela and Rev Koos Louw in 1959 (Louw: Verslag 1960). Since 1966 this outpost belonged to Lepelle, a distance of 80 kilometers from Matlala. On our way to visit the elders, a programme was decided upon to serve Holy Communion. We visited India, Mothopong and Sesehu wards, as well as Strydkraal, the main post where the minister was living, but which was vacant at the time. The old mission station, Burger, was also visited. Only the main building was still in use as a clinic. All these posts were the old outposts of Rev Abraham Rousseau. All the buildings were old and needed repairs.

#### **27.13.6.1 A Financial Dispute**

Evangelist Phala made a very strong appeal at the first church council meeting of Lepelle for an increase in the salaries of evangelists and ministers. I learned that the synod of the NGKA had a salary scale for ministers and evangelists.

The problem was that the DRC, the mother church, also had a salary scale for the ministers and evangelists of the DRCA, which was called subsidies. The problem was that the congregations of the DRCA had to provide the rest. The congregations of the DRCA became self-governing but not yet self-sufficient. Missionaries generally did not attach great importance to stewardship.

At the first presbytery meeting in 1977 at Klipspruit (congregation of Sekhukhuneland), the evangelist also lodged a complaint with the presbytery to the effect that the minister of Lepelle was not paying any attention to the need for increased salaries for the black full-time ministers and evangelists. It was clear that some inequality existed.

Evangelist Phala started to work in May 1979 at St Rita's Hospital without informing his church council (Department of Health: 29 July 1979). The subsidiary body, DRC Marble Hall, who was responsible for the subsidy, stopped payment of his salary in September 1979. The evangelist referred this matter directly to the presbytery. The presbytery decided that the evangelist must return to Lepelle and resume his work. He returned in June 1980. The church council of Lepelle was informed and the evangelist was placed at Tsansabella, a new ward that was established in 1978 (Lepelle Church Council, June 1980). The church council also wrote to the local missions committee of Marble Hall informing them about the presbytery's resolution. In a letter dated 1 June 1980 Rev P Conradie of Marble Hall wrote: "The Church council decided at its meeting of 13 May 1980 not to continue paying the subsidy of evangelist Phala". The presbytery was duly informed and on 26 July 1980 they requested Marble Hall to reinstate the subsidy, but the request was denied (Ring van Burger 26/07/1980).

The presbytery of Burger referred this matter to the Synodical Commission of the Northern Synod. A meeting was held at the Willie Theron building on 25 May 1981. The commission decided:

1. That the church council of Lepelle had to pay the evangelist the arrears of his salary from June 1980 to June 1981.
2. In case the church council and the presbytery of Burger decided to excommunicate the evangelist, the services of both Rev Jordaan and Evangelist Phala should be terminated.
3. The Presbytery of Burger should consider censorship of the missionary (Besluite: Sinodale Kommissie 25 Mei 1981).

I appealed to the Synodical Commission on 20 June 1981 and requested the commission to convene a meeting with all the parties concerned. The *scriba sinodi*, Dr OCC Erasmus, called a meeting to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1981 at Tsimanyane (Matlala) at 11h00. The following were invited:

1. The commission of the presbytery of Burger (DRCA).
2. Representatives of the local missions committee of the Marble Hall DRC.

3. Representatives of the church council of Lepelle (DRCA).
4. Evangelist Phala.
5. Myself (Scriba sinodi:5 August 1981).

The moderator asked for a solution and understanding. Rev Andries Louw, the new minister of Marble Hall DRC, advised the meeting that Marble Hall was willing to resume the payments of the subsidy, provided that no further accusations were made. He would like to see that the dispute be resolved in order to allow the minister and his co-workers to continue with the ministry because of the great need of building up the congregation of Lepelle and evangelizing the communities. Evangelist Phala continued with his ministry until early in 1984, when he received a call to Boschfontein (Jordaan 2006:96).

## **27.14 THE MINISTERS OF LEPELLE 1958 to 1994**

### **27.14.1 JS Phetla: 01/01/1930-27/02/2002**

Rev Phetla was born of Mashoela Nkgarietše Phetla (father) and Thokodi Mothathe Phetla (mother). He was raised in the district of Nebo. He received his primary school education at Mogatladi Primary School and his second was Gemsbokspruit Secondary school. He then trained as a teacher at Bethesda Teachers Training school. He taught at Jane Furse Secondary School from 1952 to 1963. In 1964 he went for further theological training at Stofberg Theological Training (Gedenkskool) in Pietersburg. He finished in 1966 and was ordained as minister in the NGKA, Lepelle Congregation, in 1967. He succeeded Rev J Mnisi. In 1971 he accepted a call to NGKA Erasmus at Bronkhorstspuit. He received demission in 1999. He married Christina Baile in 1956 and the couple had four children.

Rev Phetla served on many church committees. He translated many books into Northern Sotho. He also helped with the translation of *Thuto ya Bokreste, Hosanna* (Hymn book) and *Puku ya Kereke* (Handbook for ministers). He was well versed in Zulu and was able to translate from Zulu to Northern Sotho. He was able to preach in Afrikaans and he also preached in some Dutch Reformed congregations.

He was always willing to help the congregations in the Sekhukhuneland area (presbytery of Burger) where he grew up. He was raised on the farms near Lydenburg where he

learned to speak Afrikaans. He married a Zulu speaking lady. Their home language was Afrikaans. He assisted with the ordination of many ministers such as that of Gawie Jordaan on 16 January 1977 at Tsimanyane, when he was ordained as minister of NGKA Lepelle. He conducted the service in Afrikaans. He also ordained evangelist MJ Matemane on Schoeman farms at Moos River near Marble Hall. He conducted the service when the new church building of Mothopeng was opened. Called the Centenary Church, it marks one hundred years of congregational activities since converted labourers who worked in the Cape Province were united with their families at Mothopeng and formed a small congregation under Phillip Shaku (also called Phillipus Mantsena) in 1875. The church building was opened on 24 July 1993. When he retired, he continued with translation work. He died in 2002.

#### **27.14.2 VWM Magagane**

Vincent Wulbert Mogoma Magagane was ordained at Nylstroom as minister after completing his studies at Stofberg, Turfloop, in 1963. In 1973 he accepted a call to Lepelle congregation and was placed at Strydkraal for the wards of Mphaaneng, India, Mothopong, Sesehu and Strydkraal as co-minister of Rev P Conradie of Goedvertrouwen. In 1979 he accepted a call to Elands River congregation. Rev Magagane was a tall and humble gentleman who quietly went about his duties. When I started my ministry, his daughter Leeba was a student at the Bopedi-Bapedi High School at Marishane. When she applied for confirmation, I suggested that she obtain permission from her parents first, because they might want to confirm their daughter in their own congregation. She later informed me that her parents preferred her to be confirmed with her class mates as a member of the Lepelle congregation. This served as a testimony of true faith in the presence of many of the pupils of Bopedi-Baedi Hostel where the services were held at the time.

#### **27.14.3 ME Moloto**

Rev ME Moloto started at Lepelle in 1964 and for many years worked with the missionary of Goedvertrouwen (Matlala), Rev Conradie. Rev Moloto became my co-minister in 1977. He was very grateful for my appointment, since he had to serve the whole congregation by himself when the missionary's post was vacant. He had to serve all the wards along the Olifants River, from Moos River (Schoeman Farms) to Mphaaneng, a distance of 120

kilometers. Rev Moloto moved into the new parsonage he completed at Leeuwfontein. He served the wards of Moos River, Marulaneng and Leeuwfontein. He faithfully worked until 1985, when he received a call to Moime congregation (Jordaan 2006:64). The Leeuwfontein minister's ward was vacant until 5 August 1990, when Rev Peter Rakgalakane was ordained. Rev Moloto had built a house for his family at Leeuwfontein. His father-in-law, elder Mabuza, lived with them. After his retirement Rev Moloto became ill and passed away. He was a soft-spoken gentleman.

#### **27.14.4 Peter Rakgalakane**

On 5 August 1990 Peter Rakgalakane was ordained with the laying on of hands. Unfortunately he only stayed for one year before leaving for the congregation of Lebowa-Kgomo. He was succeeded by Rev JT Khumalo in 1992.

#### **27.14.5 MJ Moloantoa**

Makhamelo Jacob Moloantoa was born on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1929 in the district of Seleka (Potgietersrus). He felt the calling to become an evangelist. After finishing his studies at Stofberg in 1960, he started his ministry in the congregation of Mafikeng, where he served with Rev OCO Erasmus. He moved to Lerato in 1963, where he worked with Rev Stapelberg (1967-1971), Rev R Kgatla (1963-1971) and Rev MP Mabotja (1964-1966). During his period of service at Lerato he also worked with the following evangelists: Chunga, Mathabathe, Nkomo, Solomon Ramaipadi, John Tladi and Maredi. Whilst there, he was mainly responsible for the labourers of the citrus farm Zebediela Estates as well as Ga-Molapo, Khureng and Matome. He and his wife, Elizabeth, had three sons and three daughters. In 1982 he went to Stofberg for further training while also serving as evangelist in the congregation of Turfloop, where he worked with the following ministers: JJ van Deventer (1967), Lucas Mabusela (1964) and MZ Maredi (1969).

His first congregation as a minister was Standerton (1973-1986). He subsequently served at Vanderbijlpark and on 18 June 1990 was ordained as minister for the Strydkraal ward. The DRC congregation of Valleisig under Rev Andries Louw sponsored part of his salary. Rev Moloantoa inspired Johannes Moroaswi to become a minister and arranged for him to study at Witsieshoek. He placed him at Mathapisa, where he could stay in the evangelist's house which was vacant at the time, while engaged in house visiting and doing his

practical work. He also asked me to try and find financial support for him while he was working in my minister's ward, Tsimayane. When the students of RAU (Johannesburg) were building the small church at Lekhureng in the Strydkraal minister's ward section, Rev Moloantoa visited them on a daily basis, helping them to get water and sand to the site and even helped mixing dagha. He retired in December 1995 and passed away on the 18 April 2010.

#### **27.14.6 JT Khumalo**

Rev Khumalo of Hartswater irrigation scheme accepted a call to the Leeuwfontein minister's ward. He was ordained on 15 February 1992 at Leeuwfontein. He served the following wards: Marulaneng, Moos River, Elandskraal and Tsansabela. On Sunday, 25 October, he went on a visit to the DRC congregation Lyttelton East, the sponsoring body for the Leeuwfontein ward minister's post. Rev Khumalo thanked the congregation, who had helped Leeuwfontein with subsidies since the early sixties. Rev Khumalo was not healthy and had to retire in 1996. He passed away soon after his retirement (Jordaan 2006:201).

#### **27.14.7 MJ Moroaswi**

He is one of Lepelle congregation's own sons. He was reared at Mothopeng, where his grandparents had been living since the early 19 century. They were the fourth generation of Christians in Sekhukhuneland. He started his theological studies at Witsieshoek in 1993, but moved to Stofberg at Turfloop after two years. He was assisted financially by two members of the DRC, and received a total amount R35 000,00 during his six years of training. During his holidays Rev Moroaswi helped with the ministry at Mathapisa. He was ordained at Leeuwfontein in February 1999 with the laying on of hands. Ever since the congregation of Leeuwfontein seceded from Lepelle in 2008, Rev Moroaswi has been living at Mothopeng, his home town. He is serving the whole congregation of Lepelle (Jordaan 2006:65).

## **28. SEKHUKHUNELAND CONGREGATION**

### **28.1 REV AND MRS PJ JOUBERT**

In 1967 Rev and Mrs PJ Joubert came to Klipspruit as missionaries of the Sekhukhuneland congregation. One of his first duties was the inauguration of the new Visitors' Centre. He and his wife, Louie, worked there until their retirement on 17 October 1976. During his ministry Rev Joubert erected eleven churches and five parsonages for ministers and evangelists (Kritzinger 1976:427). He assisted many people and communities with their school building projects by obtaining and transporting the building material. He told the story of a uniformed man who came to Klipspruit in search of a certain PJ Joubert. PJ Joubert was a building contractor, who transported building material without a license. He answered: "Yes, that's me. At one stage I thought that I was also a missionary" (Kritzinger 1976:428).

At his farewell function he also mentioned that as David had too much blood on his hands to build the temple of the Lord, he also had too much 'dagha' on his hands. "I hope my successor will be able to build the congregation. He must not build churches like I did." Rev Joubert had a unique and unusual style of doing things. He did not wear a white tie or a gown and did not stand on a pulpit – "it is too far away from the people." He also did not observe the synod's ruling that children between the ages of seven and 16 should not be baptized, but had to wait until the age of 16 when they could go to confirmation and be baptized. According to the Bible, he said, there was no such stipulation. He compared the Church Order to a donkey. "You can only go so far as the donkey could go. When it stops, you walk further."

He also had great appreciation for the *TVSV*. He used to call them '*die tannies*' (aunties). He expressed the hope that they would not 'drop' him and Auntie Louie and that they would still pray for them when the building programme had been completed. Rev Joubert summarized his life and work as follows (VSB Ligpunte 1975:4/11): "It is like yesterday, April 1935. As the youngest missionary in the church, I accepted a calling to Wolmaransstad, the place of mealies. With an AJS motorbike, a salary and travelling allowance of R34 per month, I worked for 20 months. Fortunately I also met my wife there. I completed my studies as a teacher and after that taught at the Warmbad Bantu school. I decided that I was not called to be a teacher but a winner of souls. In 1938 I had a



calling to Seleka congregation. I got married but soon realized that the bushveld was not my wife's first love. It was full of malaria, with few Christians and churches. The distance from the south to north is about 250 miles. Today, this area is divided in several congregations. The communication system was poor. My father-in-law died and I could not be reached. As a result, a friend at Thabazimbi helped transport my wife to the funeral. I only heard about his death and funeral after I returned home. At that stage I had 100 Holy Communion Services per year in Seleka. After 10 years, I had a calling to Nylstroom in 1950. It was a pleasure to work with Rev Horak, Rev Pretorius and Rev Martinson. Our children attended good schools. After Nylstroom I accepted a calling to Bakenberg for five years. After that I moved to Sekhukhuneland, and there I worked for 10½ years. It was also a pleasure working with the *T/VS/V* and the personnel of Bosele School. Their prayers and support carried us especially during times of illness. Today, when I look back over 40 years of missionary service, I can state: 'it is all by grace alone'."

During this time he worked with other well-known missionaries such as Hendrik Hofmeyr of Pietersburg, Kamang Brink of Bethesda, THJ van Rensburg of Warmbad, George Stegman of Saulspoort, Robertson of Potgietersrus, Gerrie Olivier, Coen van Rensburg and LC van der Merwe of Kranspoort, Murray Louw of Maandagshoek and many others (Kritzinger 1976:428, Crafford 1982:539).

## **28.2 WESSEL CHRISTIAAN BESTER**

He was born on 28 January 1938 on the farm *Die Draai van Soutrivier* in the district of Bredasdorp. He grew up here, attended the one-man school at Koeranna and later at Klipdale. After he completed his secondary education at Napier, he went to Huguenote College at Wellington, where he obtained a BA degree. He subsequently studied at the Wellington Mission Institute, where he completed his studies after four years and was ordained on 17 December 1960 at Bredasdorp, his home congregation, for his ministry as missionary of North Rhodesia (now Zambia). His first mission post was Nyanje, close to a large hospital. For nineteen years Rev Bester worked in different mission offices and congregations of the DRC mission in Zambia as minister, religious teacher, treasurer of the church and lecturer at the Bible School of Madzimoy, as well as the Justo Mwale Theological School in Lusaka.



At the end of 1979 he accepted a calling to Sekhukhuneland congregation. He was ordained early in January 1980. While stationed at Klipspruit, he married Miss Wika Grobler, a lecturer in Social Work at Turfloop, on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1981. The couple only had one son, Jako, who was known as Jabulani at Klipspruit mission station. Jako is now a medical doctor.

At Klipspruit Rev Moses Shongwane was his co-minister and when Rev Shongwane left for Hammanskraal, he was succeeded by Rev SP Nchabeleng. During his time at Klipspruit, Rev Bester was also assisted by the following evangelists: Old father Mathabathe (Rietfontein); Killion Madonsela (Monsterlus); Frank Matlala (Phokwane); ES Maphanga (Klipspruit) and evangelist Mogaladi of Tafelkop, who died during his ministry. Evangelist Willem Magaela was living at Laersdrift but served the congregation of Roosenekal. The missionary at Klipspruit had to assist the congregation with Holy Communion services. Schoonoord, which included Maila and Phaahla Mohlaka, did not have an evangelist. Sekhukhuneland congregation covered a wide area with 19 outposts for Holy Communion during the year, catechumen, ordination and baptism. During the week before Holy Communion Rev Bester used to visit church members in that particular ward. Although there were no street addresses, he knew all the members and where they resided.

The following is a short extract from his biography:

*Not long after I arrived at Klipspruit, Rev Shongwane, my co-minister, accepted a calling to another congregation. The church council called student SP Nchabeleng from Turfloop. He accepted and was ordained at Klipspruit. He did not have any transport or a driver's license. Sunday services were arranged in such a manner that he could travel with me. He eventually bought himself a Volvo, the car was way too fast for him and he was involved in an accident. So we were returned to the old way of travelling, which some times frustrated both of us.*

*In his newsletter of March 1981 he writes: 'Here at Klipspruit it was the same as at other mission stations – chaotic. Then again, you feel like Job with all the trials and tribulations he faced. It usually happened indirectly. Lightning struck one of our power lines and the line fell on another line conducting electricity to the house of Rev Nchabeleng, and the electricity supply was cut. We tried to restore it but to no avail. Escom could not help us*

*but we kept on trying in the hope that Escom will come to our aid. The very next evening the minister stated that his wife was not talking to him because there were more problems. The toilet and kitchen drains were blocked; the telephone was out of order and the refrigerator had burnt out. It started to rain and the roof was leaking in two of the rooms.’ They also had a screaming new born baby in the house and Mrs Nchabeleng complained about all the dirty nappies.*

*I had to climb up the pole once more, praying that I could restore their electricity. When the sun went down, the power was restored. Even the refrigerator started working again. The drains became unclogged but not without having drain water in my face and on my clothes. One did not know whether to laugh, cry or spit but all these things kept the moruti on his knees. As the stove did not work, he borrowed my gas stove. Unfortunately it exploded. On Sunday morning when I wanted to make some porridge for myself, there was no power, because the ‘trip switch’ was broken as a result of a storm the previous night. I tried for a long time to reach Escom and by the time I should have been on my way to the service I was still standing in my overalls. Another 30 kilometer had to be travelled but with such turmoil even one’s Sepedi faltered. But I managed the service and also assisted with the women’s congress. At least the women’s tasty food and refreshments made up for starting again. (Author’s own translation.)*

Rev Bester told us that he often had to fix water pipes, restore church roofs that were blown off, fighting veldfires that were endangering the pine plantations, keeping thieves away from the wattle plantations and preventing the swimming pool at the visitors’ centre from turning green. On the other hand, a change from the day to day tasks of the congregation. He loved the people because he knew them and their circumstances very well. At the end of April 1985 Rev and Mrs Bester received a calling from the Swaziland congregation, where they served for 8½ years. They then left for Mozambique where Rev Bester started a Bible School at Vila Ulongue. Later on the Bible school developed into the Hefshiba Theological School, where Rev Bester lectured for seven years. While working there, he was responsible for the congregation in the bush at Mphatsa. The couple retired on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2001 to Stilbaai (Bester: Unpublished biography).

### **28.2.1 Evaluation**

I appreciate the story of Wessel, because usually missionaries in a cross-cultural position encounter unusual situations. The black ministers look to their white colleagues as the partners and representatives of the DRC. The parsonages and church buildings were erected by the missionaries of olden times. Therefore all the maintenance costs had to be paid by the mother church. I also had a phone call once from a colleague informing me that the chimney was blown off. The church councils did not take responsibility and ownership while the missionary sent by the owner, the DRC, was still around.

If Rev Bester refused to help, the relationship between him and the black minister could have been harmed. My own experience was that evangelists were usually more practical and willing to do hands-on service. When the roof of one of the church buildings was blown away, the evangelist reported it immediately and thereafter organized the church members to help restoring the roof. It took weeks.

### **28.3 PJ ETSEBETH**

Rev Etsebeth was ordained in February 1987 as missionary at Klipspruit. He and his family did not reside at Klipspruit but at Groblersdal because their three children, Petrus, Gerrit and Annelize were still at school. Klipspruit is 43 kilometers from Groblersdal. As explained in the history of Lerato, Rev Etsebeth was no stranger to the congregations of the presbytery of Burger. Seven years after he left Groothoek, he returned to the same presbytery. Although Groblersdal is very hot during summer, his congregation is situated in the cool Highveld.

### **28.4 A JOURNEY THROUGH THE CONGREGATION**

Travelling to Klipspruit, his first outpost is Tafelkop, only 20 kilometers from Groblersdal. This ward has a church building and a house for the evangelist. For many years evangelist LR Mogaladi worked here until his death in 1984 (NGKA Noord-Transvaal Agenda Junie 1984:194).

### **Sephaku (Frischgewaagd)**

Mission reports refer to Frischgewaagd. On the way to Nebo, 10 kilometers from Tafelkop, this ward is situated only two kilometers from the tar road. It has its own church building.

### **Sterkfontein**

This is a very old mission post 10 kilometers from Sephaku, with its own church building. It has a bluegum plantation that is more than 60 years old. It also has a fountain with strong water and fertile agricultural soil in the valley.

### **Monsterlus**

The congregation has its own church building as well as a house for evangelist Kolotse, who served here before becoming a minister. Rev Joubert also erected a church there.

### **Klipspruit**

Rev Solly Nchabeleng, the present minister used to live at Klipspruit next to the church, which was constructed from solid rocks in 1964. The school for the blind is directly opposite the church (BOSELE meaning the sun is arising – now blind people could learn to read the Bible), with the school for the deaf next to it. Although these two schools are on the same premises, no communication exists between them. The deaf cannot hear the blind and the blind cannot see the hand motions of the deaf. The deaf also sing praises in the church with the motions of their hands. The blind count each step when they enter a building. When there is a slight incline into the building, blind people are not able to determine when they reach the top. That can cause them to fall and cause serious injuries. Rev Etsebeth remembered when the principal asked his vice-principal to replace the globes that were no longer burning in the hostel for the blind. His answer was: “Sir, it is only you and I that can see that the light is no longer shining.”

All the church buildings from the mission era are now used by government staff and for other purposes. For many years, the centre for job creation was of great help to the blind and deaf when they had completed their schooling. It was run by the DRC Synodical Mission. For many years, Mrs de Vos, the wife of the principal, was in charge of this job

creation centre. She used to sell articles like mats and clothes made of sisal at the premises and also when she visited other DRC congregations. She used to share a stall at the Pretoria show with Dibukeng Christian Bookshop. After Mr and Mrs Barry de Vos left, Rev Willie Jansen and his wife Sarie took charge. Rev Willie also had a welding shop for training purposes. Frames were welded and strong baskets were made from raffia. On the eve of 15 August 1995 Rev Jansen was called to the workshop to investigate something suspicious. He was shot and killed at a short distance (Jansen-Bornman family register:40). The DRC stopped the project. Mrs Sarie Jansen moved to Pretoria and for many years she acted as secretary for the Women's World Day of Prayer. She also continued teaching music.

From Klipspruit eastwards to Steelpoort, one first gets Vleischboom and then Nebo, where the magistrate's court and government offices are situated. This is the highest peak on the plateau. Standing here and looking to the west, one sees the cliffs through which the Motsephiri River flows into the Lolamontes dam, supplying water to the Matlala Hospital and the Arabie Agricultural College. The new Arabie dam was built in the Olifants River, and has since replaced the Lolamontes dam.

### **Gemsbokspruit**

Rev PJ Joubert also erected a church building here. This is a historical post, as the first black minister in the NGKA, Rev E Phatudi, started serving here in 1943.

### **Phokwane**

The tar road passes Phokwane on the left, where evangelist Frank Matlala served for many years. Although retired, he is still assisting the congregation with services and funerals. Phokwane has its own church building and a parsonage for the evangelist. The next big place is Glen Cowie, where the Roman Catholic Church built St. Rita's Hospital. This hospital is still functioning well. The Rietfontein and Leeuwkraal wards are in this region. About 10 kilometers further, the Anglican Church erected their mission hospital, Jane Furse. These two hospitals have been taken over by the government. From here the tar road leads to Schoonoord, where the Leolo Mountains form the northern border of Sekhukhuneland. On the other side of the Leolo Mountains is Burger congregation.

### **Schoonoord Minister's Ward**

This section was previously served by the Maandagshoek mission. When Sekhukhuneland became a congregation of its own in 1964, posts like Maila, Phahlamohlaka and Schoonoord fell under Sekhukhuneland congregation. Rev FC Motubatse was the minister from 1988, with Schoonoord as his base. Unfortunately Rev Motubatse did not serve for long and had to retire because of ill health. This section is still the responsibility of the minister of Klipspruit. When the missionary, Rev Etsebeth, retired in 2001, the congregation of Sekhukhuneland was left with only one minister, Rev Solly Nchabeleng, who no longer had the assistance of an evangelist. Rev Etsebeth was the last missionary working in Sekhukhuneland. His post, which had been the responsibility of the DRC Synod of the Eastern Transvaal, was terminated.

### **Marulaneng**

This is one of the younger wards. It has its own church, built by Rev PJ Joubert.

### **Maila**

In this area there are many Swazi and Pedi people. They first erected a small church with clay bricks, which was rebuilt by the congregation after a rain storm caused its collapse. One day, Rev Etsebeth had to visit Maila outpost for Holy Communion and service. It was during the rainy season and the road at the river before one enters the village was badly damaged. He decided to walk and covered his head with his jacket because of the heat. When he approached the village around a bend in the road, he met a woman with a big bundle of washing coming from the opposite direction. Frightened, she dashed for the church on the other side, shouting that a man with no head on his body was approaching. When they investigated, they saw the moruti carrying the necessities for the service, with his jacket covering his head and shoulders. The problem was solved and the service could begin.

### **Phahlamohlaka**

This is also a very old ward and the most distant from the main station at Klipspruit. An old stone church was used for many years until Rev PJ Joubert erected a new church.

### **Spitskop**

This ward was developed when a limestone mine was opened here. Rev PJ Joubert also built a ward church for this congregation.

### **Rietfontein**

This is one of the younger wards, with a church building erected by Rev PJ Joubert.

### **Leeuwkraal**

This is one of the oldest wards. Evangelist WS Mathabatha was stationed here until his retirement. The ward has no church building and services are held in the local school.

### **Glen Cowie**

Services were held in the hospital for many years until the URC congregations of Pretoria helped the parishioners to erect their own church building in 1999.

### **Jane Furse**

Rev PJ Joubert also erected a church here. Jane Furse hospital was previously an Anglican Mission Hospital.

### **Sehlakwane**

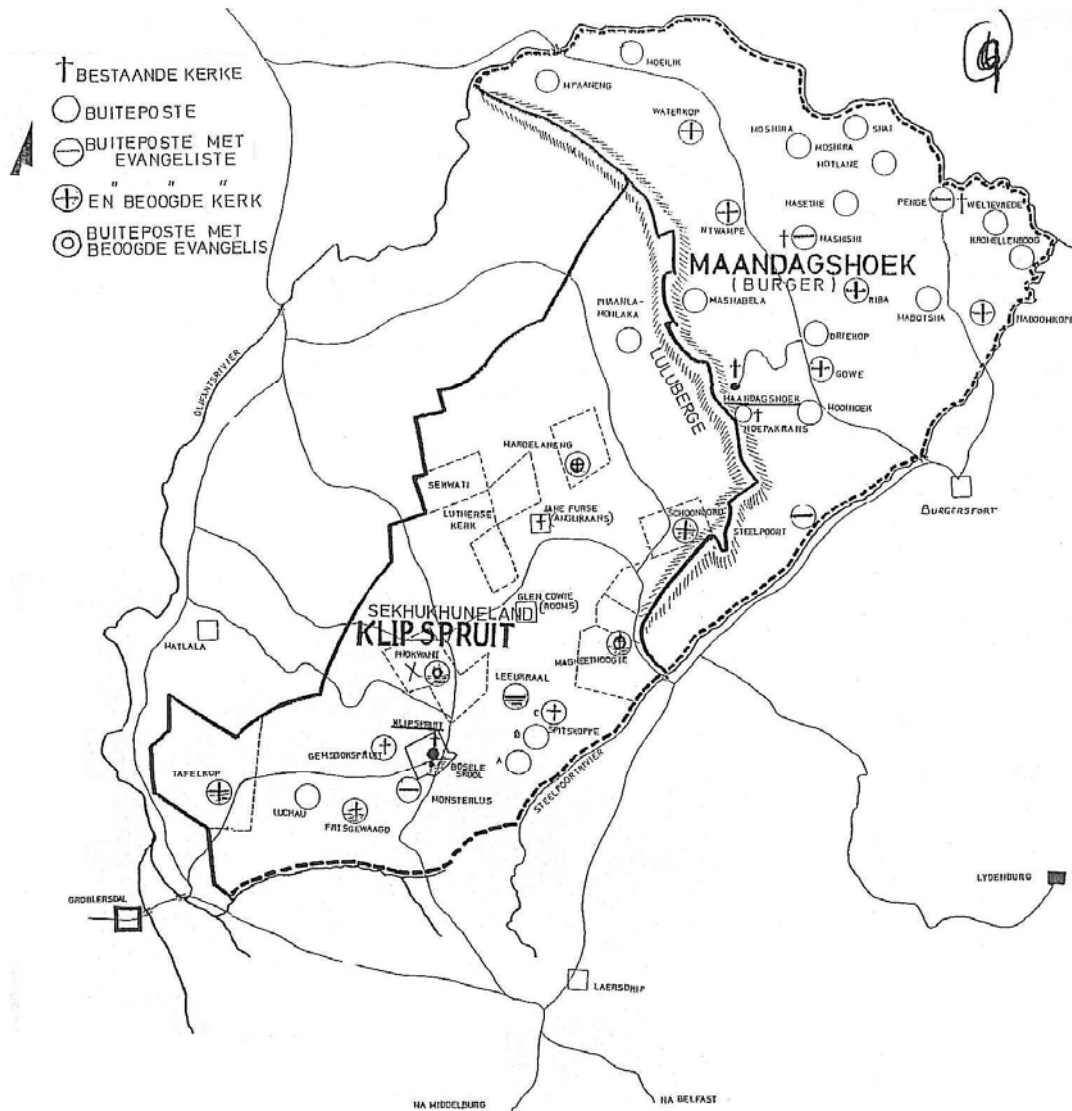
This ward is situated approximately 20 kilometers from Klipspruit on the way to Stofberg. The Pedi king Sekhukhune lived here among the gorges of the plateau where there was sufficient water and agricultural land. Why the chief moved to the foot of the Leolo Mountains, a dry area, is anyone's guess. Maybe it was to expand his political power.

### **Saaiplaas**

This outpost is also on the road to Laersdrift and from here the mountain slopes steeply towards Laersdrift. Laersdrift itself was previously a ward of the Roossenekal congregation. This congregation was terminated and Laersdrift became an outpost of Sekhukhuneland congregation.



**Chart 16: KLIPSPRUIT AND MAANDAGSHOEK**



**28.5 MINISTERS AND EVANGELISTS OF SEKHUKHUNELAND**

**28.5.1 Rev John Simon Mnisi**

In a book published in 1990 by Pro Christo Publications, *'n Land wat wyd lê*, Eva-Maria Nienaber tells the following story about her mother: “When mother started with her undertaking to pay for black students who are preparing for the ministry, she was living in her small house at Thaba Nchu. She felt the Lord’s call to support Basotho theological students. She wrote to the rector of Stofberg Gedenkskool at Witsieshoek. His answer was:



‘For the year 1959 we are full, but we will let you know.’ Not long afterwards, she received another letter from the rector, stating: ‘In Sekoekoeniland there is a young teacher, a deacon in his congregation, who is struggling with a decision. In his youth he made a promise to God to become a minister in His service. He was trained as a teacher and is teaching at the moment. But he is not happy. Money is his problem. He has a wife and two children.’ He wrote to me and I replied. ‘Yes, you can come, because a few days ago I received a letter from a child of God, who wants to help’. Mnisi wrote to me saying: ‘I fled into the bush and fell on my knees behind a tree and I thanked God as never before in my life’.”

Mrs Krüger was privileged to pay for all his theological studies. From time to time she sent food and clothing. Later he was transferred with other students to the University of the North (Stofberg School at Turfloop). He was legitimated in 1962 and ordained in his home congregation, Sekhukhuneland, in 1963. He went to Belfast in 1965 and also served at Randfontein (1969), Ogies (1974) and Zola (1975) (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1987:255).

### **28.5.2 Moses Sebabole Shongwane**

He was ordained in Hlatjane congregation in 1969, after he had completed his studies at Stofberg, Turfloop. In 1976 he accepted a call to Sekhukhuneland. He was a good and friendly minister who for many years also acted as chairman of the presbytery of Burger. In 1981 he moved to the Hammanskraal NGKA congregation. He became ill and died while serving this congregation. He was married to Grace Ditshedi Sillie, born on 15 January 1952. The couple had two children (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1969).

### **28.5.3 Frans Chike Motubatse**

He finished his theological studies in 1987 and was ordained in the congregation of Sekhukhuneland in 1988. He was responsible for the Schoonoord minister’s ward (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1991). He was also a tent-making minister. In the late nineties the church council of Sekhukhuneland and the presbytery of Burger held many discussions with him regarding his work and his health. He retired because of ill health.

### **28.5.2 Solomon Pitsadi Nchabeleng**

Solomon Pitsadi Nchabeleng was born on 18 May 1947. His father was Jim, and his mother Mpudu. He became a Christian and was baptized by Rev P Conradie of Goedvertrouwen mission. He started to work at Matlala Hospital as a male nurse in January 1966. He returned to school and completed his schooling at Boaparankwe School for the sons of chiefs at Arabie. This happened when Dr Martin van Vuuren and Dr Piet du Toit were also at Goudvertrouwen. He did not have an easy childhood. Like all Pedi children he had to look after the cattle. His parents were heathens and he was not allowed to go to Sunday school, but he did so secretly. When he wanted join the NGKA, he told his parents that he had to become a member of the church or else he might lose his job. In this way he was allowed to become a member. Many of the people who started to work in the hospital were non-believers, but they were allowed to attend ‘class’ (catechism) and eventually became members of the church. I met several of them, but only a few of them remained faithful. Some joined other churches but most of them joined the ZCC. However, Solomon was very determined and decided to become a minister in the NGKA. With the help of his sponsor, Dr Piet du Toit, he finished his studies at Turfloop. He also received a B.Th. and a BD from the University of the North, Turfloop. He was ordained on January 1981 at Klipspruit mission station as minister of Sekhukhuneland NGKA. He was married to Patches, who was a nurse. The couple has three boys and two girls. Solomon studied and achieved a Doctor’s degree in dogmatics and theology. His wife is a quiet, faithful member of the Christian Women’s Movement. They are a great inspiration in the way they uphold God’s standards in their marriage and social life. They erected their own house at Tswaing near Strydkraal.

### **28.5.5 FM Matlala**

Frank Mpjeane Matlala, 10 April 1939, belongs to the Matlala Ba-Maserumule tribe, a well-known Koni tribe of Sekhukhuneland. His father was Mamoneke and his mother Seatlane. He was baptized by Rev JS Malan of the Sekhukhuneland congregation. The family remained faithful to this congregation. Evangelist Matlala also erected his own house at Phokwane. Feeling the call for the ministry, he enrolled at Stofberg, Turfloop, in 1964. After completing his studies, he became an evangelist in his home congregation in 1967. He married Angeline in 1967 and the couple had three girls and three boys. Although retired as an evangelist he still assists the congregation of Sekhukhuneland as

well as the neighbouring congregation with funerals and other church functions. He also helps the chief of the Bakoni ba Maserumule of Ragoadi with religious functions and funerals, although this tribe is within the borders of Lepelle.

#### **28.5.6 WS Magaela**

Willem Samuel Magaela completed his studies and was ordained as evangelist in the congregation of Roosenekal (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1973). He is married to Stefiena and the couple has two sons and two daughters. Throughout his ministry he served in this one congregation. He lived at the primary school at Laersdrift and was responsible for this ward as well as the ward of Eensaam. Unlike Eensaam, the Laersdrift ward never had its own church building. The congregation usually gathered in the school. All the members of his congregation belong to the Ndebele nation.

#### **28.5.7 Lengana Petrus Mojela**

He was born on 2 January 1952 in Sekhukhuneland. He grew up in Sekhukhuneland and became a full member of the NGKA in 1970 under Rev S Burger. He felt the call to enroll at Stofberg. In 1977 he completed his studies and accepted a call to Bronkhorstspuit where he served until 1981, when he moved to Tembisa West as an evangelist. In 1989 he started a minister's course at Turfloop. He finished in 2002 and was ordained in the same year as a full-time minister in Tembisa West. In 2003 he became the minister for the new Myibuye congregation. Rev Mojela married Raesetja Maria Tolo on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1977. The couple has one girl and three boys.

#### **28.5.8 Siveve Elon Maphanga**

He was born on 5 October 1950 and was married to Andronicca Vilakazi. The couple has two girls and two boys. He grew up at Schalksrus in Sekhukhuneland and went to school at Goedgedacht. In 1976 he became an evangelist and his first congregation was Bethesda. He accepted a call to Sekhukhuneland in 1978. While still serving as an evangelist in Sekhukhuneland he went for further training. He finished his training in 1992 and accepted a call to Tembisa West, where he was ordained on 27 February 1993.

## **29. MOTETEMA CONGREGATION**

Nare David Legodi was ordained at Philadelphia Congregation in 1974, but with the seceding of Motetema in 1977 from Philadelphia, became the first minister of this new congregation. He accepted a call to Nylstroom in 1984 (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek 1996*).

### **29.1 REV MAPHUTI EZEKIEL MORIFI**

Rev Morifi was born on 23 September 1944. He was baptized by Rev CL Brink of Bethesda. He attended the following schools:

1954 to 1960	Maakgabeng Primary School
1961 to 1962	Nkoana Primary School in Sekhukhuneland
1963	Matsobane Primary School at Mhahlele
1964 to 1968	Ngwana-Mohube Ga Mphahlele Sekhukhuneland

Theological Training: From 1969 to 1971 he trained at Stofberg as an evangelist. During these years he did his practical work in the congregations of Lerato and Sekhukhuneland.

#### **Labouring as an Evangelist**

In 1972 he started to work as an evangelist in the congregation of Lerato. In September 1973 he accepted a call to Bakenberg. From December 1978 till December 1979 he worked as an evangelist in the congregation of Bethesda, when he relocated to Groblersdal and became the first evangelist of the congregation of Motetema.

From 1980 to 1985, while working as an evangelist, he trained at Turfloop Theological School to become a full-time minister. During this time he also matriculated and in 1986 became the minister of Motetema congregation. He accepted a call to Warmbad in September 2003. The congregation has since been vacant (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek 1996*).

### **30. NGKA AND DRC PARTNERSHIP – A SUMMARY**

#### **30.1 GUARDIANSHIP: THE PERIOD 1932 TO 1963**

The DRC initiative, through the support of the *TVSV*, led to the establishment of Burger, the first mission congregation in Sekhukhuneland, in 1932. This was followed by congregations of Sekhukhuneland in 1946, Lerato in 1957 and Marble Hall (Lepelle) in 1958. Development was slow during this period because of a shortage of funds. From the sixties onwards the DRC and the country as a whole experienced better financial growth. Together with the challenge the Tomlinson Commission brought the development of the Homelands, the DRC synodical mission commissions, in collaboration with the NGKA, also created more ministers' posts and other aid projects like the building of churches and provision of literature.

#### **30.2 THE CONSTITUTION OF THE INDIGENOUS CHURCH (NGKA) IN 1963**

After the constitution of the NGKA in 1963, we see the forming of seven different regional synods and a great number of evangelists and ministers being trained by the Stofberg Theological School. The congregations of Sekhukhuneland fell under the presbytery of Burger which, in turn, fell under the Northern Transvaal Regional Synod (Crafford 1982:564).

#### **30.3 CHURCH GROWTH AND INDEPENDENCE: THE PERIOD 1963 TO 1980**

As from 1963 all mission work done by the DRC was done by the local PSK and, in some cases GSK. The work of the synodical mission commissions was decentralized to the congregations, called PSKs (local mission commissions) and GSKs (joint mission commissions), where two or more congregations were involved. These commissions reported regularly to the RSK (presbyterial mission commission). The funds provided for subsidies were directed to the presbyteries and these were paid into the accounts of the local DRC congregations. The local congregations had the advantage of direct contact with the ministers and missionaries of the NGKA (Crafford 1982:388). The synodical commissions continued to fund the standing subsidies. In 1975 the DRC Synodical

Mission Commission supported 37 missionaries, 52 black ministers and 190 evangelists (Crafford 1982:388).

The synodical commissions also contributed by providing information and organizing mission conferences for both black and white ministers in the NGKA so as to improve language studies, hospital evangelization, distribution of literature to improve preaching and Bible Study, and by ongoing effort to improve relationships.

#### **30.4 GROWTH WITHIN THE CONGREGATIONS**

The **spontaneous influence of the Christian believers** under the guidance of the ministers and evangelists contributed towards an increase in membership with whole families joining the church.

Each presbytery also had an **active planning commission**. Borders were changed so that services could improve and the creation of new ward divisions took place, which were called minister's wards for black ministers working with the white so-called missionaries. The Planning Commission of the Presbytery of Burger opened the way for two black minister's posts (1965-1969) in each of the congregations of Burger, Sekhukhuneland, Lerato and Lepelle, and the creation of a new congregation, Motetema.

The **church schools** were gradually taken over by the government. Most of these schools gave birth to small congregations called outposts. The devoted witnessing of Christian teachers and evangelization brought many heathen people to the Light of the Gospel. These outposts grew in membership and with the help of the missionaries and the financial support of the DRC congregation, small ward churches were erected so that members could have their own place of worship.

**New townships** were built according to the Government Planning for Homelands. For the Lebowa Government a new capital was planned at Lebowa-Kgomo, which eventually led to an outpost for Lerato congregation near Grootboek. The membership grew and a new church building for the capital was erected with financial aid provided by the DRC Northern Synodical Mission Office.

A parsonage was built and a minister's post created. This led to the establishment of a new congregation which, under the guidance of the church council, adopted a policy aimed at

total financial independence. The history of Lebowa-Kgomo is unique, as described elsewhere.

### **30.5 THE CHURCH ALSO SAW THE NEED FOR EVANGELIZATION**

The *Kommissie vir die Arbeid van die Kerk* (Commission for Church Labour) submitted a plan of action for evangelization to the NGKA Synod of 1971 (*Handelinge van die Sinode*:148) which was aimed at church development and evangelization of stray members in particular. The 1975 Synod called on congregations to take heed of the plan which was called **evangelism in depth**. This plan was also placed before the *Algemene Kommissie van Ampsbediening en Evangelisasie* of the DRC (Crafford 1982:571).

The DRC had already, in co-operation with the NGKA of the Northern Transvaal, created a post called ‘Secretary for Evangelization’ ten years earlier, when Rev MJD Jacobsohn was ordained at Turfloop on 2 February 1961 as Secretary for Evangelism. He became Secretary for Evangelization for the Southern Transvaal Synod in 1964. Rev WJJ du Plessis took office for the Northern Transvaal Synod from August 1968 to September 1972.

As from 15 February 1973 Rev JC Beukes continued the evangelization campaigns in the Northern Regional Synod (Crafford 1982:571). His teams visited the congregations of the presbytery of Burger. Lepelle was visited every two years.

### **30.6 TENSION AND UNCERTAINTY**

Tension already existed. Crafford (1982:577) states that since the seventies a time of uncertainty and disunity marked the relations between the DRC and daughter churches. The NGKA had taken over the initiative, for example: the missionaries were no longer placed, but were called by the NGKA congregations themselves and they no longer had the support of the mission staff of the local mission hospitals. The hospitals were taken over by the Government and the white personnel were replaced by black administrative staff. The missionary had to carry the burden of administration and commissions (Crafford 1982:577).



Tension had increased since 1975 specifically as a result of the decisions taken by the General Synod of the NGKA in 1975 at Worcester. Prof ES Nchephe delivered an address at the *Kerk en Wêreld* Mission Congress (13-15 October 1978) in Bloemfontein. He said:

*To reflect on the view of the NGKA, one has to understand the decisions taken by the synod at Worcester (Nchephe 1979:52). Regarding mission and joint mission work, the Synod agreed to the policy of the Federal Council of DR Churches (Federale Raad van NG Kerke) but the wording, volksgroepe (national groups), was replaced by **people** and the extension of the Kingdom of God among **all people** to **non-Christians**. He asked why? The mission work done by the DRC is partial – only the DRC could do mission work among the daughter churches – the non-Christians and the term ‘volksgroep’ (national group) shows that the DRC is dividing the people into groups which is not the desire of the NGKA, because there must not be any division of people into national groups. He was also referring to joint mission work and said that the DRC does not want advice from black people. For the NGKA to show them a field for mission work is just paper work. Regarding converts: these cannot become members of the DRC because it is a white church only. The DRC is to be blamed for the declining relations among the member churches of the Federal Council of Churches. The DRC is seen as paternalistic, always laying down the law/dictating. Regarding missionaries the following guidelines were laid down by the synod:*

- 1. No longer could there be missionaries in the NGKA because the church is not subordinate to the DRC. Missionaries are to be called ministers only.*
- 2. Christ is the Supreme Being in the NGKA and therefore all ministers are directly under the supervision of the NGKA and not the DRC.*
- 3. All ministers must only be members of the NGKA and not of the DRC as well.*
- 4. All ministers of the NGKA should also be allowed to serve in the DRC, as whites were allowed to serve in the NGKA. If not, it is racism.*

*The new ‘white missionaries’ (actually to be called ministers) must persuade the NGKA that they had become synonymous with the blacks. The only difference was the colour of their skin. They must empty themselves of all prejudice and (even more difficult) disassociate themselves from the whites, because it caused suspicion. Their criterion of*



*what is right and what is wrong must not be that of their own people and culture, but the Word of God. This does not mean that the NGKA is not appreciative of the work done by the DRC among black people. It will always be appreciated, but the NGKA has reached full maturity. (Author's own translation.)*

### **30.7 CONTINUED SUPPORT**

Many DRC congregations were discouraged and some even wanted to discontinue support. But Prof Nchephe described the situation as the wrong approach on the part of the DRC, as the DRC regarded the NGKA and its continued support of the latter as a *mission* and not as financial aid to a sister congregation which is still financially weak. He wanted continued financial support from the DRC and also advised that salaries be improved so that the black members of the NGKA could continue the mission call. It was important to him that black ministers could become missionaries, but unfortunately the 'world climate' was against them. It was fighting an evil system, but nobody would respect his skin. Support was needed for the following projects: Further training of black and white ministers; joint conferences and joint refresher courses; the planning of overseas tours; further studies abroad of their own choice, and better salaries to discourage tent-making ministry.

### **30.8 CONCLUSIONS**

Prof Nchephe concluded as follows:

1. The mission enthusiasm of the DRC in congregations of the NGKA which seceded caused suspicion.
2. Joint mission work in new areas as well as mission work on the level of presbytery and synodical base is welcomed.
3. The NGKA must decide on its own whether circumstances within its congregations needed mission work.
4. The policy of the DRC caused embarrassment to the NGKA.
5. The status of missionaries caused anxiety in the NGKA.

6. The tent-making decision makes the minister independent of the church, which is unacceptable because it adds to an insufficient salary.
7. The ‘New Mission Situation’ can succeed provided that all these obstacles which are in the way of the mission call are removed.
8. If support is discontinued, it would not improve the joint mission call, but the gap between the two churches would become wider. (Author’s own translation).

### **30.9 ADVICE**

1. Nobody must stand in the way of the mission call of Christ. Therefore all obstacles must be removed.
2. The DRC must open its doors to the young churches, in practice and not only in theory. The colour line must be removed.
3. Joint mission work must be done only if the particular church council requests it. No missionary or mission work must be allowed without prior permission.
4. Each congregation must motivate mission work and also activate it within its borders instead of mission work from an outside organization which could paralyze the congregation.
5. Financial support must be unconditional – the only condition is that it would be for the extension of the Kingdom of God. No package deal.
6. The DRC and the NGKA both should investigate ways to remove obstacles. (Author’s own translation.)

### **30.10 THE POSITION OF THE MISSIONARY**

The Northern NGKA Regional Synod held at Potgietersrus in 1979 revealed a situation of uneasiness regarding the position of missionaries in the NGKA. At this synod it was clear that several delegates queried the lawful right of voting because of the structural position of those belonging to the DRC and also serving as a missionary or minister in another church. Strong arguments and even accusations and blame were laid against the DRC. After long discussions the delegates settled and continued with the election of the

moderation. Regarding the joint commissions of NGKA and DRC, I remember that one delegate remarked that the joint commission's work was not to bring the two churches together but to keep them apart. (When I became a minister of Lepelle NGKA, my legitimating certificate and proof of calling and ordination was handed to the *Regskommissie* of the NGKA Regional Synod for approval and this juristic commission reported to the Synodical Commission that it was approved. All the ministers who were ordained by the NGKA had to become fully fledged members of the NGKA).

The General Synodical Commission of the NGKA mentioned in their report to the General Synod at Umgababa, 12 to 21 June 1979, that the case regarding the missionary has been settled (NGKA Agenda 1979:24). It reads as follows: "A letter was referred to the secretary (*Skriba*) of the General Synod of the NGKA in this regard. The GSK (*ASK*) met with *Breë Moderatuur* (General Moderamen) and after a long discussion it was decided to refer it to the Juristic Commission of both churches. After they dealt with this matter the two General Moderamen of both churches met, and an agreement was drawn up. The General Synodical Commission has accepted the agreement as drawn up by the General Moderamen of the DRC and NGKA." This was approved by the synod at Umgababa (NGKA Agenda:24). This agreement appears in an appendix (NGKA Agenda:28).

## **30.11 STRUCTURAL UNITY**

### **30.11.1 The Federal Council**

Previously the *Federale Sendingraad*, which was constituted in 1949, was a council to stimulate mission work on behalf of the different synods of the NGK (Crafford 1982:471). This organ inspired the different synods and both the DRC and the younger churches took part in conferences. The *Federale Sendingraad* was discontinued when the *Federale Raad van NG Kerke* succeeded in uniting all the different DRC Synods into one GENERAL SYNOD on 11 October 1962. From here on the ASSK (General Synodical Mission Committee) continued mission work with great success (Crafford 1982:472). A further result was the drawing up of an *Algemene Sendingreglement* (A General Mission Code/Regiment). In this document clear guidelines are stipulated for joint co-ordination without being dictative.

This era since 1962 is characterized by Saayman (2007:118) as follows when he refers to Van der Watt (2003:218-219). “During the first three waves, but especially in the second and third waves, DRC mission was undertaken on the initiative mainly of synodical structures. This implied that mission was carefully regimented: the General Synodical Mission Committee was responsible for co-ordination, research, planning, and information, while the various Regional Synodical mission committees undertook the practical implementation in carefully delineated areas.”

### **30.11.2 Church Union among the DR Church Family**

Already in 1970 the DRCA indicated its desire for church unity among the DR Church family. At a meeting on 26 January 1976, where all four churches of the family were represented, this ad hoc study committee expressed its opinion that the present structure of the Federal Council of DR Churches was not effective in carrying out the aims set by the four churches for their structural expression of unity, and therefore it advised the constitution of a general synod to replace of the Federal Council. After this, several more meetings were held. Some churches attended while others refrained from attending. On 18 March 1978 the Federal Council of the Dutch Reformed Churches took a definite decision on jurisdiction and composition and closed with the following remark: “The separate Dutch Reformed Church affiliations are the embodiment of only one Dutch Reformed Church which has affiliations among the various population groups. If these affiliations were to exist separately without any official liaison among them, it would mean a contradiction of the existence of the Dutch Reformed Church as a whole” (NGKA Agenda 1979:31). The DRC rejected the idea of an umbrella synod. The proposed overarching synod is also beset by serious practical objections (NGKA Agenda 1979:34). Instead, the existing Federal Council of the Dutch Reformed Churches in all respects fulfilled the intended objectives, i.e. binding together the mother and daughter churches; the unification of the powers of the churches concerned; the discussion of mutual problems; the practice of brotherly relations; the formation of a common Christian front and the sincere search for Christian answers to many problems created by a multi-racial society, within and without the church (NGKA Agenda 1979:34). My own observation was that the DRCA had shown a strong desire to be fully independent without any dictations from outside. It had a longing for power and control. This attitude was revealed at all the synodical meetings and especially at joint meetings with the DRC joint committees.

## **30.12 THE DRC IN CRISIS – 1980 TO 1994**

I have tried to give a review of what was discussed at the NGKA Synodical meetings and what is meant by joint mission work. The outcome was not what one had hoped, because until the end of the seventies, the relationship between the NGKA and DRC did not improve, but worsened. Within the DRC other winds were blowing, which had a strong influence on its mission policy. It is necessary to state what happened and how it has influenced mission work in the presbytery of Burger. The general attitude of the DRC regarding mission work changed because of its relationship with the government of the time, political and economical circumstances, and the uncertainty of members of the DRC and NGKA as well as changing structures in a changing world.

### **30.12.1 Government Policy**

I would like to refer to the book *Stormkompas* (1982), compiled by leading missiologists and church leaders under the editorship of NJ Smith, FE O'Brien Geldenhuys and Piet Meiring, and specifically to the contribution by Prof DJ Bosch, who said that if you love people, you also become involved with the circumstances of people who suffer because of government policy; the more than half a million people who were moved against their will, bad circumstances in locations without basic services and low wages, as well as a shortage of schools and infrastructure (Bosch 1982:30). He urged the church and Christians to what he quoted from DO Momberg's *The Great Reversal* about Evangelism and social concern: "People within a nation may be honest, loyal, Christian citizens and yet support national evils which are a disgrace to mankind and a violation of the ethical teachings of the Christian Scriptures." Rev TE Lombard (1982:37) wrote in his commentary on Bosch and referred to an article in *Die Kerkbode* which is a statement by the Synodical commission of the DRC Southern Transvaal Region as a commentary on the words of Jesus in John 18:36: "My Kingdom does not belong to this world" (Smith, *et al.*, 1982). The pressure on ministers not to keep quiet but to comment regularly on political issues is not called for, because the DRC does not want to become involved in politics ... we must remember that the 'Kingdom of the Lord is not of this world.' It shows that within the church many Christians were of the opinion that the Gospel is the way to heaven. It must not have any other implications; otherwise it could be seen as a Social Gospel. Many theologians in Reformed tradition tried to educate their members but because of the political onslaught from outside, the Christians rather supported the

government because of the danger of stamping out the Christian faith, referring to communism and their allies, the ANC and the PAC.

In the same book, *Stormkompas*, Prof NJ Smith wrote about the history of the church in Africa in which, according to him, Western churches had failed because they only contributed to Western economy. He said that the DRC had the same attitude, because it does not care enough for the under-privileged, and does not show compassion towards those who have no political rights, who need houses and are paid unjust salaries. In reply to this, Dr PGJ Meiring quoted Bishop Leslie Newbiggin when he attended the ISWEN congress in July 1980 in Pretoria. When asked: “What contribution can the DRC make in our time in Africa?” After a short silence he replied: “The DRC has built up a reputation of negativity as a church of apartheid, because its structures and policy draw a line through the union of believers that keeps brothers and sisters apart rather than connecting, so that none can listen to the DRC.” Prof Meiring also quoted Dr Johan Kritzinger who stated that “all negative thoughts about the government and its interior policy are transferred on the DRC, wrongly, but Africa has good reason to accept that a close relationship exists between the church and the (party) government.” The DRC had no other choice than to reform and change its structural base in order to restore relationships (Smith & Meiring 1982:12).

As a result of this book, further stimulation among church leaders resulted in a congress on *the church in the eighties* held from 18 to 21 January 1982 in Pretoria. This congress led to the *Ope Brief* (Open Letter) in *Die Kerkbode* of 9 June 1982. It specifically focused on *Ras, Volk en Nasie* (Ethnicity and Nation), the official DRC point of view which was commented on in the *Ope Brief* and discussed practically in the publication: *Perspektief Op Die Ope Brief*. The 123 ministers of the DRC asked for a new structure, justice and a new society. These essays appeared only four months after the publication of the *Ope Brief*. The issues dealt with by leading theologians led to the termination of the membership of the DRC of the *World Ecumenical Council of Reformed Churches* in Ottawa (Bosch, König & Nicol 1982).

These publications as well as serious discussions within the DRC on church council, presbyterial and regional synodical levels, urged the DRC in general to change its policy. As a result, a new publication was drafted and approved at the DRC General Synod in

Cape Town held 14 to 25 October 1986, with the title *Kerk en Samelewing* (Church and Society).

### **30.12.2 The DRC Pastoral Letter of the Eighth meeting of the General Synod at Bloemfontein – 16<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> October 1990**

The publication of *Kerk en Samelewing* (1986) caused an uproar as admitted in the abovementioned letter, which was distributed to all congregations and each member of the DRC, a letter which I still have in my possession. I am referring to some of the paragraphs to illustrate the influence it had on congregations and also on the mission outreach in the NGKA congregation of Lepelle, where I was stationed as missionary.

The revised policy publication of *Kerk en Samelewing* is an important document to which the synod gave serious attention. Some of the resolutions which appeared in the 1986 edition were disputed to such a degree that the *Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk* broke away from the DRC. The Synod of 1986 realized its shortcomings and therefore invited members and churches to come with proposals, while the *Algemene Kommissie vir Leer en Aktuele Sake* was instructed to evaluate these and to consider their inclusion. The result was that a new revised edition was submitted to the Synod. Some sections of the previous edition were irrelevant and were removed. New paragraphs were added. This revised edition is formulated more correctly, with a finer nuance and better motivation, so that there could be no misunderstanding of what was meant. The standpoint of 1986 is re-affirmed and without any ambiguity.

Where the Synod decided in 1986 that membership of the DRC was open to all individual believers from member churches of the family of the DRC, the Synod added to this that when congregations, presbyteries or synods of reformed confession would desire to join the DRC, it would be possible after consultation and after a proper agreement had been reached. This was not a new decision because it will be remembered that the Coloured congregation (St Stevens) and the Portuguese congregations were included in one presbytery, and also that English and Dutch speaking congregations were also linked with the DRC so as to assist them with their special needs.



### **30.13 THE DRC MEMBER CHURCHES**

The General Synod decided that it was in favour of unification, but there is no clarity regarding the structure. Therefore the ASK (General Synodical Commission) was instructed to work out the structures and to present it before the next General Synod in 1994.

The commission would deal with all aspects of language, culture, liturgy and ministerial needs. In the meantime, serious attention had to be given to improve relationships and attitudes and to build bridges in order to protect unity. With decision making a historical milestone in the DRC was reached.

### **30.14 INFLUENCE OF KERK EN SAMELEWING IN THE NGKA PRESBYTERY OF BURGER – 1986: MARBLE HALL CONGREGATION**

Because of the international financial sanctions, many farmers had problems in selling their produce like tobacco and citrus. During the first half of the eighties a severe drought as well as political unrest in the two homelands of Kwa-Ndebele and Lebowa proved to be bad for farm workers, farmers and business. The DRC rural congregations were struggling. Even the subsidies for evangelists and ministers were no longer considered when a post became vacant. The attitude towards black people in general and the terrorist attacks on soft targets did not encourage members to contribute towards mission work. As from 1985 the MDM riots in the homelands, burning of shops and businesses and killing of people by necklacing, further contributed to the discontinuation of funds for the NGKA.

The congregation had lost several members to the charismatic churches during the eighties, but a severe setback came when the APK broke away and took almost a quarter of the members of the congregation with it. This was the time of political uncertainty in the Nationalist Party and those who left were all right wing members. Dr AP Treurnicht represented the right wing party, called the *Conservative Party*, and most members of the DRC belonged to this party. When the Freedom Party of Constance Viljoen came into being, the situation of right wing dominance still caused the DRC to be politically controlled, with very little interest in the needs of the local NGKA congregation of Lepelle. I was also asked whether it would be possible to become a tent-maker because of a shortage of funds. Dr Karel van Rensburg, who was serving on the mission committee



(PSK), saw the difficult situation I was in and with his help, I obtained a post as lecturer at the Ndebele College of Education at Siyabuswa in KwaNdebele, about 30 kilometers from Marble Hall, from September 1989 to December 1991.

The congregation still paid pension and medical contributions, transport allowances as well as providing accommodation. From 1992 to 1994 the church council managed financially, but with a shortfall of funds. I was informed that due to rationalization the missionary's post would be discontinued as from 1 April 1995. I turned 60 in 1995, and in accordance with the stipulations of the DRC Regional Synod, I was allowed to retire with emeritus status. The long relationship the DRC of Marble Hall congregation had with mission work in Sekhukhuneland since 1956, when its minister, Dr JT Jordaan, became fully involved in mission work came to an end in April 1995.

#### **30.14.1 My Own Experience**

It was expected that the missionary post would soon be terminated. Dr Karel van Rensburg, mentioned above, resigned from the local mission committee because, he said: "From now on I have no further contribution to make." The ending of the congregation of Marble Hall's long involvement in mission work was a painful experience. I realized that the DRC in general was in the grip of a struggle for survival. Many congregations merged. Others carried on in combination or with the help of a relieving or retired minister. It was not easy to explain the situation to the local DRCA congregation of Lepelle. The members could not believe the situation. We came to an agreement that I would remain at Lepelle for a period of time until the congregation could afford a full-time minister to replace Rev Moloantoa, who retired in 1995 and Rev Khumalo, who was forced to retire earlier because of illness. The Marble Hall DRC congregation assisted me by sponsoring my travel expenses for one year till the end of April 1996. I continued assisting as relieving minister with funds obtained by myself. But that is another story.

### 31. THE PHASING OUT OF THE MINISTRY OF EVANGELISTS

The missionary-evangelist era in the mission work of the DRC, after many years of partnership, received the first blow when the Synod of Northern Transvaal submitted a point of discussion for inclusion in the Agenda of the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the General Synod of the NGKA to be held at Umgababa, Natal on 12 June 1979 and following days (NGKA Agenda 1979:211). It reads as follows:

4.1. *The training of evangelists is to be terminated.*

4.2. *If the training is terminated, the General Synod will consider the further training of the present evangelists to fully trained ministers.*

1. *Further training for four years. Three years of which will be training while in service. Candidates will continue with their service in the congregation, but will have to attend the Theological School for two months per year for lectures and exams. During the year, they will complete assignments and must pass their year exam before they can continue the next year. After three years, they will study for one full year at the Theological School.*

2. *This course will start from 1980 at all the theological schools of the Church. The lecturers are requested to draw up a course for CENTRAL MANAGEMENT. This course is temporary but will be suspended after four or five years (NGKA Agenda 1979:211 – author’s own translation).*

The General Synod at Umgababa approved this proposal (18.3.12:262). The resolution reads as follows:

**Evangelists, legitimating and further training:** The Synod decided that all evangelists who desire to become ministers will do so under the following conditions:

*A theological training of four years.*

*12.1.5.1 Admittance requirements:*

*Five years in-service-training in the church, with a Standard 8 certificate.*

**Theological training** (12.1.5.1)

*Three years in-service-training. This meant that an evangelist had to go for two months per year to the Theological Training school for schooling and exams. Assignments must be completed during the year. The exams and year results must be passed before a candidate can be allowed to continue with his studies. The Central Management of Stofberg Theological School determines the syllabus and standard of the course. This course is only for a limited period as determined by the General Synodical Commission for the General Synod.*

**Second method** (12.1.5.2)

*Admittance Requirements: At least three years in service of the church as an evangelist and in possession of a Standard 8 certificate.*

**Theological training:** *The present basic training of five years for a minister but one year less for evangelists. That means four years of full-time training at the Theological School.*

**31.1 HOW THIS DECISION INFLUENCED THE MINISTRY IN THE PRESBYTERY OF BURGER:**

**31.1.1 Lepelle Congregation:**

**Evangelist DM Phala:** He went for further training as minister, although he studied while being an evangelist at Boschfontein. He was ordained in 1988 at Hlatjane.

**PM Mokone:** He retired in 1990.

**MJ Matemane:** He retired in 2005 as the last evangelist of this congregation.

**HH Mohatle:** He retired in 1987.

**31.1.2 Motetema Congregation:**

**ME Morifi:** He accepted a call to Motetema as evangelist in 1979. From then on he studied at Turfloop to become a minister. He completed his studies in 1985 and was ordained in 1986 as minister of Motetema congregation. He accepted a call to Warmbad (Bela-Bela) in September 2003. Motetema congregation has since been served by the minister of Philadelphia.

### **31.1.3 Lerato Congregation:**

**PS Mahlobogoana:** He came to Lerato congregation in 1974 as an evangelist. He started his studies at Turfloop in 1983 and finished in 1986. In 1987 he was ordained as minister of Lerato congregation, replacing the missionary.

**LJ Tladi:** He came to Lerato in 1952 and also retired here in 1985. These two men saw the last missionary go and also experienced the work of the last evangelists of this congregation.

### **31.1.4 Sekhukhuneland Congregation:**

**SE Maphanga:** Reverend Maphanga became an evangelist in Sekhukhuneland congregation in 1978. He started his studies to become a minister at Turfloop while serving as an evangelist, and completed his studies in 1992. He accepted a call to Tembisa West in February 1993.

**WC Mathabatha:** He died and was buried at Mphahlele.

**PH Kolotse:** He was the evangelist for the Monsterlus ward in Sekhukhuneland. He enrolled for the minister's course at Turfloop and accepted a call as minister to Bethal in 1994.

**FM Matlala:** He started his ministry as an evangelist in Sekhukhuneland in 1967 and retired in 2008. He is still assisting this congregation.

**WS Magaela:** Willem only served as an evangelist in one congregation, Roosenekal, which was incorporated into Sekhukhuneland. He retired here in 2008.

**LP Mojela:** He was raised in Sekhukhuneland. He completed his evangelist course in 1977 and returned to Turfloop Theological School in 1989. On completion of his studies he accepted a call to Tembisa West in 2002 as full-time minister. Since 2003 he is serving the congregation of MayiBuye.

### **31.1.5 Burger Congregation:**

**Mabu Benjamin Shaku,** born 16 August 1926. He grew up at Ga-Nchabeleng (Mothopong), and was converted under the ministry of Rev J Malan. He finished his

studies at Turfloop in 1964. He started his ministry as an evangelist at Penge in the congregation of Burger in 1965 (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek 1974*). After he relocated to Ntwampe, one of the outposts of Burger, he retired in 1996. The old man built his house at Mothopong, his home base. He is still active but lost his wife in 2009. He says that while working in his shop during the day he feels good, but returning to his home at night, he misses his wife very much.

**Mokgatane Petrus Phahlamohlaka:** He was ordained in 1961. He worked at Hoepakranz in the congregation of Burger, but was transferred to Steelpoort Farms, still in the congregation of Burger in 1973. He retired in 1998.

**Philemon Lekgau Chaba:** He was ordained in 1967 in the congregation of Burger (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek 1974*). He also went for further studies to become a minister and was ordained in Nkhensani congregation in 1988. In 1989 he moved to the congregation of Matlala, where he served until his retirement (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek 1991*).

**LJ Makwana:** He was stationed at Ribastad as an evangelist. He also decided to continue his studies in order to become a minister. Unfortunately he fell ill and did not have the privilege to serve as a minister.

**JP Mokoena:** His name appeared in the NGK Jaarboek of 1978. As an evangelist he was responsible for the farms in Steelpoort, Watervalsrivier and Motsepula.

**Mphofe Thomas Maduane** was born on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1939 at Ga-Magolego, also called Houtbos, near the Leolo Mountains in Sekhukhuneland. He stayed with Rev Murray Louw from 1956 to 1963. At Maandagshoek he worked as a gardener for Dr du Plooy. He was married to Magdalene Sagoeme Ntsoane, born 27 February 1946. They had five children, two boys and two girls. He went for training as an evangelist at Turfloop Theological School from 1963 to 1965.

He started to serve in the congregation of Meetse-a-Bophelo from 1966 to 1967 before moving to Ratanang (Bourke's Luck Hospital) near Pilgrim's Rest. He worked here for six years with Rev JM Louw (son of AA) until 1974, when he returned to his place of birth in Burger congregation at Maandagshoek. His wife was a trained nurse who was able to help the family financially during all his years in the service of God.

During his long service at Maandagshoek, he was responsible for many of the outposts: Hoepakranz, Mashishi, Waterkop, Moshira, Mooilyk, Kwano, Ntwampe, Mashabela, Modimolle, Shai, Waterval Rivier and Motsepula. During this time he worked with the following missionaries at Maandagshoek: Dr JJ Kritzinger, Rev J Nieder-Heitmann and Rev JPT Koen. He also worked with the following ministers: Rev ES Ramaipadi (Naboom-koppies), Rev MJ Mankoe (Praktiseer), MP Mojapelo (Ntwampe) and TM Banda (Praktiseer), as well as with the following evangelists: MJ Makwana, Mokoena, ZG Mofurutsi, AB Makakaba, Mr P Phahlamohlaka, J Mashabela, MB Shaku and LP Chaba.

He also helped the congregation as treasurer and scribe. He was a very neat person, very meticulous in his work and his car was usually spotless.

These men worked with the missionaries “but played a much more important role than is usually appreciated by historians” (Crafford 1991:vii). A long and fruitful co-operation between the missionaries and the evangelists existed. The missionary-evangelist effort in proclaiming the Gospel and planting congregations ended when the office of evangelists was phased out.

## **32. CHANGING IN MISSIONARY STRUCTURES WHICH LED TO STEP-OUT AND TAKE-OVER**

In this chapter I would like to point out the contribution of the missionaries during the phasing-out period from Church-Mission partnership towards full independence and Church-Church partnership.

### **32.1 THE DATE**

I look at the seventies as the time when a change in mission structure commenced. This was not enforced by the leaders of the DRC/NGKA, but by the missionaries themselves, who felt that the time for a change in ministry was needed.

### **32.2 JJ (DONS) KRITZINGER**

He could be seen as the first missionary in Sekhukhuneland who started a new strategy in order to hand over full responsibility (26:1). His ordination in 1972 in the congregation of Burger introduced a new era in the ministry of missionaries who also served with him in the same presbytery, which covered the Sekhukhuneland region. They were Pierre Joubert (Klipspruit Mission – Sekhukhuneland congregation), Petrus Etsebeth (Groothoek Mission – Lerato congregation), myself (Matlala Mission – Lepelle congregation and Christo Büchner (Philadelphia – Philadelphia congregation). Philadelphia's borders were towards Bronkhorstspuit and Cullinan so that this region did not fall under Sekhukhuneland. When Dons Kritzinger left, he was succeeded by Jan Nieder-Heitmann and Johan Koen. When Pierre Joubert left, he was succeeded by Wessel Bester and Petrus Etsebeth and at Groothoek, Petrus Etsebeth was succeeded by Ockie Olivier and Sakkie van der Merwe. Christo Büchner's post was not filled after his sudden death. I worked with all these missionaries from 1977 until 1995.

All of us worked closely together with our black colleagues and each of these congregations had a team of evangelists. I have already discussed the phasing out of the evangelists (31.1-31.1.5), the gradual phasing out of missionaries (Lerato:25, Burger:26, Lepelle:27 & Sekhukhuneland:28) and the termination of the partnership between the DRC and the NGKA (30.1-30.14.1).

In his book, 'Rethinking Ministry', with the subtitle 'New Wine in New Wineskins', Kritzinger summarized the shift he envisaged. It was partly accomplished in his time, but not fully. The fact is that he started to introduce a new structure. According to his book, he already had a good idea of Biblical principles regarding the role each and every believer had to play in the congregation. He was, while serving the congregation of Burger, searching for a new model of structure for the NGKA. The first problem he described was 'the underrating of the faithful', and the second problem was 'the overrating of the clergy' (Kritzinger 2007:13). He described these problems as follows:

### **The Underrating of the Faithful**

They are called the *laity*. Whereas the original meaning of the word is derived from 'people', it has come to mean *ignorant*. Three images can describe the situation.

- The members are *spectators*. They can't play on the field. That is reserved for those who *can*. As someone said: the 22 people on the soccer pitch are desperately in need of rest, and the thousands of spectators in the stands are desperately in need of exercise! The church faithful are waiting and watching ...
- Another image describes them as *passengers* on a bus. They have done their bit, they have boarded the bus. Now the bus – and the bus driver – must take them to their destination. They have paid their ticket!
- They can also be described as *consumers*. They go to church to consume whatever is produced. The specialists perform, they accept what is produced. They themselves have nothing to produce, except 'pay, pray and obey!'

No wonder the influence of the church in society is so small. No wonder the more active members apply their gifts in other organizations, even organizations in the church such as the Women's League. Apart from the few who are accommodated in the church council, most men only send their women and children to church ... that is their contribution.



## **The Overrating of the Clergy**

*The members put their minister (pastor, priest, rector) on a pedestal. They are not ordained, so they regard themselves as of less value. They wait on him/her to constitute the church. He/she is special, extraordinary, on a higher level. It is a serious misunderstanding when church members think like that about the minister, but it is even worse when the minister himself begins to think that he is special!*

## **The Resulting Church**

This double misunderstanding results in a number of basic flaws in the church, as well as a few practical problems.

- In the first place the church is in danger of being *top-heavy*, unstable. A small number of people are overworked and ineffective, because they carry extraordinary burdens. Too few ministers have real work satisfaction, and too many crack under the load of responsibility and expectations. They must be good preachers, good administrators, and good pastors. What they can't manage, is not done. They are expected to be everywhere and do everything, although they realize that their most important work is to spend much time in prayer and preparation.
- And the *base is weak*. The church is an organism, and as in a tree, it is the root system and the soil that sustains it, and also anchors it. When the root system is undermined, the whole plant suffers. And that is exactly what happens when the church members are thought of as 'laity' ... ignorant, unable to do more than just *receive* a ministry. On the contrary, it is the base of the church that must be empowered, because they are the church. In our opinion it is the ministry in the *wards* that need to be emphasized. This is where the church stands or falls, grows or fades away.

**Where does this structure of ministry come from?**

**How did this problematic situation arise?**

He answers by saying: "This is the structure that was introduced by the founders of the churches." Although the missionary's goal was the establishing of independent churches, it ended in transferring the tradition of his sending church, which was paternalistic

(Kritzinger 2007:16). Since the Reformation, Kritzinger (2007:18) says: “The pulpit became the focal point in the church buildings. The preaching of the Gospel, the Word of God, was emphasized. The ancient administration system of the medieval kingdoms – one parish, one priest – became the accepted structure for the church of the reformation (also) and this same structure was again transplanted to the developing world through the agents of these Reformed Churches.”

### **23.2.1 Evaluation**

It is against this background that Kritzinger was starting to look for a new structure in his congregation. His predecessors had a fixed structure. The money for development, even the salaries of the co-ministers and evangelists, were provided by the *TVSV* and contributions from different DRC members and congregations. The people were poor and many were without employment. The members could not contribute to the salaries of ministers and evangelists.

How did Kritzinger apply his ministry method? In discussing this with him, he wrote that the old mission method was changed to place more responsibility on the church council and leaders of the congregation. The maintenance of church and bazaars were handed over, with his support and guidance, to the congregation. Many congregational activities were channeled to the ward leaders. He said when his successor took over from him, he could start with the basic things by devoting all his time to first studying the language and then becoming a team member of his co-clergy and evangelists in serving the congregation. He also requested that the subsidies for his colleagues and his own be paid into an account of the congregation. This was not the case with other missionaries. Their salaries were paid directly into their bank accounts by the sending bodies. The case with Burger was an example of goodwill and trust. Nothing needed to be under cover or separate. Every aspect of the ministry was to be open in order to create trust and mutuality. The fact that the missionaries’ salaries were on the DRC scale and much higher than those of the NGKA, only revealed the irregularity in the partnership between the two churches. I have already discussed this matter, showing that this was one of the reasons why the present partnership could not last.

### **32.3 REV JAN NIEDER-HEITMANN**

After Dr Kritzinger left, the new missionary, Rev Jan Nieder-Heitmann, found a new situation. Much of the missionary's responsibilities were transferred to the leaders of the local wards and to the general church council. He was supported by evangelists, ward leaders and the leaders of the Christian Women's Ministry and the Christian Youth Movement. Evangelist Thomas Maduane was moved to the missionary's parsonage and Rev Nieder-Heitmann stayed in one of the residences at the hospital. He was still a link between the supporters, the mission office in Pretoria and those congregations of the DRC like Meyerspark, especially through posting the Maandagshoek Mission News to mission friends and prayer supporters. He also spent much time completing the youth centre directly opposite the parsonage. The missionaries were usually requested to act as cashiers of the congregations, but in the case of Burger they had the service of one of the members, Mr JM Kobe (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1987). Rev Nieder-Heitmann also concentrated on the training of leaders for each ward. Every small ward functioned as a congregation on its own.

### **32.4 REV WESSEL BESTER OF SEKHUKHUNELAND**

Wessel succeeded Rev Pierre Joubert (28.1). Rev Joubert expressed the hope that his successor would not have to work as hard as he did. Rev Joubert had a good team of evangelists working with him and while he undertook several building projects, the mission projects carried on. He was a skilled organizer and businessman. Rev Joubert realized that African people are strongly community orientated. They attached great value to a place of their own where they could gather and worship. A place for worship and prayer has a binding effect on believers. In some way the building being their own place of worship, conveys a message of God's care and presence.

When Rev Bester arrived in 1979, he immediately felt the need of members for spiritual growth. He devoted himself to a programme of house visiting and the studying of the Zulu and Sepedi languages. He visited each home and tried to get to know everyone in his congregation. He told me how he used to read certain Scripture portions about a specific theme he wanted the believers to know. Wessel concentrated on families and groups like the women's and youth movements. Having been lecturer at two Bible schools in Zambia, his method in the Sekhukhuneland congregation was teaching, training and guiding the

church council to become self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating. He was able to guide the congregation towards these three aims.

### **32.5 REV PETRUS ETSEBETH**

When he returned in 1987, seven years after he had left Lerato (Groothoek), the first unusual step he took was that he and his family did not stay at the Klipspruit Mission station, but outside the borders of the congregation at Groblersdal (28.3). This motivated him to depend much on his ward leaders and evangelists to assist the members of each ward. He helped them to fulfill their duties in serving their fellow members.

Rev Etsebeth spent much time helping the evangelists with the translation of study material from Turfloop Theological School, and guidance with assignments as well as financial guidance in preparing for full-time ministry service. Whereas his predecessor concentrated on family households, Petrus felt that the church council had to be trained in administration and congregation management. Every year the different wards had to provide statistics for the annual presbyterial sessions, correct data of membership, confirmations, baptism, departures and new members from other congregations, and deaths. Rev Etsebeth trained the church council to keep statistics of each ward. He earned the nickname of *Moruti Statistics*.

The mission secretary of the DRC for the Eastern Transvaal Synod was directly involved with the buildings and the schools for the blind and deaf at Klipspruit. The final phase was the hand-over of the school buildings to the government, including the youth centre. When Rev Willie Jansen was murdered, the after-care centre was closed. The Government took total control and the church was left only with the parsonage and the church building. The old mission parsonage was also taken over by the Department of Education. Rev Etsebeth continued to serve on the panel for morning devotions at the school until his retirement in 2002.

### **32.6 REV SAKKIE VAN DER MERWE**

Rev IM van der Merwe started his ministry in Sekhukhuneland in 1964 at Maandagshoek. This was during the early stage of the mission-church relationship, because the NGKA was still under the guardianship of the mother church. Burger congregation was spiritually weak. The report that he sent to the *TVSV* (21.1) indicated that the spiritual condition of

the mission was unsatisfactory. The influence of the supporting bodies and the strong control exercised by the secretary of the mission office in Pretoria is an indication that the missionary was not in control. These bodies were not satisfied with Rev van der Merwe's method of working. The local church council had no say and influence, or was not recognized at all. The mission office under the control of the secretary advised and even requested Rev van der Merwe to consider a calling to another congregation, which he agreed to do.

Regarding the true situation of NGKA congregations during the first 10 years since 1963, one can agree with Gerdener (1958:154): "Summing up the stepping-out position of the five DR Daughter Churches, we would remark that, with the single exception of the DR Bantu Church (Cape), it is apparent from their very designations that their relation to the mother churches and not to their own character and future autonomy, supervened in the minds of those who gave the name. Although all of them have been fair and squarely launched on the waters of the South African ecclesiastical sea, the pilots are still on board and, in fact, these younger churches are still largely being towed."

This situation of Church-Mission partnership continued, but gradually more congregations were formed in Sekhukhuneland and when Sakkie returned to Sekhukhuneland in 1986, accepting a call to Lerato (Groothoek Mission), the presbytery of Burger consisted of Burger (which he left in 1966), Sekhukhuneland, Lepelle, Motetema, Lerato and Philadelphia. The total of five missionary posts, 10 black minister's posts, and 12 evangelist's posts, all subsidised by the DRC, existed within the presbytery of Burger (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 1986). Year after year at the presbytery's sessions, and within the congregations, the church councils were dealing not so much with the spiritual need of their members, not so much with the need for jobs and poverty alleviation and with a plan to reach non-believers with the Gospel or child and youth evangelism, but mainly with the urgent need for increasing the salaries of the ministers and evangelists. The church councils preferred the missionary system because they did not need to contribute to their salaries. They were linked to the DRC, the mother with the cheque book. The missionaries organized and managed to obtain funds for building new churches and doing maintenance. The members, however, were not prepared and taught to take responsibility for the future and to become independent (32.4).

The missionaries were aware of the needs of poverty-stricken people on the one hand and the deep division between the rich and the poor on the other. I must admit that I did not have the courage or the motivation to address the members with high salaries and the necessary means to contribute more and to carry a bigger financial burden in order to improve the salaries of the full-time church labourers (ministers and evangelists). One of the biggest problems was the barrier the church council itself maintained. The reason is that the church council's system was linked to tradition: A fixed amount to be donated monthly or yearly by each member. Government grants and social pensions were received by the youth who still attended school and by unemployed mothers. Those who earned salaries and owned businesses had to pay the amount the church council prescribed. When I started in 1977, the fixed amount for all members was R2,00 whether you were employed or not. School children did not need to pay. Gradually the fixed amounts were increased, but even today fixed amounts are prescribed.

### **32.7 STEWARDSHIP**

Rev Sakkie van der Merwe realized that something had to be done. He discussed the matter with me and informed me about a certain magistrate, a member of his congregation, who faithfully only paid R1,00 per month year in and year out. Lebowa-Kgomo was one of Sakkie's wards. Many of the members were public servants earning good salaries. He wanted to build the Lebowa-Kgomo church building and he knew that money would not be forthcoming from the DRC as the steel structure was supplied by the DRC Synodical office on the assumption that the structure would be enclosed by the congregation.

Another of Sakkie's aims was to encourage the congregation to become self-supporting. His method was to focus on the New Testament teaching, especially stewardship as taught by Jesus in his parables to show that believers are the managers and stewards of God's provision. Our money and businesses belong to Him and we were appointed to administer it efficiently. Sakkie came with a revolutionary method to change the old system of fixed contributions to giving according to Scriptural base. Giving must be in accordance with our thankfulness and joy. But he emphasized that these two virtues will not realize if members do not have a sound relationship with God through the salvation and deliverance of sin. A further aspect of giving is that when a person gives, he or she does so in obedience and the ultimate result of this is spiritual growth. Giving with joy and thankfulness is one of the methods to grow.

What results did he obtain? In the first year when he started the programme, the congregation of Lerato managed to raise R4 000; in the second year the contributions reached R9 000 and in the third year R17 000. The church building of Lebowa-Kgomo was completed and the congregation of Lebowa-Kgomo after seceding, never requested assistance from other congregations of the DRC. When Sakkie retired, the relief minister, Rev Mankoe, at his farewell admitted that he did not agree with Sakkies' initiative in the beginning but he had to concede that Sakkie was right and his methods successful.

### **32.8 LEPELLE: GJ JORDAAN**

If I have to view my own contribution towards self-supportiveness, I must admit that I did not succeed in guiding this congregation towards independence. What was the scenario when I arrived in 1977? This congregation is the one that Kritzinger (2007:4) described in his book. Lepelle had 28 posts. Rev ME Moloto took responsibility for three of these wards and Rev MLS Phatudi for six. I did the rest. Fourteen of these wards did not have church buildings. We gathered in school classrooms and many members walked as far as eight kilometers to attend church. These wards were cared for by either a local leader, a woman who wore the CWM clothes, or some youth leader who was still at school, or an elder. With my bakkie I used to fetch the members nearer to our meeting place so that each time one or two additional wards could be served Holy Communion. Usually at each meeting children were baptized and all required funds were collected, receipts written out and the money taken home to be deposited.

What would my strategy be in order to develop a self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating congregation? Were these three aims important or were there other deeper-lying issues to be tackled first? How should I prepare this congregation for independence? I am reminded of Gerdener (1958:157): "The Church is appearing on the eastern horizon, while the mission is disappearing in the west. But the whole historical process, the political situation, the racial setting and the pattern of community life are factors which influence the rising in the eastern skies and the setting in the west. All our planning cannot override these factors, although we must plan; but the Hand behind and over all is not ours. He must bide His time as we must trust His guidance. The desire of the emerging churches may become a passion and even an agony. But only the Lord of the Church knows the time and the way from Mission to Church."



This summarized the course of the history of the congregations of the presbytery of Burger up to 1994, when the NGKA and the *NG Sendingkerk* merged into the URCSA. I reported my own experiences (27-27.14.7). However, there are some perspectives which could be mentioned as preparation for the termination of the DRC and NGKA partnership.

### **32.9 TO FULFILL THE OFFICE OF MISSIONARY AND MINISTRY**

#### **32.9.1 Missionary**

I noticed that the missionaries in Sekhukhuneland were all loyal and co-operative towards the church councils under whom we served. We all honoured our black colleagues and evangelists and assisted them in their specific needs.

Here I was placed to serve a congregation with many wards and a church council as well as two black ministers as co-pastors. I decided to help them in doing what they were expected to do in serving the congregation. But, what about my calling as a missionary? After all, the congregation who was in partnership with Lepelle sent me as their missionary and regarded me as such!

##### **32.9.1.1 Restoring of Fallen Walls: Masemola**

I discovered that the efforts of previous missionaries had collapsed in some villages. For example, there were schools built at Masemola, but now a large school had been erected adjacent to it by the government. This building was not in use as there was no congregation in the village (27.5). A congregation was started afresh and Masemola became a new ward in the congregation of Lepelle.

##### **32.9.1.1.2 Malope**

At Malope I found the same situation as at Masemola. The roof of the church building was blown off. The difference here was that there was no school in the village. A primary school and a congregation were started (27.4). Today this church building is the meeting place for the church council and other movements because of its central position.



### **32.9.1.1.3 Kgarathuthu School**

The children of the first missionary of the DRC, Rev Abraham Rousseau, went to school here. This was the farm Zoetvelden owned by his nephew, Frikkie Rousseau. I could not as yet establish the date when this building was erected. I presume it was after 19/02/1910, when this area was proclaimed a rehabilitation centre for poverty-stricken families who needed to make a fresh start. The old wheat silo is still here. Rev Rousseau lived only four kilometers away on his own farm, Eensgevonden, before moving to his new mission station, Burger. The school principal wrote me a letter, asking whether the church would object if the school committee demolished the old building as it posed a danger to the school children. Or did the school principal use psychology to get the much needed classrooms for his pupils? However, it had the right effect. I immediately managed to obtain the necessary funds to purchase an old tobacco store from Mr Koos Krüger at Marble Hall. One of the farmers, Ferdi Erasmus, demolished the store and within a year the old school had been restored with the extra classrooms added, and was handed to the Kgarathuthu Primary school. Services were started and today the building is used as school and community hall and is well cared for by the school committee and village *kgoro* (council). This building (approximately 100 years old) is still in use (Jordaan 2007:8).

### **32.9.1.1.4 India Church Building**

Another *restoring the walls*-project was the rebuilding of the oldest building built by Rev Abraham Rousseau in 1934. The building became a school during the mission era, but when the government took over, a new school was erected adjacent to it. The building was demolished by the school committee when the walls started to disintegrate. I started a new congregation at India and we were holding church meetings in the school. A desire was expressed to rebuild the church building on the same foundation as the previous church, but this time with heavy rocks. This was done with the help of the Rand Afrikaans University Christian students in 1987. The congregation is still using the building and it also serves as school classrooms (Jordaan 2007:14).

### **32.9.1.1.5 Mothopong's Old Historic Church**

Yet another *restoring the walls*-project was the restoration of this old church building built by Rousseau in 1936. I have great appreciation for the historical value of such buildings

and as yet I could not find any church building in Sekhukhuneland older than this one. During 1986 and also in 2009 maintenance was done by me. The church building is still used as a community crèche.

#### **32.9.1.1.6 The Matlala Mission Station**

This is another example of *restoring fallen walls*, and I knew that no minister, church council or any other person or body cared for this old station. I personally saw the need for congregations in urban areas that were looking to reach out to people of different race, language and culture to become involved. I also realized that in the short time that I laboured here, I would not fulfill the dreams for this congregation and these people, the Matlala ba-Maserumule and the Batau tribes. Groups like the Action Labourers of the Harvest, Skuilkrans DRC and the Bethesda Evangelical congregation undertook short-term outreaches. Child evangelism, visiting the sick in the hospital, providing food for crèches, clothing as well as gardening projects which they had been doing for many years. This is not mission work, but projects undertaken in partnership with groups to make a difference in the lives of needy people. I call this action Church-to-Church and no longer Church-to-Mission partnership. The URC congregations are independent and these groups are not doing mission work, but evangelism, the strengthening of the Body of Christ and reaching those who are still outside the fold. Some in the HIV ward have found peace and assurance of salvation in Christ. The Matlala Outreach project has opened up new perspectives of partnership. The principles in this project is what Steve Loots (2008:175) also had in mind when saying: “Certain principles must be in play for an effective mission trip. First of all, the focus must be on the people/people group/local church and Christian community, and not on the visitors.” I prefer referring to *outreach* trips and not *mission* trips. Established in 1956, one of the houses on the old mission station is called *outreach house* and the other house is called *old mission house*. The main emphasis is on *diakonia* in serving the community and also *koinonia* in togetherness with the local believers, glorifying God within the Body of Christ and in doing evangelism together.

#### **32.9.1.7 Establishing of New Wards**

I would not like to define church planting as the gathering of a few families, starting a Sunday school in a new village, having catechism classes for the young and even older people and when they are ready, baptizing and confirming them as new members of the

congregation. These days church planting is when a certain denomination or mission organization gathers a few Christian families, pitches a tent, holds meetings, baptizes them somewhere where there is water, and declare that a new church has been planted in the village. The fact is that in this village many other denominations have been working for many years. Is church planting not that new churches are being established in areas where the Gospel has reached a certain group or village where no church has ever worked?

Part of my strategy as a minister, if I may call it such, was to travel and visit people in the small villages where the NGKA at the time did not have a preaching point or services. I found people who may have worked previously in the mission hospital under Dr van Niekerk, Dr van Vuuren, Moruti Jordaan or Moruti Conradie. It was in the early stages of the mission, when people joined the church for employment. Some of their children or wives perhaps expressed a wish to be served by the church again. In some of these villages new preaching points were started. Not all of them were successful. I remember that I visited Mabitsi, where one of our elders, Mr AL Nchabeleng, was a mission teacher and with the aid of evangelist Amos Nkgadima, people had joined the mission many years ago. Here I found a woman called Afnita. She was very glad and cried when we visited her again after all these years. We started with a congregation in conjunction with others who joined. We had five families and many children in the Sunday school. Afnita became very ill and she decided to join the new sect which broke away from the ZCC, called Modise (International Zionist Church). Eventually we lost all the members except one woman, Monica Moswatupa. Today she is very frail and the only person in that village whom we visit and to whom we serve Holy Communion.

There are also other wards which have been established and which, with God's blessing, continue to grow. Eventually all the preaching posts became wards of Lepelle. At all these villages small church buildings were erected, except in one ward, Krokodilheuwel. Only five families are living here and they are being cared for by the ward church council of Tsimanyane. I have already reported about the new ward, Elandskraal, which was established during the time of the riots (27.12.3). Other wards were also added, e.g. Tsansabella, Masehlaneng and Thabampse. I have documented the history of each of the wards of Lepelle in an unpublished document, called: *The history of the mission of the DRC in the lower Olifants River region of Sekhukhuneland*. I praise God for giving me a church council and colleagues, black ministers and evangelists who were co-operative, sympathetic and loyal. Nothing was done without the necessary consultation. They

occasionally also criticized me, never with condemnation. Whether the above story of *building up fallen walls* and establishing new wards falls within missionary ministry or minister's ministry, I am not sure. The next section under the heading, *MINISTRY* will explain why there are a variety of differences.

### **32.10 THE MINISTRY**

I wish to start this section by expressing my gratitude to the other missionaries I worked with in the presbytery of Burger. I wish I could have reported much more about them. They deserve better. They were Dons Kritzinger (26.1), Jan Nieder-Heitmann (26.3) and Johan Koen (26.5) in Burger congregation; Petrus Etsebeth (25.1.3), Ockie Olivier (25.1.5) and Sakkie van der Merwe (25.1.6) in Lerato; Pierre Joubert (28.1), Wessel Bester (8.2) and Petrus Etsebeth (28.3) in Sekhukhuneland congregation. I worked with them for 18 years, from 1977 to 1995. What I mention below, is what I shared with them. What I wrote about *restoring the fallen walls* above, although their stories would be different, could also apply to them.

In our ministry we all shared our service with our black colleagues and evangelists. Their names are all mentioned and to the best of my knowledge their history and ministerial service are also documented. Once again I wish I could have done better, because they deserve better documentation.

#### **32.10.1 What is Ministry?**

Imagine a congregation like Lepelle which in length is just over 100 kilometers and in width 20 to 30 kilometers lying all along the Olifants River (Lepelle in Northern Sotho). We had 28 wards at one stage to be served by one white minister, two black ministers and two evangelists. I noticed that during my service at Lepelle, the minister's wards of Strydkraal and Leeuwfontein were vacant for eight years. What would the strategy be to see that each believer was assisted in his spiritual life, that the congregation increased in membership and that the congregation management was sound? What strategy did my colleagues and I use?

I started by trying to develop each ward into a small congregation with a church council (sometimes only one or two persons), a women's movement, a youth movement and a Sunday school. I tried to build a small church building as gathering place, a place which

could be a binding factor for the congregation. In most cases they took the initiative by improving the floor, putting in new window panes, building a step at the entrance, constructing a toilet and even etching the date in the cement. The area surrounding the church was kept neat and tidy. I realized that the minister alone could contribute very little when he only had a programme of serving Holy Communion four times a year, that is every three months. I appreciated the help of the evangelists when they were still with us. I especially appreciated literature obtained from Rev Koos Beukes, who was the secretary for evangelism. He provided us with *Lentšú lê phelago* (Lewende Woord) sermons which were used by the elders or church leaders. From Bloemfontein we received Sunday school lessons (CLF) and from Dibukeng, Bibles and hymn books. I am also thankful to the Stofberg Theological School for the further training of ministers, evangelists and church leaders. Dr Hennie Möller assisted us with the training of scribes and cashiers, and the congregation leaders in office management and administration. Each one of us tried to guide, assist and advise without being prescriptive. We all knew that we must not be superior in our attitude. We were all on the same level. Personally I often felt that I did not accomplish much. I often wondered whether I was a missionary, a minister, or a church administrator, but I simply continued being available. I would not call it an identity crisis. I would rather say it was a strong feeling that the time for being a missionary had passed and that a new strategy for the ministry was needed.

I knew that the DRC congregation of Marble Hall would soon terminate the subsidised missionary post. While I was a tent-making minister for just over two years (27.9) I observed that some wards went visiting other wards nearer to them, the youth movements organized rallies together and the women's movements also went visiting other wards. All these activities did not take place under the leadership of the church council but under the leadership of the ward leaders, although some of them also served on the church council. When I read Kritzinger's book *Rethinking ministry*, I realized that he had discovered something about the meaning of the term *ministry* that I experienced but could not formulate into words. He defined ministry as follows: "The ministry is the *service arrangement* in the church. What happens is that *some* are called to a *special ministry* (Eph 4:11 comes to mind). But *all* are in the ministry, all serve the same body. When we are therefore going to deal with the *ministry of the church*, we are thinking of the *ministry of every believer*. Only within this comprehensive ministry are we going to map out the *special ministry*" (Kritzinger 2007:3).

I became aware of a strong desire among the members to do something about developing the congregation towards independent self-propagation without the old concept of the ordained ministers. That is what Kritzinger (2007:3) said: “The clear picture that comes across throughout the New Testament is that the church is one (a unit), and that the diverse roles within the church are interdependent and on the same level.”

The URC has not adopted a new structure of ministry yet. Kritzinger (2007:58) suggests:

- a) The role and functioning of theological schools;
- b) a broadening of the definition of ministerial training to include the whole church and
- c) a new inclusive structure in order to incorporate part-time students.

What should we do in the meantime? In answering this question one must realize the great work that evangelists have done during the pioneer and DRC/NGKA joint partnership era. Their past successes indicate that a new form of office must take their place. Kritzinger’s address on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1978 on the future evangelization of unreached people groups before the sub-commission of the Synodical mission’s committee gave important guidelines:

“Co-operation is utterly desirable because of the following reasons:

1. *Suitable workers for a specific people group could come from any denominational background (language, background, affection etc).*
2. *A spiritual home for the mentioned people groups must be established.*
3. *The mission task certainly required a team effort. An attempt with single missionaries will not succeed. He said that this demands the following missionary methods.*
  - a) *In order to reach out effectively to each people group, no congregation could live comfortable in honouring God if there is no focus on the unreached people groups.*
  - b) *Furthermore, no church or congregation can commence with such a task if not properly programmed. Qualified persons will have to attend to this action by motivating teaching, guidance and sharing.*
  - c) *What is needed is a partnership agreement.”*

Reflecting on this address after 33 years and observing the developments since then, one may become disappointed. Partnership in mission did not develop, but was terminated. However, not everything is lost. The DRC has started a Bible institute which has already trained hundreds of believers and church leaders in fulfilling the task of reaching different people in South Africa and in Africa. The Nehemia Bible Institute at Wellington may be considered as the answer to a far reaching effect on evangelization. If only the call and vision of the Great Commandment could be obeyed.

### **32.10.2 Partnership**

I realized that I would not, as a missionary or as a minister, be able to establish the perfect congregation in accordance with the *Biblical principles* as described by Kritzinger (2007:27). In order to obey the command of Christ, the assistance of others were called in:

- a) The mission doctor, Mich Veldman, who suggested that I should contact the Gideons to help in spreading the Gospel. They were able to distribute thousands of portions of the New Testament to every high school pupil in the congregation. They did this on a yearly basis and also distributed Testaments to the Grade 7 groups.
- b) I did not have the necessary funds to build churches, but the students of RAU were able to obtain funds and spend two weeks every year assisting with the construction of small church buildings.
- c) Rev Koos Beukes and his team of evangelists were called in every second year to help with evangelization services in the wards for a period of three weeks.
- d) Short-term outreach groups were organized to show films, visit the members and train them in discipleship.

### **32.10.3 Partnership Church-to-Church**

The purpose of partnership is to find partners in fulfilling a specific task. Steve Loots (2008:102) suggests the following to be considered: “Church-to-Church ministries is valid and important, but see it for what it is. Blessing brothers and sisters in Christ, meeting their needs, helping in times of disaster, uplifting them economically, and even training them in certain skills is all very important, but it is not the same as taking the Gospel to the



world. So what is the answer? Let us not prefer one above the other, but rather do both. Take the goodies and essentials to the people. Serve the needy; help the poor; encourage the church. Serve your partner and bless those that God sends you to. But, on top of all that, turn ministry trips into mission trips by combining ministry to the body and taking the Gospel to the people around them.” This is still my dream for all the congregations of the URC, and the DRC congregations, that they should find joint partnership projects. There should be a clear understanding of the difference between ministry and mission. The DRC and former DRC member churches should spend more time in discussing joint projects and reaching out to one another (congregation-to-congregation, church-to-church) in order to find a new way of serving the body of Christ but also to reach the unreached by bringing people to Christ.

#### **32.10.4 Changing Paradigms in Mission**

What is God’s purpose for our church in the *missio Dei* concept? Firstly, the church must have a vision of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) and secondly be committed in order to fulfill God’s purpose. The paradigm shift comes when every believer feels the call. There will be those called to go on a permanent basis with a trained mission career, either theologically trained or in the field of medicine, administration or any other support service. These men and women need home-based partners in prayer, in giving and supporting in whatever the need may be. Loots (2008:14) said: “Allow God to change your thinking, adopting a new mindset. Start with a decision and commitment.”

#### **‘Our Jerusalem’**

“For too long in our generation individual church members relied on the clergy to do the work and the church have relied on the denominative structures or the missionary organizations to do the work” (Loots 2008:16). This attitude led to ‘Jerusalem’ becoming a harvest area and it remains the responsibility of every Christian to share the Gospel in ‘our Jerusalem’. In facilitating missions, many are needed to make it happen. Some will leave; others will stay, and assist in prayer, serving and support. The fact is that we must become obedient to reach the world through partnership and by witnessing in ‘our Jerusalem’ and doing our share as partners to the ends of the world. This is what mission and church powers try to accomplish: *every member a partner*.



### **32.11 EVALUATION**

I prefer using the term *every member a partner* instead of *every member a missionary*, because as Ott and Strauss (2010:33), stated: “the missional church ecclesiology can be taken to an unhealthy extreme that overlooks the necessity of international mission to the nations, because the nations are the scope of mission, and because the sending of cross-cultural missionaries remains a necessity, churches must include the sending of individuals for cross-cultural ministry as an essential part of their overall mission in the world.”

### **33. A SUMMARY OF PHASES OF PARTNERSHIP IN THE DRC MISSION WORK**

#### **33.1 THE PIONEERING PHASE OF MISSION WORK IN SEKHUKHUNELAND**

During the pioneering phase, the DRC took initiative for the training of evangelists, teachers and workers needed for their mission stations. The Mission provided funds for mission schools, clinics and the salaries of all workers. The supporters in this pioneering phase were the Christian women of the *TVSV* (7-8). This mission movement was supported financially by the Christian women of each congregation in the Transvaal. Rev AJ Rousseau's co-workers were the evangelists, school teachers, clinic staff and other personnel (8-8.6). I have tried to report on the contribution of the local indigenous workers who played a very important role in the early mission work. In modern times no mission project can succeed without the help of partnerships among the indigenous groups. They are translators, leaders of other indigenous church denominations and mission movements as well as home-based believers.

This was not yet partnership on an equal footing, but it was, in my opinion, a phase in which such a partnership was prepared for. It was not equal in terms of authority, but it was a time when some partners, at least, had respect for one another.

#### **33.2 CHURCH-TO-CHURCH PARTNERSHIP PERIOD – THE CONSOLIDATION PHASE (16 TO 23)**

Shortly after the DRC Mission Church became an independent church under the name of *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika* (NGKA) in 1963, a new partnership started. The first task was that each presbytery had to consolidate its borders as well as the internal planning of each congregation. The planning commission of the presbytery of Burger skillfully planned the borders of the different congregations to include the main wards in order to make provision for the placing of black ministers. Some of the evangelists's posts were replaced by a minister's post. The congregations were also divided into minister's wards, supported by a ward church council. The missionaries had their own wards to look after and the general church council functioned according to the stipulations of the Church Order.

During this phase, the structures of the congregations were designed in such a way that there was a movement away from a hierarchical structure, with the white minister at the top, to a structure where white and black ministers were on an equal level of authority.

### **33.2.3 Ecumenism in Partnership**

A further reflection on the above discussion regarding the influence of the Ecumenical Movements is needed in order to determine the effect on the DRC and NGKA partnership. The Oxford Dictionary defines *Ecumenism* as follows: “The principle or aim of uniting different branches of the Christian Church.” The Ecumenical Movement had a far-reaching influence on the DRC/NGKA partnership. The drive to unite as one church became the dominant factor.

The Federal Council of the DRC family had the task of persuading the DRC to unite as one church (Du Toit, Hofmeyr, Strauss & Van der Merwe 2002:146). It is important to notice that the DRC General Synod of 1986 already showed its willingness to prepare the ground for unity. The well-known document *Kerk en Samelewing* (Church and Society) – a testimony of the Dutch Reformed Church was approved at this synod. This caused far-reaching historical changes (Du Toit, *et al.* 2002:157).

This document led to positive ecumenical results. It also led to schism in the DRC when the *Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk* was established on 27 June 1987. Du Toit, *et al.* (2002:157) also remarked: “It is tragic that when the DRC began to work seriously to create unity, this initiative caused a group of members to break away to form the *Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk*.” The whole history of the formation of this church shows clearly how the DRC worked hard to abandon apartheid and to work seriously on church unity, but that there was also resistance to such unity within the ranks of the church.

To show that the DRC is serious in its endeavour for church unity, a council meeting of the General Synod to discuss unity was held in March 1989. This meeting did not succeed in bridging the gap between the DRC and the other members of the DRC family (Du Toit, *et al.* 2002:163). The General Synod of the DRC in 1990, which specifically dealt with the unification of the DRC family decided to continue dialogue and to express unity among the members.

### **33.2.4 The Circumstances and Conditions during the Eighties until 1994**

The striving for unity in the higher gatherings of the different member churches of the DRC family did not influence the members of the NGKA of the Presbytery of Burger in Sekhukhuneland. In my personal experience and observations at the time, most of them did not know of these aspirations. Some of the younger ministers belonged to the Broederkring. This organization was known for its bitter opposition to the policy of Apartheid. The Broederkring was banned by the Government because it was rooted in the Black Consciousness Movement. It continued its work under the *Belydende Kring* (Du Toit, *et al.* 2002:143).

Only one incident occurred when a student of the Theological School at Turfloop who, while doing his practical service in the congregation of Lepelle, was involved in rioting. The *kgōsi* (tribal king) wrote a letter to the Stofberg Theological School complaining about the student. The dean, Rev Lex van Wyk, referred the case to me for investigation. It was found that the student was under pressure and that his involvement did not cause harm to anybody. The student continued and finished his studies. After his ordination, he was called to one of the congregations of Sekhukhuneland and is still serving there, loved and appreciated by the members of the congregations of the Presbytery of Burger.

Even with the unification of the two churches, NGKA and NGSK, which was to become the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, I observed that many members did not care much for the new name. Most of them were poor and the struggle against poverty and difficult living conditions, sickness and unemployment carried on. They still had to search for wood and gather *marog* (green plants) to be dried in the sun and stored for use during the winter, and stand in long queues with buckets at water points. Many still call their church *Dutch* or *NG*. During the riots their children were ordered by the comrades to join them at night and to march with them, throwing stones and burning shops, schools and vehicles. The parents spoke at church meetings of the way they objected to these events and how they prayed for their children's safety. During the riots of the eighties it happened that information was sent to the (white) ministers by church members and church council members about whether to stay at home or to feel free to visit the different wards.

The riots and tensions led to a sharp decrease in support from the DRC. Most of the ordinary church members could not understand why the white DRC did not continue their

support, because they were not necessarily in favour of the riots and destruction of properties that were going on. When the white ministers retired, they experienced it as a loss and expressed their sorrow and disappointment.

During the eighties there were basically two initiatives to move beyond the unequal relations of the past: The restructuring of the church to make equality possible, and, much more visible and prominent, the national struggle against white domination in all spheres of society, including the church.

The legacy of both these initiatives is important to the way in which we search for relevant forms of partnership in our present context.

### **33.2.5 Statistics of the Congregations of the Presbytery of Burger – 1994**

*(NG Kerk Jaarboek 1994)*

The statistics of church membership in 1994 gives an indication of the way in which the work of the previous phase was indeed blessed by God. There were strong congregations that were able and willing to become partners with others in the continuation of the mission of the church in the new South Africa. The numbers were as follows:

	<b>Baptismal membership</b>	<b>Full members</b>	<b>Total Ministers of the Presbytery</b>	<b>Total Church Council Members</b>
Burger	827	743		
Lepelle	750	1 969		
Lerato	664	1 012		
Motetema	331	389		
Sekhukhuneland	1 965	1 856		
Lebowa-Kgomo	264	460		
Philadelphia	2 498	928		
			14	240

### **33.2.6 BEGINNING OF A NEW PHASE**

The two churches, NGKA and NGSK, after various discussions, also decided to unite, which indeed happened on 14 April 1994. The Confession of Belhar's second article tipped the scale to unification (Du Toit, *et al.* 2002:166). In the same year the General Synod of the DRC in 1994 was called the Synod of Reconciliation. Pres Nelson Mandela also visited the synod. Guidelines for a new special commission were drawn up in order to continue the dialogue and to draft a report to the General Synodical Commission (Du Toit, *et al.* 2002:170).

At this synod it was stated that the process of becoming one church is the work of the *Joint Commission*, consisting of members of the DRC, URCSA and RCA. Delegates met for the first time on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1995 (Du Toit, *et al.* 2002:172). The General Synod declared that the process aimed at a one church-relationship had officially started. Ad hoc commissions of the different churches of the family would co-operate in working together towards church unity and in drawing up a Church Order (Du Toit, *et al.* 2002:172). One problem was the acceptance of the Confession of Belhar as the official confession of the united church. In April 1997 the synod of the URCSA decided that conversations with the Joint Commission had to continue, but that the acceptance of BELHAR IS NOT NEGOTIABLE.

This decision had become an obstacle to many in the DRC as far as the endeavour for unification of the URCSA and the DRC is concerned (Du Toit, *et al.* 2002:174).

### **33.2.7 Partnership and Obedience – An afterthought**

After reading the reports about the dialogue and efforts to keep the partnership going, and noticing that the endeavour for unity in the church was not yet complete, I am tempted to quote Sinclair (1988:219):

*Undoubtedly partnership is not just for partnership; nor should structures be for structures. There is a kind of ecumenical partnership which is so bureaucratic and self-absorbed that it strangles any useful action. The calling of a new missionary does not necessarily have to be the climax of a long and tortuous negotiation between churches, and mission agencies. There must also be a place for an agile response to the urgings of the Holy Spirit.*

### **33.2.8 Obedience and the Great Commission**

Discussing *missio Dei* and the great truths of *marturia*, *diakonia*, *kerygma* and *koinonia* and *mission and unity*, and reading the Great Commandment of Jesus Christ to his apostles in Matthew 28:19-20, give rise to a feeling of gratitude, but also of humility. The Lord has used the DRC and those who were called to go and take the Gospel far and wide into Africa. As pointed out (34-34.4) the fourth wave (Saayman 2007:106) is waiting to carry us further to the utmost ends of the earth. Together with Max Warren (1976:173) a new meaning for *missionary* should be considered:

*Because misunderstanding is sometimes almost woefully easy, we should be clear that the word, 'missionary' is to be understood as applying to anyone, anywhere, who is committed to obedience to the great commission. That obedience may, for most, be confined to their 'Jerusalem'. For some it may mean moving into neighbouring 'Judeah'. Others, perhaps, will find themselves unexpectedly in some uncongenial 'Samaria'. Still others will go to 'the ends of the earth'. All should be knit together in prayer, for their work is one. It should also be clear that the words, 'missionary' and 'mission' are not to be restricted to individuals. They are equally relevant to group obedience. Ideally, they should refer to every congregation and to the universal Church (Warren 1976:173).*

### **33.3 EVALUATION OF PART THREE**

This section could be seen as the intended result of the previous phase set by the Planning Commission. Each congregation except Motetema Congregation had two posts for a black minister. The DRC subsidiary bodies co-operated in providing at least an increased amount for the black ministers' salaries although not the total amount the NGKA Synod has decided on. In some cases the evangelist's post was discontinued and the subsidy of the evangelist was added to the minister's post.

Tension was caused in the seventies, when strong voices in the DRC family indicated clearly that unification was better than, and much more Biblical than partnership in mission work. The DRC and NGKA partnership was under pressure. The missionaries' posts were reconsidered. Another factor was the increased political tension within the DRC regarding the moving away from apartheid. This had a serious financial influence on the budgets for mission work and their missionary posts. Gradually the posts were terminated.

The ministry structure of the NGKA reached a stage where it was no longer fruitful. Both black and white ministers travelled on a weekly basis to small outlying wards administering Holy Communion, holding various meetings, doing home visits and conducting funerals and weddings. The white minister was usually overloaded with administration and presbyterial duties. He was the contact person with the DRC and as a result he became the source and administrator of the funds. His black partner did not have the same role to play. Many villages were not reached with the gospel (Kritzinger 2007:5). The white minister (previously called the *missionary*) was in a partnership which could be described as: “graciously impeccable: a kind of ecclesiastical diplomacy with a missionary flavour, but appear to issue in nothing more significant than the struggling survival of the institutions themselves” (Sinclair 1988:219).



## **PART FOUR**

### **CONSEQUENCES FOR CHURCH DEVELOPMENT AND CHURCH PLANTING POST-1994**

#### **34. THE DRC AND THE YOUNGER CHURCHES AND THE PROSPECT OF A PARTNERSHIP AFTER 1994**

What has happened with the partnership in mission? I have indicated that this era has terminated. The URCSA is independent and an appeal is made to the DRC to unite. When we look at the emblem of the URCSA we see that there is still a space to be filled. That is why it is a uniting church and not yet united. Once the DRC joins in, it may be called *united*. The NGKA and the Reformed Church in Africa also are invited to unite. With the Belhar Confession (1986), the URCSA showed that its independency was solid and the DRC family churches will have to acknowledge this. For unification it is imperative that all the family member churches will accept it as one of the new confessions of the church. The different Moderamen are dealing with this matter.

As far as partnership in mission is concerned, one can say that there is no written contract regarding partnership. The DRC must recognize that the URCSA is no longer the object of mission work. Some DRC congregations are still contributing financially and quite a few white ministers are still serving in different URCSA congregations. Each DRC Regional Synods replaced the word *mission* with *getuienis* (witnessing). In the Free State it is called *Sinodale Getuieniskommissie* (SGK) (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek 2007:107*). The DRC Eastern Synod calls it *Bediening vir Getuienis* (Service for Witnessing). The DRC Eastern Synod, the DRC Northern Synod as well as the URCSA for the Northern Region also have a functional post for ecumenical projects. Although mission has been discontinued, certain projects are still continuing. These projects have a serving character (*diakonia*).

##### **34.1 PARTNERSHIP AND UNITY**

Van der Watt (2010) said that there was a phase in the mission when emphasis was laid on proclaiming the gospel (*kerygma*). This was the time when no churches had been planted yet. It was the pioneer phase. When the young churches were established, the time of *diakonia* had come. The older churches supported the younger churches with goods. This

phase was characterized by prescribing and dependency as in a mother and daughter relationship. Now we have entered a new phase, where relationships are central – the phase of fellowship (*koinonia*). From this *koinonia*, the fellowship, love and union, flows the desire to listen to the Word together, witness together, serve and worship together. Only when we start from this unity in our fellowship within the scope of the Triune-Unit, our witness and service will be effective and credible (Van der Watt 2010).

### **34.2 A NEW RELATIONSHIP**

It is quite clear that, apart from the dialogue regarding unity, a new relationship is developing between the DRC and the URCSA. This is practical and sometimes also spontaneous socializing. Kritzinger (*NGTT* 1997:38) makes it clear that partnership is not synonymous with unity. “Partnership, per definition, takes for granted a plurality of structures. Sometimes co-operation even functions as a technique to uphold division, or to postpone or defer a necessary unity. Organizations and churches may have to be challenged with the option of sacrificing their own identity and integrating (merging) into something new. This may indeed be God’s will in a certain situation, in which case partnership will not be the desirable goal, but unity. This should, in all seriousness, be considered. Also in our present discussions of partnership we should not ignore this possibility.”

The DRC, when thinking of the younger churches, is slowly undergoing a mindshift. To quote Saayman (2007:106): “During the first three waves the same missionary motivation was at work throughout, closely linked to the Afrikaner’s self-understanding and their sense of being in control (often expressed in typical western terms as a sense of stewardship over immature indigenous Africans’).

“However, since 1994 a new reality brought a change in attitude and a sense of necessity to reach out to black Christians. Not all congregations have outreach projects, but the thinking is slowly changing. Not all members in the DRC underwent a mind change yet, but under the guidance of the new committees for Service and Witnessing and the contributions called ‘geloofsoffers’ (faith-offerings) there is an indication that they want to commit themselves to serving the Body of Christ by supporting outreach projects, also assisting URCSA congregations financially with their charity projects such as HIV Care

centers for children and others. In 2008 the Skuilkrans DR Congregation published a list of 44 service groups. One group is reaching out to Egreja Reformada em Mocambique.”

Yet, some leading members of the URCSA and DRC are still reticent in reaching out to one another. Saayman (2007:121) quotes Van der Watt (2002:ii-iii; Louw 2002:ii); “it seems as if congregations choose rather to become involved somewhere far away, where the possibility of such difficult everyday relationships is non-existent”. Saayman (2007:122) also quotes Kritzinger, *et al.* (2004:276) in saying: “There seems to be weariness among many Afrikaners to deal with African people in depth and on a long-term basis, and to negotiate or co-operate with the URCSA. The DRC seems to be tired of having to face the fruits of its successive waves of mission over the past 300 years, and being unhappy that there is so little to be proud of, so few URCSA members they can work with comfortably or without problems.”

### **34.3 STEWARDSHIP**

When Dr SD Maluleke took over the office of executive secretary of the URC of the Northern region, he immediately started to try and change the thinking of members of the URCSA who were strongly cemented in the old DRC mission era. What was the position then? He described it as follows: “Many congregations among the African communities were started by the white missionaries. They were sent by white congregations. They were also financially supported by their mother churches. The African people were only asked to repent and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord. The white congregations provided money to build churches for African believers. White congregations took responsibility for maintaining mission and church buildings” (Maluleke 1998a:10).

### **34.4 ENSLAVEMENT**

Maluleke (1988a:10) said:

*The good work of the white congregations enslaved the minds of many African people. They enjoyed the service of a minister but they were not responsible for his salary. The African church council became a CALLING BODY and the white congregation became the PAYING BODY. The calling body was and is not responsible for the welfare of the ministries and for the ministers. The African members of the church never accepted*

*ownership of their church. They are still like babies depending on their mother. The white ministers taught people that they must not strive for money because God will provide. The financial stewardship was not a burning issue. Some people were even paid to attend church services; some were given bread and clothes. Christians were enjoying to be served without accepting responsibility and accountability.*

*This way of doing colonized the minds of people. The majority of our African members still believe that pastors are to serve them but their salaries is the responsibility of the white church. Some are even under the impression that the pastor is paid by the government. Most of the members are not even contributing to the church. Most of those who are contributing are donating their leftovers. They spend on many things for themselves. If there is something left over, they can then give to God and His church.*

*Such a church is always dependent on donations from a white church. If the white church stops the subsidies, those African churches will collapse or remain without a pastor while its members are a community of paid people. They are not taught how to tithe because they were told God will provide, while it actually means that white churches will provide. People never accept ownership of their church. Ownership goes with responsibility and accountability.*

This is especially true of the congregations in the rural regions of which I had personal experience in the Lepelle URCSA congregation. It is also true of all the congregations of the Presbytery of Burger in Sekhukhuneland. When the members present their *Kabelo* cards (gift offerings) most members only contribute R2,00 per year. This was the situation in 1977. Most of them were very much in arrears. The missionaries realized that the people in the homelands were unemployed. Most of their spouses and children worked in the urban areas. When they came home once a month, they only brought enough money for one bag of mealie meal, some groceries, a little money for schooling and a little pocket money for the month. The women tried to produce food around their homes and on the lands, but it is a dry area with very little rain. Beans, marog, manna and sometimes also mealies were planted. The people were poor. The system of the chiefs was not based on giving *within your means*. ‘I want R100,00 from each of you as to build this school.’ Whether poor or rich, every one had to donate the same amount. This system became practice in the church. The church council decides how members should donate, whether

they are pensioners, school children, unemployed or those who have jobs. And even if you are in arrears, you must settle your debt.

Sometimes Dr Maluleke tried to change the old system by having workshops for ministers, church council members, youth, women and the men's association. In his book: *Struggle in transforming the mindset of church leadership and members* (Maluleke 1998b:3) he defines the old way of thinking as follows: We ignore the new thinking, we are not able and willing to change the situation. We only want to keep to the old way of operating. We are refusing to change our old way of thinking and to accept a new way of thinking. This abnormal understanding prevents our ability to think and even allow our discussions to fail. He pleads for a change and only a change of mindset can achieve this.

### **34.5 INEQUALITY**

The poor wages of evangelists and ministers compared with the full support of the missionaries or white ministers in the NGKA, is one of the reasons why the old system of joint mission or partnership in mission failed. Kritzinger (2007:15) remarked: "The traditional principle is that the local congregation is responsible for the sustenance of the minister and his family. This is impossible when <sup>(a)</sup>the church members are poor and cashless, of much lower financial status than the minister's expectations, and <sup>(b)</sup>the church is small. Only in more or less homogeneous middle class communities can this pattern work." When the yearly financial statements were drawn up for the synodical office, the salary of the missionary was not even mentioned, because it appears on the statement of the local DRC congregation, which received the money from the presbytery, synod or other institution or congregation to be paid directly to the missionary. Most of the black ministers and evangelists were very grateful for subsidies according to the DRC scale of subsidies, because the money contributed monthly by the local NGKA congregations was not sufficient for them to survive. The DRC realized that, and was urged to withdraw, because the situation was unacceptable.

Dr Maluleke (1998b:14) presented the following case study to us:

*The congregation where I am a member is 20 years old. It was started as a project of the white DRC (that is Mission Field). This is a black congregation. When this congregation started, there were five evangelists and one white missionary. They all received their*

*salaries from the DRC. They never asked the congregation to be involved in this project. Now they want us to accept responsibility for everything. The blacks still feel that this congregation is the project of the white DRC. The DRC is the owner of this congregation.*

### **34.5.1 Evaluation**

Dr Maluleke's problem with the URCSA is, sadly, the case in missions all over the world. 'The haves' give to the 'have-nots', often in the hope of gaining influence over them. Frequently, the result is dependence that debilitates the local church by encouraging a welfare mentality. Saint (2001:52) warns: "Anyone of superior education, technology, and superior financial ability who is attempting to help people of inferior capabilities has to guard against creating dependency." These words are from Steve Saint, son of missionary martyr, Nate Saint. He returned with his family in 1995 to the Auca tribe who killed his father together with four other missionaries on Palm Beach in Ecuador in 1956.

When Saint started his work, he wanted to say: "How could they not know who the elders are after 35 years of church planting? I began to understand just how fatal dependency could be. Faithful missionaries have given years and years of valuable time to help the Waodani spiritually. Instead of a self-propagating, self-governing and self-supporting church amongst the Waodani, they were just a group of individual believers" (Saint 2001:60).

The situation with the DRC and the inland mission was different, and much more developed towards self-dependence and self-propagating, but mistakes were made in developing a self-supporting church.

This was the situation in all rural areas. In the presbytery of Burger the situation is as follows:

#### **Lepelle**

Until 1995 there was a missionary post and three black minister's posts as well as two evangelist posts. Now, in 2010, there is only one black minister, who is a tent-maker (two retired ministers are supporting him) serving 21 outstations.

### **Burger**

Until 1995 there was a missionary post and three black minister's posts as well as six evangelist posts. Now, in 2010, there is only one black minister who is a tent-maker serving 21 outposts. There are no evangelists.

### **Sekhukhuland**

Until 2002 there was a missionary and one black minister as well as two evangelists, who retired in 2002. Now in 2010, there is only one black minister who is a tent-maker.

### **Lerato**

Until 1990 there was one missionary, two black minister's posts and two evangelists. Lebowa-Kgomo (1990) and Sebetiela (2000) seceded each with its own minister.

## **34.6 DISCONTINUANCE AND CONTINUANCE BY ESTABLISHING FORUMS**

The 1994 unification between the NGKA and the *NG Sending*, without the Reformed Church in Africa and a large section of the NGKA who remained under the old name and the DRC as a whole, came to an abrupt standstill, which ended most initiatives of the old partnerships such as the Federal Council of Member Churches. Discussions would only take place when the Moderamen of the different churches could meet. The emphasis was not on the continuance of the partnerships but on relationships with the possibility of unification. The Confession of Belhar was one of the stumbling blocks; however, the DRC tried to keep the partnership alive under the new name of *Forum*.

### **Forums**

The North and East synods of the DRC and the URCSA of the Northern Synod are involved in this partnership. With funds provided by the two DRC synods, a functionary post was created to encourage congregations, presbyteries and organizations to develop projects and joint efforts of witnessing and services.

New names for mission were found, yet still obeying the Great Commission. Kritzinger (2007:28) refers in a footnote to what Hoekendijk formulated regarding the ministry of Christ. "Jesus' life and work in human likeness was taken up by three things: He



proclaimed the kingdom of God from first to last (*kerygma*); He erected signs of the kingdom through his sacrificial caring and healing (*diakonia*); and He called and nurtured his disciples as the beginning of the new people of the kingdom (*koinonia*).” The projects of partnership between congregations, presbyteries and organizations of the URCSA and DRC, as expressed in the forums, have the character of *marturia* (witness). The main emphasis is service (*diakonia*) following the example of the Great *diakonos*. The work of these forums is formulated in short by the constitution drawn up by the first office holder, Rev ANE Louw who since 2004 has been serving on the Northern and Southern Synodical Forum. These are the guidelines:

#### **34.6.1 Values and Guidelines for Forums for Joint Public Witness**

1. A **forum for joint public witness** is a voluntary partnership formed by representatives of congregations of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church) and the Uniting Reformed Church (URCSA), for the sake of **co-operation in joint outreach**. This implies that **joint ownership** and **shared responsibility** are accepted by these congregations to bring **the good news** to the **whole local community** through **word and deed**.
2. To achieve this, a process is necessary in order to develop a **shared vision of the kingdom of God** in the local community and a **passion for sharing the gospel** with everyone who needs it. This process presupposes a **commitment by the participants** to **open, honest communication** and **willingness for reconciliation**. It should also be characterized by a **growing realization** that **God entrusted us (together) with the good news**.
3. It is all about **co-operation and partnership**. The term ‘partnership’ was also used in the past, but the term does not adequately describe the urgent need for a **new style of co-operation**. Therefore the terms **joint ownership** or **shared responsibility** is preferred to convey this **new way of co-operation**. It precludes the notion that one congregation is merely supporting the other in its outreach or that one congregation views the sphere of outreach as its own exclusive terrain. This shared responsibility and joint ownership should grow in spite of factors and influences that could hamper or even prevent it from succeeding. Therefore a **prayerful stance of bold faith** is necessary in order to succeed.



4. Every believer is a **wounded believer** who has his/her own story of disappointment and pain, and we usually find it very difficult to share these wounds with one another. We have to realize though, that especially in our racially divided situation it is of the utmost importance to **learn to share our wounds and experiences with one another**. Some of these experiences led to the formation of **racial stereotypes and attitudes** which hamper and even block our communication with each other. Hence, for the sake of making good progress in our **joint forum**, we have to strive for the development of a **Christian healing atmosphere** and identity of the forum.
5. This is the reason why **open, honest communication and reconciliation** are regarded as **core values of a joint forum for public witness**. To establish and enhance these values requires **commitment and hard work**. In a practical way this can be achieved through the processes which are usually associated with workshops for reconciliation. Two important elements that are essential in successful workshops of this nature are **introspection** and a **new way of looking at others**. Firstly, it requires introspection on how I present myself. My stereotypes and attitudes, and even my hidden wounds tend to make my communication superficial. Secondly, it requires a new way of looking at others, especially at my partners on the other side of the racial divide. It concerns more than cultural differences, although these differences also play an important part. It is also about some other barriers and divisions which are difficult and painful to admit. Happily it also concerns **the wonderful discovery that God, amidst our weaknesses, is fully engaged in his redemptive work in my black or white fellow-believer**. God is also rejoicing in him or her. These insights and discoveries are only possible in a **joint learning experience** where we (re)discover the importance, the centrality and **the full implications of the reconciliation with God and one another that Jesus Christ brought about**. This experience can be enhanced and deepened through **appropriate facilitation**.
6. The **enhancement and deepening of our mutual understanding and intercultural communication** may lead to better co-operation, which in turn may lead to **joint ownership and the acceptance of our shared responsibility** in the formulation of **outreach goals and the identification of appropriate strategies** to meet the needs of our community. If and when we succeed in this process, the wonderful experience is shared that **‘we’ and ‘they’ just become ‘WE.’**

7. It is essential that the forum for joint public witness which is to be established, draft a **memorandum of understanding** which should be signed by the participating congregations. The act of signing the memorandum and exchanging the signed memoranda establishes the forum and paves the way for co-operation in a structured way according to the guidelines agreed upon.
8. The forum must apply for tax exemption at the relevant office of SARS and also register with the Department of Social Development as a Non Profit Organization (NPO) under law 71 of 1997. The draft constitution may be adapted in order to fit the specific requirements of the local situation, and should then be presented to the participating congregations for approval.
9. The forum for joint public witness should **communicate its outreach projects** in order to build a support base for the forum. Part of the process of communication to the supporting congregations is **regular evaluation, feedback and report**, as well as the identification of new challenges.
10. In order to work effectively, the forum may consider appointing **task groups** to do some research, and even **consider appointing a full-time or part-time functionary** to take the initiative with outreach projects. In the case of the employment of a full-time functionary, registration as employer with SARS, UIF and the commissioner of compensation is essential. **In all cases a proper service contract is essential.** An alternative modus operandi for the forum would be to contract a specific congregation to act as employer on its behalf, for the sake of utilizing existing structures. In whatever way the forum decides to structure its work, it is of the utmost importance that the right people be selected as employees, co-workers and associates. The values of good communication and reconciliation should be the decisive and determining factor.
11. **Liaison with the Synodical Forum for Joint Public Witness** is recommended for the sake of co-ordination, the exchange of information and experience as well as the sharing of management and facilitation expertise. In this way a network of forums for joint public witness can benefit society at large by spreading the concepts of good communication and reconciliation, erecting signs of the coming kingdom of

God and at the same time being in themselves living proof of the reign of God in our midst.

In the continuance of partnerships through the *Forums* one should have regular discussions to plot the way forward and define the needs in the Body of Christ. In 2008 the DRC and URCSA of the Northern Synod came together at the *Dienssentrum* to listen to the different stories of outreach projects of congregations and presbyteries. The stories were wonderful, especially rural projects together with the local congregations and presbyteries became known; evangelism, building and restoration of churches, helping vacant congregations, etc. (Note: On 17 June 2011 the URSA Northern Synod approved the discontinuance of the DRC and URCSA Forum. Rev ANE Louw also retired afterwards.)

#### **34.6.2 Evangelism and Service**

Since the post of secretary of evangelism was terminated, Rev Koos Beukes continued helping the URCSA congregations in a remarkable way with funds obtained from individual donors of DRC churches. He undertook building small ward churches in Venda and Shangaan traditional territories. The members of these URCSA churches are struggling financially. He also wrote and published seven series of Sunday school handbooks for teachers in English and Afrikaans as well as different Sunday school books for children in the vernacular. The problem is that this initiative is no longer sponsored officially by the DRC and the URCSA. He is maintaining several evangelization projects as donations permit. The need for Sunday school material in the younger churches is vital.

The Commission for Catechism Education of the Cape Synod of the URCSA brought out two catechism books in 2002 that filled the need for a contemporary catechism book that takes into consideration the Southern African context in general, and the URCSA context in particular. The General Youth Committee of the DRC and CLF co-operated in making available staff, technical skills and facilities, as well as financial sponsorship to promote the process.

#### **34.6.3 Christian Literature Fund (CLF)**

Another old partnership body is the tremendous contribution towards literature for Christian believers in the DRC family.

Still going strong after more than sixty years, the mission of the Christian Literature Fund has always tried to partner with congregations in ministry in the light of its vision, “the Message of the Bible to all.” The Christian Literature Fund supports ministry to individuals, ministers and congregations by producing and distributing free or affordable literature in various languages. This is done specifically with a view to ministering within all the member churches of the DRC family, including those beyond the borders of South Africa.

Besides free pamphlets, they also offer products for resale. These include ministry resources, such as hymnals in various languages, catechism guides, and Bible stories for children or new readers, preaching aids and marital guides. They also publish a series of books reflecting on ministering within congregations, methods of spreading the gospel and the call to congregations to get involved in alleviating the plight of communities.

#### **34.6.4 Dibukeng**

Since 1946 the Dutch Reformed Mission Bookshops in Pretoria were selling Christian books and Bibles to the public in all the languages spoken in the RSA as well as other African Languages such as French and Shona. These bookshops have lately been known as DIBUKENG with two branches in Bosman Street, one in Silverton and one in Brits.

Dibukeng was herited by the URCSA of the Northern Synod and publishes all the URCSA administrative materials, church aids and handbooks. Dibukeng is also the distributor of all CLF materials as mentioned above.

#### **34.7 A THREAT TO THE RURAL CONGREGATIONS AND WHAT TO DO**

The rural congregations of the URCSA are struggling financially. The congregations of the urban areas are much more privileged, because of greater numbers, better work opportunities and financial support by the urban DRC congregations. Many of our rural members moved to the urban areas. The congregations of the rural areas are waning. Many of these congregations previously had a missionary, some black ministers and evangelists, but these days are vacant (according to the URCSA year book approximately 40 congregations in the Northern Synodical area are vacant). In more than one presbytery every minister is a tent-maker. Many vacant congregations are served by a tent-making consulent.

Another problem is the lack of co-operation with other Christian Communities. In a certain URCSA congregation some small wards have teamed up with other small wards of the Methodist and Lutheran congregations for ecumenical services like Holy Communion, and other projects. This was unacceptable for the local URCSA minister, who only served Holy Communion four times a year.

Some church councils are not very sympathetic towards their ministers. When a dispute arises, the minister's salary is held back or no annual increments are granted or bonuses paid out. This is to let him know that he must look out for a calling elsewhere.

### **34.7.1 What to do?**

Solving financial problems in the congregations is not easy. Watching these congregations, training and trying to cause a mindshift in the leaders, received priority attention throughout the years from the executive secretary of the Northern Synod, Dr Maluleke. I was present at every workshop held at Mamelodi, providing suitable books and manuals to be studied after these workshops. The result was a remarkable change in these congregations when they placed their orders at Dibukeng. Some congregations show keenness in stewardship and management. There is still much work to be done. I admire the efforts of the staff at the *Mamelodi Dienssentrum*. I would be grateful if the DRC congregations, in partnership with the URCSA congregations in the urban areas, would team up to adopt a needy congregation in the rural areas.

### **34.7.2 Adoption of Needy Congregations**

The URCSA congregations in the urban areas have many members who still have ties with their homes; either parents or children still look after their family interests. When visiting some of the home sheds (lapas) they usually comment on the new house or rooms built by their son working in town. They always keep contact with their homes. When a relative dies, the custom is to bury the person at home or, as they usually say, at her or his 'place.' Why shouldn't these urban congregations also have a spiritual interest in assisting the rural ministers and congregations? I know of a church building at one of the wards in Sekhukhuneland and also of a church building in Lerato congregation which were built by an urban congregation. There are ample opportunities and ways in which to keep the congregations going in poor communities. There are several areas to be addressed and if

this can be done effectively, a whole new world will open up to the indigenous churches in rural areas.

### **34.7.3 My Story with Lepelle**

When I retired in April 1995 the situation in Lepelle was not encouraging. Rev Moloantoa also retired at the end of 1995 and Rev Khumalo was ill and not able to travel. He also had to retire soon. The church Council agreed that I could work for another year, provided that I paid my own transport. Since May 1995 I travelled to Lepelle to assist with the ministry in eleven wards. This continued until 2001 when the presbytery of Burger requested that I should have a proper contract drawn up if I wished to continue as assistant minister. This was done and a copy is included at the end of this section. I learned that the URCSA was not happy with anyone working with them without a legal contract.

The second matter was the use of the old mission building at Matlala Hospital. Since 1986 the young members of the DRC in Arcadia have been visiting Lepelle during Easter, showing Christian films and doing house-to-house evangelism. Their visits were agreed to by the church council every year. Some of the ministers like Rev Joel Heroldt and Rev Marthiens Swart also accompanied them.

When I retired I wanted to ensure that future visits by outreach groups could use the mission buildings and that equipment was safely stored. To ensure this on a more permanent basis, I approached the Lepelle Church Council, also asking for the formation of a *Forum* between the groups and the congregations they represent. I had a document drawn up by a Christian attorney, which is called an Association Agreement. (This document is also included at the end of this section.) The different stakeholders agreed to work together according to the memorandum of agreement. Although the church council of Lepelle did not refuse the use of the buildings, the document was not signed by the various parties. They undoubtedly found the Forum idea too strange and suspicious. The local church council of the Tsimanyane ward, however, was very grateful for the assistance received from the visitors. They visited hospitals, did youth work, even helped with Sunday services. The document also helped the groups to co-operate with one another.

The Arcadia youth group under the leadership of Rev Jan van Jaarsveldt changed their name to *Action Labourers of the Harvest* in 1990. It has its own constitution and is accredited to the Witnessing Commission of the DRC congregation of Lyttelton East. Rev Jan van Jaarsveldt was also ordained by the congregation of Lyttelton-East for Outreach, Witnessing and Service. Although I am assistant minister of the URCSA, I represent the DRC of Skuilkrans.

#### **34.7.3.1 Skuilkrans DRC Congregation**

Some of the members of Skuilkrans accompany me on my visits. Since my retirement, several of the members helped on a yearly basis with the restoration of church buildings. Apart from the maintenance of mission buildings at Matlala, consisting of the old farm house, which was the missionary's manse since 1956, and the evangelist's house which is now called *Outreach House*, and several outbuildings, ward church buildings were restored. Lepelle has 23 church buildings which are in need of regular attention. The main problem is the beams supporting the roofs, because when a leak occurs the wood gets wet and starts to rot. During the rainy season in Sekhukhuneland strong winds occur and many roofs are ripped off. A programme of regular inspection and restoration has been followed, because a 'stitch in time saves nine.' Two of the church roofs were destroyed during my time.

More money is needed for such projects. Members of Skuilkrans assist with material needs. Some financial assistance from the Witnessing Committee has been provided on a yearly basis. The yearly programme for the eleven wards of the Tsimanyane minister's ward, where I helped, is drawn up in co-operation with the minister of Lepelle, Rev MJ Moroaswi. He does not own a vehicle and all his travelling is done by taxi or with the help of congregation members. The nearby wards are grouped so that on one Sunday we take two, three to four services per day. With sixteen visits, all eleven outposts are served during the year. Each ward receives Holy Communion once every three months. I meet the minister at the crossing of the Apel, Jane Furse and Lebowa-Kgomo roads and from there we travel to the outpost where I drop him off until such time as I am able to fetch him again, or sometimes an elder would take him to the next outpost and from there again to the nearest taxi rank. He is also a tent-making minister who must report to his office in Polokwane on Mondays. Depending on the number of outposts, the distance travelled on these Sunday visits range from 100 to 200 kilometers, but never less. When an outreach



takes place in conjunction with the restoration of a church building, many more kilometers are travelled.

### **34.7.3.2 Evangelism Needs**

The need, particularly for spiritual ministry, in each of the different congregations of the presbytery of Burger is huge. Some elders are doing their utmost at their own cost, because they realize that the members yearn for a visit from the minister and for regular services. Yet, the loss in membership is continuing. Members just disappear without anyone knowing where they have gone. In 1995 I once met a man at one of the shops where I had to wait for a group from Pretoria who wanted to do an outreach in order to guide them and introduce them to the leaders of the community. He asked me: “Who are you?” I replied: “I have been the moruti here since 1977.” He told me that he was baptized by a Dutch missionary in the forties but he had never heard of me. I asked him how this was possible. I had been working there for 18 years, during which time he never visited a church service.

I experienced that *materialism* is one of the more serious problems of most members. Once they have a good job, their spiritual needs are not very high on the agenda. Another problem is that when people are *ill*, they are well attended to by the Apostle and ZCC members, with the result that gradually they are drawn to these denominations. The pressure that the church council is placing on members for financial *contributions*, and the threat that services would be withheld, especially with regard to funerals, have caused many members to leave the church. There is a great need for evangelism.

### **34.7.3.3 Continuance in Serving the Body of Christ**

Christ gave His Body to the church and the church became His Body. Geysler (s.a.:20) says: “The command to the church, in the image of the body of Christ, in the Holy Communion, and in the command to go out and preach the Gospel to all nations, just as the promise to the church when it was founded, defines and confirms the unity of the Church – as a visible unity – as a characteristic of the church.”

The two churches have a lot in common which should enable them to continue helping each other to fulfill Christ’s command, caring for each other as ONE Body in Christ. I hope that the idea of a *Forum*, perhaps calling it something else to explain its purpose and



vision, could take root. The idea of partnership since the Federal Council of DRC member churches is well-known and perhaps joint Communion Services could be held.

The problem is that the training institutions due to a shortage of funds, will never be able to produce enough highly trained ministers to serve the church, and at the same time reaching unbelieving people groups.

Kritzinger (2007:57) suggests that “these well-trained ministers should be deployed as specialists and trainers in the church.” The problem of unequal salaries as it existed in the old partnership era among white missionaries, black ministers and evangelists could be overcome by well trained teachers, preachers, administrative specialists and leaders in each small Christian community. An institute like Nehemia is already fulfilling this need as partner with congregations, specifically within all the member churches of the Dutch Reformed Church family, but also includes other churches.



**34.7.3.4 SERVICE CONTRACT LEPELLE CHURCH COUNCIL**

*Verenigende  
Gereformeerde Kerk  
in Suider Afrika  
Noord Transvaal*



*Uniting Reformed  
Church in Southern  
Africa  
Northern Transvaal*

**BURGER PRESBYTERY : LEPELLE CONGREGATION**

**SERVICE CONTRACT**

1. An agreement between

LEPELLE CHURCH COUNCIL  
(CHURCH COUNCIL)

and  
Gabriel Jacobs Jordaan  
(NAME OF MINISTER OF THE WORD)

2. The service contract endorses the Bible as the holy and infallible Word of God, together with the creeds and confessions which the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa confesses. It further endorses the Church order, the synodical resolutions and supplementary stipulations binding in the regional synod of Northern Transvaal.

3. I, Gabriel Jacobs Jordaan, hereby endorse statements mentioned in paragraph 2 above and further declare:

3.1 that I will abide by and implement the resolutions of the Lepelle Congregation.

3.2 that my services in the congregation will be done on voluntary basis and that I will not receive any remuneration or honorarium from Lepelle Congregation.

3.3 that this contract is valid until the 31 December 2001 and may be renewed if need be.



4. The Church Council of Lepelle Congregation will offer accommodation on those weekends during which the contracted minister will be rendering services in the congregation.

Signed at TSEMANYANE On this day 16 June 2001  
on behalf of the Church Council

M. J. M. M. M. M. (Chairperson of the Church Council)

[Signature] (Secretary of the Church Council)

[Signature] (Treasurer of the Church Council)

[Signature] (Minister of the Word)

**Witnesses:**

1. [Signature]

2. [Signature]

### **34.7.3.5 ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT**

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT ENTERED INTO BETWEEN:

THE NEDERDUITS-GEREFORMEERDE KERK ASSEMBLY: MARBLE HALL;  
(hereinafter referred to as the FIRST PARTY)

And

THE NEDERDUITSE GEREFORMEERDE KERK ASSEMBLY: SKUILKRANS  
(hereinafter referred to as the THIRD PARTY)

And

THE NEDERDUITSE GEREFORMEERDE KERK ASSEMBLY:  
LYTTELTON-EAST (hereinafter referred to as the FOURTH PARTY)

And

The organization known as ACTION LABOURERS FOR THE HARVEST (AKSIE  
ARBEIDERS VIR DIE OES (hereinafter referred to as the FIFTH PARTY)

And

UNITING REFORMED CHURCH: LEPELLE (hereinafter referred to as the SIXTH  
PARTY)

WHEREAS the FIRST PARTY is presently the legal occupier of the property as indicated on Sub Division Diagram LG. No A 272/80, attached hereto as Annexure 'A' (hereinafter referred to as THE PROPERTY) on which property certain buildings including a parsonage, study, outbuildings, church building, evangelist house and other buildings have been erected (hereinafter referred to as the BUILDINGS)

AND WHEREAS the parties have decided to form an effective control body (hereinafter referred to as the TRUST BOARD) shall comprise as follows:

1. A member from the local territory Church Council to a member from the NEDERDUITS-GEREFORMEERDE KERK ASSEMBLY: MARBLE HALL;

2. A member from the NEDERDUITSE GEREFORMEERDE KERK ASSEMBLY:  
LYTTELTON EAST;
3. A member from the NEDERDUITSE GEREFORMEERDE KERK ASSEMBLY:  
SKUILKRANS;
4. A member from the organization ACTION LABOURERS FOR THE HARVEST;
5. A member from the UNITING REFORMED CHURCH: LEPELLE.

The Chairman and Treasurer shall be elected from the above mentioned members.

AND WHEREAS the parties are desirous to record their respective interests and duties in this agreement;

NOW THEREFORE the parties agree as follows:

1.

#### DUTIES OF THE TRUST BOARD:

The Trust Board shall be compelled to make available the relevant buildings and facilities to work groups for weekend housing as well as household facilities during the week, depending on the duration of the projects contemplated by working groups.

2.

The Trust Board shall effectively manage any funds and monies entrusted to them and for this purpose, shall be compelled to open a Trust Account at a reputable financial institution. Available funds shall be exclusively utilized as follows:

- 2.1. Payment for water and electricity;
- 2.2. Maintenance of the buildings;
- 2.3. Maintenance of the site;
- 2.4. Costs incurred to communicate and associate with the relevant hospital authorities;

- 2.5. The Trust Board is also mandated to appoint a caretaker with all the normal general duties and to take effective measures to prevent burglaries and theft as well as monitoring of all activities and to take proper care of the site.

3.

DUTIES OF OUTREACH GROUPS AND VISITORS:

- 3.1. Outreach groups and visitors shall consult with the Trust Board and shall give their full co-operation to the Trust Board;
- 3.2. All outreach groups and visitors shall acknowledge the rights and duties of the local Church Board, Hospital Management, patients, occupants and other relevant authorities of the site;
- 3.3. To co-operate with the Board of Trustees;
- 3.4. To see to the conservation of bird life, trees and fauna and flora in general;
- 3.5. To co-operate with the caretaker regarding dates of occupation, keys and other relevant issues;
- 3.6. To adhere strictly to rules regarding safety. In this respect it is specifically recorded that the Board of Trustees shall under no circumstances be liable for any loss or damage of property, or injuries of any kind;
- 3.7. To maintain the site at all times and keep it in excellent order for the next visitors;
- 3.8. The units are self-catering and any visitors/groups will be expected to supply their own relevant furniture, apparatus and instruments for their own use;
- 3.9. Any new groups excluding those known to the Board of Trustees, shall be compelled to apply to the Trust Board in writing for the use of the facilities, specifying the date and purpose of their visit. As a result of limited space only one group can be accommodated at a specified time.
- 3.10. Keys must be handed back to the caretaker after use of the facility.

4.

As a result of poor electricity supply to the property, only a few rooms may be considered for renting, including accommodation to be provided for the caretaker who has to stay on the property. It is recorded that the facilities must be used strictly for church and related activities.

The reservation of groups or any one person is not transferable and must be cancelled if the group or a person in the group is not able to keep an appointment. New bookings must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees has the sole right to allocate the various accommodation facilities to groups or any one person.

### 35. THE DRC MISSION SINCE 1994 AND FUTURE PROJECTIONS

The question asked by Crafford (1982:589): “Will the DRC still play a role in Africa?” could be answered with a “Yes.” “In which way?” could be asked, especially since 1994. In this chapter I would like to evaluate existing tendencies and our mission dream for the future of the church. The change in government and the unification of the NGKA and *NG Sendingkerk* in 1994 caused the DRC to rethink its position and vocation as a missional church in Africa. Saayman (2007:106) also referred to the change in mission motivation, pointing out what he characterized as *The Fourth Wave: 1990 – To the ends of the Earth*. He quoted the new DRC vocation as follows:

“This motivation was verbalized thus at a DRC mission’s conference in 1938:

The church (DRC) is deeply convinced that God in his wise counsel ordained it that the first white citizens of this southern outpost in this dark continent of Africa would be men and women with deep religious convictions, *so that they and their progeny would be the bearers of light for this continent*, and therefore regards it as a special privilege and responsibility of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa to bring the Gospel to the pagans of *this country*.” (Quoted in Scholtz 1984:85 – my translation and emphasis.)

The change in DRC missionary motivation becomes clearer if one compares this official definition of DRC mission with the official version as accepted in 1998:

“Mission is the salvific action of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit with the world through which He gathers for himself from the whole of humanity a congregation through his Word and his Spirit.

“Through this congregation God

- lets his Word be proclaimed to the fallen world;
- brings into being the communion of saints from all nations;
- provides ministry to a world in need;
- gives visible form to his command to protect and utilize creation; and
- his justice is proclaimed to the nations.



“In this way God makes his kingdom come to the ends of the world.

“For this reason the DRC accepts being used by God in his interaction with humanity and the world as the aim and motive of its existence.

Believers from every tongue and nation must be gathered thus to form a unity with all believers in true faith in Christ” (Die Kerkorde 1998:67; my translation).

In the first place the 1998 version is, as can be expected, far more comprehensive and detailed than the 1938 one. It is very clear that the pronounced evangelistic Africa-directness of 1938 has disappeared in 1998, to be replaced by broader ministry in *the world* and to *the whole of humanity*.

Many DRC congregations are involved in mission work both inland and abroad. The DRC Synod of Western Transvaal supports mission projects in Botswana, Sri Lanka, India and China (*Ned Geref Kerk Jaarboek* 2010:118). I would like to refer to two congregations only, namely Miederpark in Potchefstroom and Skuilkrans in Pretoria.

### **35.1 POTCHEFSTROOM – MIEDERPARK**

The congregation has a full-time secretary and a part-time manager to administer and co-ordinate the different mission projects inland and abroad.

#### **Inland Mission Projects**

1. A retired minister and his wife are doing hospital evangelization. They are supported by a team on Sundays doing ward visits.
2. They also have an inter-service as well as a special mission called TUG (The Ultimate Goal) which is a special project to reach out to people involved with the FIFA world soccer tournament.
3. *Emmanuel Tent-ministry*, for evangelization: This tent is active in different villages; cell groups are formed and the teaching of discipleship and church planting is the ultimate purpose.
4. A fully trained URCSA minister is doing part-time service in the industrial and mining areas.

5. Sunday schools are conducted on different farms with the assistance and co-ordination of one of the members of the congregation.
6. The DRC congregation of Potchefstroom supports a full-time evangelist in Tshepisang, one of the villages.
7. Multi-cultural services are held in the DRC church every Sunday. This is mainly for foreigners.
8. The Nehemia Bible School material is used in classes presented in the Potchefstroom Correctional Service.
9. The Timothy leadership courses are also followed for three years, by several students.
10. A job-creating service bureau is run and training of workers in some skills is taking place at different factories.

### **Mission Abroad**

1. Support for a full-time person to assist Egreja Evangelica International in equipping church leaders with the aid of Timothy Bible material.
2. A full-time person who is stationed on a certain unknown Arabic Island is supported financially.
3. The Reformed congregation of Wapadrand has a full-time missionary in Burundi, who is supported financially in partnership with Miederpark.
4. The Botswana Short-term Outreach Programme is a project to assist missionaries of different churches in Botswana which also include mission work among the San people. It is *Called Joining Hands to Reach Botswana for Jesus*.
5. Veritas College International is training believers in church planting in different French-speaking countries in Africa.
6. A full-time person is supported in assisting the church in Malawi with church planting, youth evangelism and adult literacy classes.

7. A mobilization service has been started to motivate other churches to send out missionaries to other countries.

### **Miederpark Missions Commission**

It is still known as missions commission as in previous years. This commission meets once a month and is divided in two sections, one for inland witnessing projects and the other for foreign mission projects. They then have a joint meeting to discuss the different points on the agenda (Ned Geref Kerk Miederpark Sending 2010).

### **35.2 DRC CONGREGATION OF SKUILKRANS**

The motto of the congregation is *Everyone a Witness*. A married couple, both ministers at Skuilkrans, is co-ordinating the different projects which are financially assisted from the Faith Offering fund. Some projects are financed by the church council. The congregation has several service groups actively reaching out. Some of the projects are being done in partnership with other organizations such as *PEN, MES, CMR, JIREH, Zama-Zama, Action Labourers of the Harvest* and *Hartklop*. Many children's and old age homes of the DRC and others are also financed.

The URC of Mamelodi, Ekangala and Lepelle are assisted by groups who visit them. Other congregations such as the RCA Shalom in Durban also receive assistance. Various aid programmes are financed and food parcels are also donated.

The after-school care centre on the grounds of the Silverton Church building called Silverton Crux cares for 50 children. A small committee, known as *Getuienisbediening* (Witnessing Service), manages the congregation's mission activities. A monthly mission newsletter is sent out to various groups and supporters.

### **35.3 EVALUATION**

What do we learn from these two congregations and from other congregations in the regional synods?

The DRC congregations are equally involved in mission in 'Jerusalem, Judeah and the ends of the earth.' Since 1994 the DRC has been involved in mission work abroad, but the ends of the earth has moved nearer home. Millions of people have flocked to this country

in search of a better living. Some left their homes to work in the city, which enables them to send money and necessities to their families.

### **35.4 A FUTURE PROJECTION**

When *God's Smuggler* (Brother Andrew) visited the RSA in 1971, I travelled with him and his organizer, Francis Grim, visiting different major cities in the RSA. I was responsible for selling his book published in Afrikaans, *God se Smokkelaar*. I heard him saying on various occasions that South African Christians should awaken and spread the gospel to Africa and the world before these nations settle in the RSA. Ironically, this warning has come true after 1994 with the change of government in the RSA. The world has come to 'Jerusalem.' Unbelievers (non-Christian people) from many countries flocked to squatter camps right at our doorsteps in the urban as well as the rural areas, looking for employment on farms, in the cities and in factories. Thousands of South Africans emigrated, most of them permanently. Many South Africans travel abroad for holidays, outreach and mission work. Modern techniques have brought the world very close indeed. Internet and television techniques opened new doors for the propagation of the Gospel. Saayman (2007:122) describes this scenario so well that I would like to quote him fully:

“It seems to me that there is not sufficient theological clarity on the relationship between mission in ‘Jerusalem’ and mission ‘to the ends of the earth’.” Throughout the history of Christian mission it seems to me that we generally understood this relationship in terms of strictly linear progression from Jerusalem to Judeah and then on to Samaria and ultimately on to the ends of the earth. I would suggest that one should rather understand it in terms of the progression of a never-ending spiral, where involvement in Jerusalem spirals on through Judeah and Samaria to the ends of the earth and back to Jerusalem, on through ... etc. The members of the body of Christ are therefore always equally involved in mission to Jerusalem and to the ends of the earth. The specific context may prescribe specific changes in accent from time to time, but it is not as if we complete our mission in Jerusalem and then move on to Judeah while the ends of the earth have to wait until we have finished in Samaria. And once we arrive at the ends of the earth, we never have to return to Jerusalem again! The ends of the earth can therefore not become a *substitute* for ‘Jerusalem’ – as it indeed seems to have become in DRC mission in the fourth wave. Some serious rethinking of priorities seems to be called for. An awareness of this necessity seems to be evident in the Vocation Statement taken by the General Synod of 2002

(*Roepingsverklaring* – DRC 2002). It contains four important affirmations and commitments:

1. Gratitude for the past 350 years of church history and the commitment to continue witnessing.
2. A renewed commitment to the continent of Africa and especially Southern Africa.
3. A commitment to greater unity with other churches as well as a special desire to unite with other churches in the DRC family.
4. A call to members, in whatever countries they are living, to be involved in healing our lands (Saayman 2007:117).

### **35.5 A NEW BEGINNING**

I would like to take some points from Van Niekerk's (1997:408) article: *Einde of Nuwe Begin vir die NG Sending?* (End or new beginning for the DRC Mission?) He says in his abstract that:

*A new South Africa and a new century require new structures, which can build on the good foundations of the past, but also make the necessary corrections, and respond to new challenges. The mission work of the past century was directed from the Synod and was especially carried out by missionaries. This structure has terminated. In the meantime there are signs of new life, new interests, and new enthusiasm for new initiatives everywhere. The missions committees of local churches are doing new planning for outreaches. Groups of young people go to neighbouring countries and even abroad. Many churches support young people who are working in our country, and in countries like India, Turkey, Russia and Europe. The last ten years the mission initiative has shifted from Synods to local churches, from trained missionaries to lay members, from a local and Africa-focus to a global vision, from central control to a wide variety of approaches, from own church structures to partnership in different para-church organizations (Van Niekerk 1997:414 – author's own translation).*

He continues to say that although there is much good in this, there is also a danger that many of these are not long lasting. The question is whether the energy which the local congregations are putting into these projects will last in the new mission era. This requires

research. Van Niekerk says that information must be based on three points of research fields:

**1. The Bible**

*The rich information obtained through Bible Study has to be applied functionally to develop and to drive the new missionaries.*

**2. History**

*Both white and black people have a rich pool of experience obtained through many years of partnership during the past mission era. How is this experience to be disposed of functionally in the new mission era in order to build on the good we have managed and to learn from each other?*

**3. Context**

*We must find a way in the difficult and uncertain future. How must we understand the context in order to provide the correct answers?*

Without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit none of our efforts could accomplish the comprehensiveness of the field research. Van Niekerk is sure that a mechanism could be created in which all who have gained experience and insight could find a way to communicate their knowledge and experience with others. This indeed would be a new movement in the church, so that each member of the church could obtain a better idea in a more dynamic and meaningful movement which could also be shared with other churches and groups (Van Niekerk 1997:414).

**Another Mission Congress**

When I read this, I was reminded of the very fruitful mission congresses of the past. Hasn't the time come for a new congress to confer about mission work in the new era? The mission conferences during the old mission era have contributed much in the form of guidelines and motivation to the DRC family. In the past, these conferences were mainly attended by ministers and missionaries of the DRC.

## Delegates

If another congress or conference should be organized, the attendance scenario is going to be different. The delegates will be from the local congregations of the DRC through their Witnessing Committees and many part-time and full-time lay workers, of whom most are women. Many are tent-makers. Kritzinger (2007:50) refers to them in two categories:

- a) He/she devotes only part of the day to direct congregational ministry and
- b) his or her salary is derived from another occupation or source.

The congregation does not (in any case, not fully) assist the tent-maker financially. There are also some service organizations like SAAWE, where several of its personnel belong to the DRC and where retired DRC ministers are employed full-time. SAAWE (The South African Action for World Evangelization) provides a link between churches, organizations and evangelistic and church-planting needs. Representatives of the DRC family should also participate.

## The Agenda

1. **Borders:** I have already previously mentioned the problem regarding the concept of Jerusalem, Judeah and the utmost ends of the earth. Which are these borders in a post-modern era?
2. **New Terminologies:** When reading the book of Nelus Niemandt – *Nuwe drome vir Nuwe Werklikhede*, I was struck by the new words and notions; no longer can words like *heathen* and *uncivilized people* be used; these have been replaced by such words as *non-Christians*, *unbelievers*, *strangers* and *less evangelized groups*.
3. **The methods:** It is a long time since Roland Allen published his book *Missionary methods St Paul's or ours?* Another important publication is Kritzinger's *Rethinking Ministry – New Wine in new Wineskins*. This book gives the necessary information to be considered. It is a handbook for future mission work and church planting.
4. **Relationships:** Missional congregations and their relations with churches regarding witnessing; relations between older and younger churches, new churches and faith movement partnerships.

5. The old terms *missio Dei*, *marturia*, *kerygma*, *diakonia* and *koinonia* are to be re-defined.
6. The task of the Synod and Core Commission for Service and Witnessing should be attended to.
7. The necessity of a national mission magazine like the old *Sendingblad* should be reconsidered.

### **35.6 A NEW DREAM FOR THE EMERGING CHURCH**

Niemandt (2007:158) states that the missional church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is focusing on the world and its needs; no longer is the individual's needs in the centre. Now the individual believer is becoming a member of God's crisis-control team. This is to share God's mission of atonement, restoration and salvation in the world that needs grace. The world is God's purpose for mission – for God so loved the world. Warren (1995:53) says “Strong churches are not built on programmes, personalities or gimmicks. They are built on the eternal purpose of God.” The mission work which was previously done by a small section of the congregation has moved to the whole congregation as God's mission (Niemandt 2007:156). The urge is for Christian leaders to help members of a congregation by equipping, empowering and sending them out with a missional identity. This is also known as discipleship training. Jesus made disciples by taking them on a mission journey to practise daily the newfound knowledge they have gained through his teachings. They were taught to be devoted to service in God's Kingdom, to preach, to heal the sick and to care for those who are in need of food (Niemandt 2007:161). The emphasis is on training. Kritzinger (2007:58) calls it: *The enhancement of an every-member-ministry*.

*Every member has a ministry ... and this means every woman, man and young person. It is this ministry – a ministry based on the gifts of the Spirit – which needs to be <sup>(a)</sup>acknowledged, and <sup>(b)</sup>enhanced. It is of the utmost importance that the believers should not only be told that they have a ministry, but that they should be taught to understand it, and be trained for their ministry. And here we should take heed of the words in Ephesians 4:12: Exactly that is the most basic task of the 'some' that are set apart and trained. It is their calling to enable, to 'prepare', to assist the members to execute their (the people's) ministry.*



### **35.6.1 Evaluation**

The use of the term *missionary* is being redefined. There is a wide range of meanings and usages of this term.

Ott and Strauss (2010:222) refers to Brian McLaren, a prolific and popular voice of the emergent church who declares, “every church a mission organization, every Christian a missionary and every neighbourhood a mission field.” Ott and Strauss (2010:223) stated “that the churches must include the sending of individuals for cross-cultural ministry as an essential part of their overall mission in the world ... the challenges of communicating the gospel across cultural and linguistic barriers ... demand long-term commitments and exceptional gifts that not every Christian possesses.” The DRC has a long history of experience in mission work. The church must reconsider its vocation for the cause of Christ’s global mission. “The nature of the world Christianity has dramatically changed over the last century, making a reassessment of the role of missionaries necessary. The distinction between sending countries and mission fields has broken down, requiring greater co-operation. International partnership in mission is no longer an option; it is an imperative” (Ott and Strauss 2010:236). The DRC also has a long history of partnership. Missionaries, evangelists and black ministers worked together each with their specific calling.

### 36. PARTNERSHIP – AN ANSWER TO PROBLEMS AND TENSION?

At this stage it is necessary to ask what happened to Whitby's *Partnership in Obedience*. What was the influence of the Ecumenical Movement in the history of mission? Was partnership an answer to problems and tension?

The Bible has much to say about the importance of obedience; the world is the field; go into the world and preach the Gospel to every creature; you shall be my witnesses to the ends of the world; the good news of the Kingdom must be preached all over the world so that all nations can receive the truth. Our duty is to finish what God has commanded us to do. Every Christian has been called and must be mobilized. The believer who obeys God will receive great rewards (Mark 10:29-30).

Obedience of Jesus' great command was also the theme at Whitby, where the International Mission Council gathered to give new hope to the mission of the church after the tragedy of World War II. *Partnership in Obedience* helped the church to expect that new things will happen and to believe that the Church is God's way to change the world to become a better place for mankind (Bosch 1979:178).

The relationship between the DRC and the daughter churches was not influenced only by the forces which were stipulated in Chapter 30: *NGKA and the DRC Partnership – a summary*. There were also other latent forces at work within the Federal Council of the Dutch Reformed Churches. The DRC as mother church could not control the strong influence of the ecumenism in the younger churches.

A timely book, *Reflection on Mission in the African Context*, edited by HL Pretorius, AA Odendaal, PJ Robinson and G van der Merwe, was dedicated to the memory of the late Prof Lex van Wyk, "our respected colleague who, having written part of the manuscript, did not live to see its completion" (Pretorius, *et al.* 1987:viii).

These authors stated that: "The Ecumenical Movement (EM) is therefore concerned with the manifestation of the essential unity of the church, the one body of Christ, with the solidarity and co-operation of the churches constituting a common witness in the world. Thus it is the movement that provides an opportunity to express that unity which is given in the common calling of all churches and Christians by the same Lord Jesus Christ. Though this unity does not yet find its fullest expression in the way the NT envisions, still

the EM remains a dynamic spiritual force” (quoted Visser ‘t Hooft 1970:180 in Pretorius, *et al.* 1987:163).

### **36.1 UNITY AND MISSION**

The first International Missionary (IMC) conference was held at Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1910. Pretorius, *et al.* (1987:164) say: “Under the chairmanship of John R Mott, it undertook the task of surveying the world mission of the non-Roman churches. Edinburgh was of major historical importance for Protestant participation in the modern EM.”

In the 1920s it developed into three main ecumenical organizations which came together in 1948 in Amsterdam, where they formed the World Council of Churches (WCC), which put a lot of energy in politics. Rightfully Pretorius, *et al.* (1987:165) ask what happened to the unity-mission discussion. This quest for spiritual integration between missions and unity went on, however the practical expression of this relationship in the life of the churches and of the Ecumenical Movement (EM) created many problems. “This is perhaps best illustrated in the search for the right relationship between the IMC and the WCC which were ultimately integrated in 1961 at New Delhi” (Pretorius, *et al.* 1987:165).

Many churches, even the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) and evangelicals worldwide, became participants in the ecumenical discussions on unity and mission. For South Africa and the churches of the DRC family, the South African Council of Churches (SACC) played a role of ecumenical involvement. It could be said that: “No other church body has attracted more attention due to its involvement in and comment on social ethics in South Africa” (Pretorius, *et al.* 1978:166).

The younger churches were drawn into discussions with the sending churches. Pretorius, *et al.* (1987:166) say: “As an example of an ecumenical organization on a regional or continental level the All-Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) can be mentioned. It is significant that two South Africans, Prof ZK Mathews and Dr DJS M’Timkulu, played vital roles in the pioneering and implementation of this conference.”

### **36.2 ECUMENISM IN THE YOUNG CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Churches which were the result of the Protestant missionary enterprise, also called indigenous churches, became conscious, after one century, of their important position as

church of Christ and their unity with the missionary bodies and their missionary calling together with the older churches.

These younger churches realized that the Western churches were divided. It was also called ‘the scandal of Western denominationalism’ (Pretorius, *et al.* 1987:167). The influence of the EM in the young churches could be summarized as follows:

- 1) The young churches were in a dilemma. On the one hand they had the desire to break through the traditional forms of denominationalism; on the other hand they had deep respect for and loyalty towards the transmitted forms as visible ties with the church universal.
- 2) The context was different. One result of the context being different was that the indigenous churches did not always respond to their milieus as the Western mission agencies ‘expected’ them to respond. This developed an attitude of paternalism in mission – the view that in many cases the missionaries held on too long to a position of authority over and control of the indigenous church.
- 3) Another factor was that paternalism went hand in hand with dependency on the support of the home mission in the West and the younger churches were unable to function on their own. Pretorius, *et al.* (1987:168) state that: The concerns discussed above, as well as many others were present in all younger churches. Frequently ecumenical bodies were used as a forum to grapple with these common problems. Slowly the younger churches became conscious of their important position as church of Christ and they became active in ecumenical relationships.

### **36.3 WHITBY (CANADA) 1947 – PARTNERSHIP IN OBEDIENCE**

It all started with the meeting of the IMC at Whitby (Canada) in 1947. Pretorius, *et al.* (1987:168) summarize the outcome as follows:

*The churches of the Third World were virtually voiceless in the early international ecumenical meetings. Of more than 1 200 representatives at Edinburgh only 17 came from the younger churches, not even one being from Africa. But the tables were gradually to turn. The meeting of the IMC at Whitby (Canada) in 1947 was confronted with the need to break down the distinction between older and younger churches in the face of world-wide*

responsibilities. In principle the move was from missionary paternalism to partnership in mission.

This development was later to be hailed as introducing a new missionary era, despite the great reluctance by missions to take seriously the call of Whitby to 'partnership in obedience'. (My emphasis.)

Today the prevailing attitude is that a justifiable dependence of a younger church can go hand in hand with interdependence of the different members of the body of Christ. Once again the necessity is demonstrated for the whole church to bring the Gospel to the whole world, in which both the West and the Third World are included.

The factors and problems concerning the unity and mission of the church in other regions of the world were also present in South Africa. Pretorius, *et al.* (1987:169) summarize it as follows:

The denominational variety; the young churches' ambivalent attitude toward their own denominations; the fact that different issues are addressed by the two types of churches; the influential role of non-theological factors; the mutual embarrassment and failure to meet expectations; the tensions involved in the process from paternalism to partnership and from independence to mutual interdependence. (My emphasis).

The situation in South Africa is further complicated by three unique elements. These could be stipulated as follows:

- 1) The older and younger churches share the same area.
- 2) The denominational division has been worsened by division along racial lines.
- 3) The three different Reformed churches of the white people have not been involved in the EM. As a result, the ecumenical search for unity in mission went on. However, the DRC itself has tended to become more isolated since the 1960's. The three younger members of the DRC family positively became more involved in the EM.

This resulted in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Synod taking disciplinary steps against the DRC. However, these movements were very

positive towards the younger churches of the DRC family. These younger members of the DRC family also had a positive attitude toward the SACC (Pretorius, *et al.* 1987:170).

#### **36.4 WHITBY 1947 TO WORCESTER 1975**

What happened to Whitby's *partnership in obedience*? The General Synod of the NGKA at Worcester 1975 agreed to continuing partnership, even called partnership in obedience (*Kerk en Wêreld* 1978:45). However, the Synod's resolution of agreement with the Federal Council of DRC Churches' statement on partnership, a new foundation for future joint co-operation with the DRC and understanding was decided on (30.6). This was reflected at the DRC Mission Congress (24.4) in 1978. The theme of this congress was *The Execution of the Mission Calling in a Changing World*. The DRC was requested to adapt its policy on missionaries due to the end of the old mission era. In this regard, Kritzinger, Meiring and Saayman (1984:89) state: "Many things which were previously accepted as self-evident are no longer self-evident ... the days are past when a missionary or his society could automatically step in and settle in a place of his choice."

The DRC in Sekhukhuneland as described in this dissertation, lost its function regarding mission hospitals, mission schools and institutions. This is true of all the DRC mission projects in Africa and South Africa. Regarding evangelization and support for the younger churches, the DRC was willing to continue with the partnership. Foreign missions were debarred in many countries, but in South Africa the situation, with so many unreached, caused the DRC to be willing to co-operate further with younger churches of the DRC family in order to complete the unfinished task. However, the general feeling of sending mission churches and organizations in the Western world is "the euthanasia of mission as the ultimate object" (Kritzinger, Meiring & Saayman 1984:157).

#### **36.5 WHAT HAPPENED TO THE *MISSIO DEI* CONCEPT?**

In the light of the discussion of the Ecumenical Movement, Jennings (2007:219) states that *missio Dei* involves three interrelated themes which will be summarized as follows:

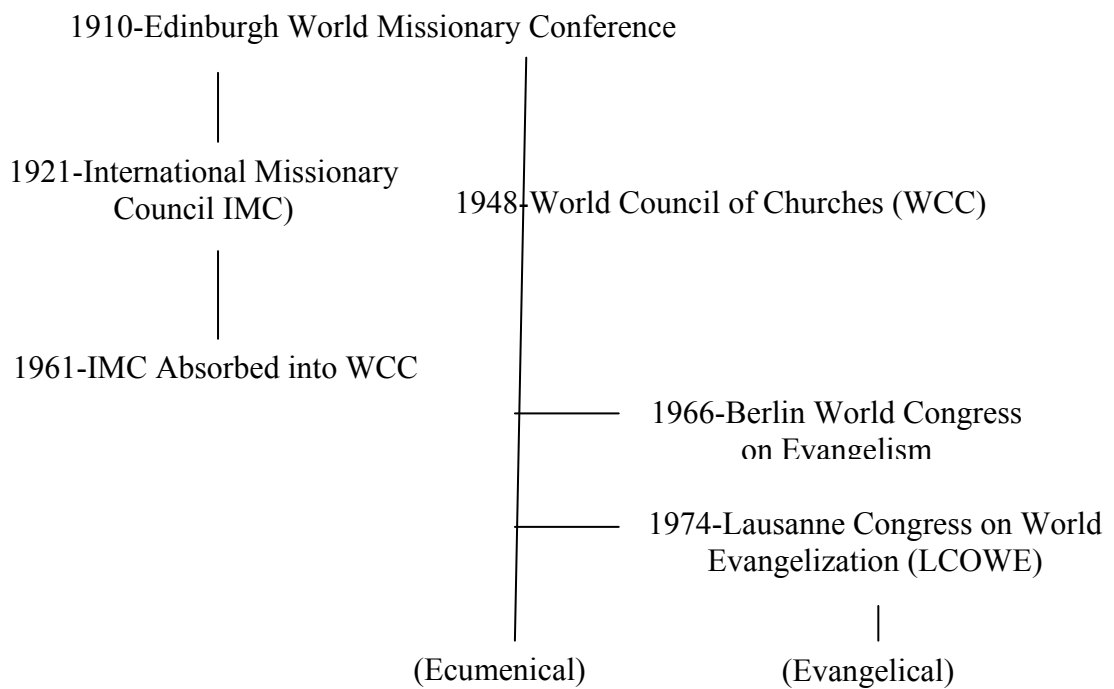
- 1) "Christian missions spread the Christian faith, by contrast *missio Dei* focuses on the triune God's initiative and activity.

- 2) God does not work alone through the church to save the world, but also directly in world events, i.e. non-ecclesiastical, social, political, and economic realities.
- 3) The church, in its one mission, under God had to find new ways of outreach – co-operative action, reconciliation, interfaith encounter.” Evangelicals, however, who were involved in mission sending organizations did not agree with replacing them with the evangelical activity of the existing national churches. For them it was a shift from mission to mission.

### **36.6 EVANGELICALS SEPARATE AND CONSOLIDATED**

As a result, the *Lausanne movement* was started with the evangelicals gathering in Berlin in 1966, convened by Billy Graham. This led to the 1974 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization (Jennings 2007:222).

**Figure 2: TWENTIETH-CENTURY UNIFICATION AND FRAGMENTATION OF THE MODERN MISSIONS MOVEMENT**



The stated purpose of the LCOWE is to further the evangelization of the world by building bridges of understanding and co-operation among Christian leaders everywhere to

mobilize the whole church to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world. It shows how evangelicals were seeking to co-operate positive elements of certain emphases of the *missio Dei* concept outlined above.

### **36.7 EVANGELIZATION AND MISSION**

The following is an analysis of the purpose of LCOWE as summarized by Jennings (2007:222):

- 1) **Evangelization of the world:** First, the purpose is for ‘the evangelization of the world by ... proclaim[ing] the whole Gospel.’ The term *evangelization* is intended to be more holistic – including both word and deed – than the term *evangelism*, which is ‘proclamation’: ‘World evangelization requires the whole Church to take the whole Gospel to the whole world.’ The fact the WCC understands *mission Dei* as God’s activity in the world outside the church is still acknowledged. The focus, however, must be on proclamation and the need for people to express their Christian faith.
- 2) **Building bridges:** *Second is the stated purpose of ‘building bridges of understanding and co-operation among Christian leaders everywhere to mobilize the whole church.’ Evangelicals recognized and rejoiced in the church’s growth outside the West. To carry out the task of world evangelization, ‘co-operative action’ between Western and non-Western Christian leaders was seen as strategic and even necessary. At the same time, evangelicals (at least Western evangelicals) did not concur with such ‘new ways of outreach’ as the type of ‘interfaith encounter’ that ecumenicals in the WCC were advocating. Christians were to be mobilized not to dialogue but to ‘proclaim ... to the whole world’ salvation in Jesus Christ alone.*
- 3) **The whole world:** The stress on proclaiming the gospel to ‘the whole world’ points to a third distinctively evangelical emphasis. The absorption in the early 1960s of the IMC into the WCC was based on the belief that God’s mission involved the servant church around the world more so than Western-based mission agencies. The evangelicals were concerned about the still-unreached areas of the world. Missions centered in preaching Jesus Christ to the world’s unevangelized. With the more all-



encompassing *mission* of the church possibly losing that cutting edge, the vitality of Christian missions needed to be protected and emphasized in its own right.

The above distinctives do not differ much from Kritzing (1988:34), who stated that “mission is evangelization because evangelization is communication of the Good News of salvation of Christ to all who are outside the field.” This emphasis is on winning souls, but a broader view is that man is more than *soul*. Mission is directed at the *whole person* and on his *whole situation*. Mission is involved in the needs of people. The three dimensional view of mission is involved in the *whole person*, in his *whole situation* in answer to the *whole Gospel*.

To be a witness is preaching (*kerygma*), which means evangelization, which is the proclamation of the Name of Christ through whom salvation comes. This evangelization is taking place through word and deed. *Diakonia*, on the other hand, is involvement in the social needs of people while *Koinonia* is the building up of the church in view of God’s mission. Kritzing (1988:35-36), Figures 2.1 and 2.2 explain Bosch’s (1979:227) metaphors of the prism and a pair of scissors.

### **36.8 PARTNERSHIP ECUMENICAL VS EVANGELICAL MISSION(S) DISTINCTIVES**

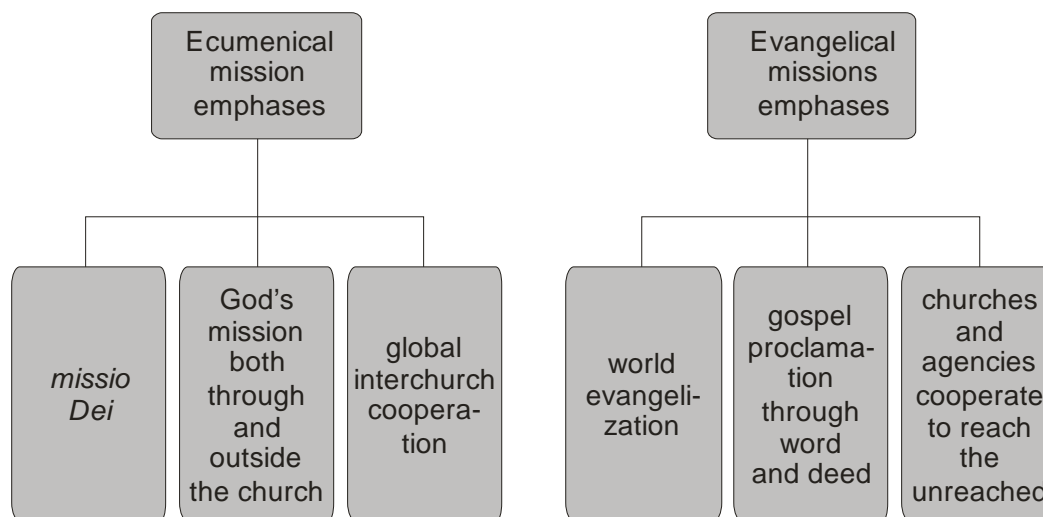
*The ecumenical mission emphasis is on global inter-church co-operation. The Evangelical missions’ emphasis is on churches and agencies co-operating to reach the unreached. Ecumenicals see God’s mission both through and outside the church. Evangelical missions’ emphasis is mainly proclaiming the Gospel through word and deed. Jennings (2007:224) remarks that:*

*Ecumenical missionaries and church leaders, therefore, became inclined to focus on such issues as peace, justice, and inter-religious dialogue. What happened with apartheid in South Africa, for example, was a major concern of the WCC.*

*Evangelicals, on the other hand, had channeled their energies toward identifying the world’s unreached peoples and mobilizing churches to send missionaries to those peoples for evangelization and church planting. Being strongly tied with the pietism era of mission history the DRC supported the Evangelical missions rather than co-operating with Ecumenical movements.*

**Figure 3: THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY DEVELOPMENT OF MISSION AND MISSIONS**

## Ecumenical vs evangelical mission(s) distinctives



According to Jennings (2007:225) (figure above) profound differences exist. There is also an overlap. Jennings suggests that organizationally they must stay separate – “the difference between those emphases is a big deal.” Further reflection by other missiologists follows below.

### **36.9 PARTNERSHIP AND DIAKONIA**

Kritzinger (1995:95) states in a paper read at the *Mission’s Consultation on Trends in Mission Sending from South Africa* (Cape Town, 5 December 1995), that “the kind of partnership that preferably should be endorsed, is one steeped in the Biblical notion of service (*diakonia*). The emphasis should not be on the rewards of partnership, but on the privilege and necessity of serving each other. When a partnership lacks this serving spirit, it will not succeed. It is important to evaluate the above statement in the light of the context and circumstances in which the church has fulfilled its witnessing task.”

Bosch (1979:227-228) discusses the relationship between *diakonia* and the other two dimensions, *kerygma* and *koinonia*. He says that since the twenties with the emergence of a *comprehensive approach* mission and the realization that mission is more than *kerygma* only; the all-inclusive Biblical approach is as follows:

*Every aspect of one's existence is involved. It therefore does not suffice to think or speak of our witness in terms of the proclamation or preaching of the Gospel only. Witness is more than kerygma (proclamation). The Biblical term which is appropriate to express the all-inclusive nature of our witness is the Greek word marturia (witness). Marturia means to witness by word and deed, even if it may bring suffering and opposition of the witness. Marturia includes kerygma (proclamation), koinonia (fellowship) and diakonia (service).*

This was affirmed by the Missionary Conference at Willingen (1952) (Pretorius, *et al.* 1987:97).

A fourth dimension *leitourgia* (worship) was added later (Bosch 1979:227). In discussing the relation between the three dimensions, Bosch (1979:227) states that *kerygma* and *diakonia* belong together as the witnessing of the church. The Word is the spoken Word of God and God's deeds are seen and tangible. The salt and the light in Matthew 5:13-16 do not explain the difference between the *kerygma* and the *diakonia* of the church. Such is the *Great Commandment* (Matt 22:39) to be interpreted. It is like the blades of a pair of scissors held together by the *koinonia* – the stem. This stem is the cement which is keeping the *diakonia* and *kerygma* together. The primary task of the church is neither the one nor the other.

Bosch (1979:228) warns that the above interpretation should not put us back in a balance theology. The Bible speaks of various gifts, and different Christians fulfill different tasks in witnessing. The World Council of Churches of 1959 put it as follows: "There is no single way to witness to Jesus Christ. The Church has borne witness in different times and places in different ways. This is important. There are occasions when dynamic action in society is called for; there are others when a word must be spoken; others when the behaviour of Christians one to another is the telling witness. On other occasions the simple presence of a worshipping community or man is the witness. These different dimensions of witness to the one Lord are always a matter of concrete obedience. To take them in isolation from one another is to distort the Gospel" (Bosch 1979:228). This confirms

Bosch's statement that in a definite context it will be shown where the accent should be placed and the circumstances will dictate how our witnessing should be carried over. The main issue of *marturia* however, is genuine solidarity in our trustworthiness.

Not only the WCC but the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and the World Evangelical Fellowship under the title *Evangelism and the social responsibility* in its paper: *An Evangelical Commitment* (1982) agreed that the church's struggle with social evils like poverty, oppression, violent injustices and suffering challenged congregations to take a firm stand on social, political and economic issues. Great emphasis is put on the righteous deed (*dikaiōma*) as a further inseparable part of witness (*marturia*). Evangelism means doing justice and preaching grace (Pretorius, *et al.* 1987:97).

This confirms Bosch's statement that genuine *kerygma* has an inherent social dimension and *diakonia* an inherent proclamation dimension (Bosch 1979:228).

### **36.10 PARTNERSHIP AND MISSIO DEI AFTER WHITBY**

What happened with Whitby's partnership of 1947? The shock of World War II caused the realization that younger churches in the non-West serve Christ along with the older churches of the West. Jennings (2007:219) states that the Christian leaders were grappling with how to understand this new post-World War II world of the 1950s. For them, a traditional 'West-to-the-rest' programme of missions would no longer do. That approach was too church-centered, and it was too *based in the West* as well. For many the more God-centered *missio Dei* was becoming a more satisfactory concept to use in understanding Christian mission. It would, in fact, become the single most influential concept in wider (ecumenical) twentieth century Christian mission theology.

Fortunately we had and still have mission strategists in our country and in the DRC and the younger churches as well, to guide us along in the struggle to apply God's purpose for the church in South Africa. Their views were mentioned above and reflected with regard to partnership in obedience.

Pretorius (1987:99, 100) ask whether missionaries are still needed, seen in the light of the emphasis on every congregation as testimony ... "the answer is a definite but qualified no ... from what we have said, it is evident that missionaries as specialized witnesses are still necessary. It is, however, a prerequisite that they should be sent out and placed only with

the co-operation of all churches or congregations concerned. When used as staff for specialized ministries, missionaries will not replace ‘the testimony of the congregation, but extend and deepen it’.”

The situation in the NGKA was different compared to the presence of large numbers of missionaries from foreign countries in Africa and Asia. The partnership of the DRC family of churches made provision for white DRC ministers to pastor the congregations and to be supportive of black ministers and evangelists. The South African situation was different. Kritzinger (1979:13) mentions that the missionary has created a mighty machine and it is his responsibility to see that it functions effectively, an expensive machine with a team of co-workers to be paid, and with many activities. He must therefore keep contact with individuals and institutions and ensure money flows in at the right time. He is no longer the chief of the mission, but in practice he is still doing the same things. With the independence of the NGKA, his position in comparison with those of his black colleagues, and considering the background of the political situation in the country, is cause for tension and problems. The missionaries in the homelands would remain, with specific responsibilities and in no senior position above black ministers. In the transition from mission to church, it was expected that the black ministers had to take over the role of the missionaries for which they did not have the necessary training and experience (Kritzinger 1979:14, 15).

### **36.11 PARTNERSHIP: AN ANSWER TO PROBLEMS AND TENSION**

Before we can answer this question, one should look at another aspect which also emanated from the WCC. The WCC initiated a study on the subject *The Word of God and the Living Faiths of Men* (Kritzinger, et al. 1984:51). In 1967 at a conference in Kandy in Ceylon, of Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant representatives on *Christians in Dialogue with Men of Other Faiths*, dialogue was studied against the background of the unity of mankind and of a very universalistic concept of redemption. At this conference dialogue was also linked to the love of God, which obliges us to communicate with our fellow men. The following statement was made: “We believe that Christ is present whenever a Christian sincerely *enters into dialogue with another man*; the Christian is confident that Christ can speak to him through his neighbour, as well as to his neighbour through him. Dialogue implies a readiness to be changed as well as to influence others” (Kritzinger, et al. 1984:51).

Evangelicals feared that dialogue would oust mission altogether. The report at the WCC in Nairobi in 1975 included the following words: “We all agreed that the Great Commission of Jesus Christ which asks us to go out into all the world and make disciples of all nations, and to baptize them in the Triune Name, *should not be abandoned or betrayed*, disobeyed or compromised, neither should it be misused. Dialogue is both a matter of hearing and understanding the faith of others and also of witnessing to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

In the discussion that follows Kritzingers, *et al.* (1984:52) say that there are more than one form of dialogue: “Verkuyl distinguished three forms: Dialogue aimed *at better mutual understanding* (in other words, to *remove misunderstandings*); dialogue aimed at *better co-operation* on social problems between people of different faith; and dialogue as a *medium of missionary communication.*”

Important aspects to ascertain whether the principles of dialogue could also be applied to a working agreement of partnership as a method for proclaiming the Word in missionary work could be evaluated as follows:

The attitude must be one of openness and humility. Every dialogue must be open to God and his address to us. True dialogue must always be open to becoming *trialogue*. Kritzingers, *et al.* (1984:54) state that Verkuyl, in particular, has pointed to an important, but often neglected element:

*Every dialogue aimed at facilitating missionary communication must be open to the participation of another partner, the Holy Spirit. Dialogue thus becomes ‘trialogue’? He quotes a statement of the conference in Mexico City which described dialogue thus:*

*The partner in dialogue who does not listen to the other is arrogant and irrelevant. But if in the dialogue we do not interpret the Gospel, we are turning dialogue into a superficial conversation. In the dialogue our concern must be that we, together with our partner, should be involved in God’s dialogue with us and with our partner, in which he moves both us and our partner to listen and respond. Thus dialogue can never be a free-wheeling conversation between people.*

A further aspect is partnership and unity. Kritzingers (1995:96) states that one of the fundamental reasons why partnership should receive priority attention in mission is the *Biblical notion of unity*:

*Sadly, evangelical missions are often marked by intolerance, tensions and divisions. Could the failures of mission be ascribed to the lack of unity within the missionary community?*

*Historically speaking, the missionary movement of the previous century provided the main impetus for the growing ecumenical awareness in world Christianity. However, sometime during the present century the evangelical wing of the mission enterprise withdrew from the ecumenical movement and found itself in the role of the adversary. Ecumenism came to be regarded as apostasy, a backsliding from the true evangelical calling. What a pity! We should recapture the indicative of Jesus' prayer, namely that mission and unity are inextricably intertwined.*

The situation within the DRC family could be described as disunity. The partnership between the *NG Sendingkerk* (DR Mission Church) and the DRC were divided on the DRC's mission statement of *self-governing and independent churches*. The DR Mission Church requested the DRC to change this policy, because it was not willing to work together in mission work if common ground is wanting (Kritzinger 1988:37). The result was that a workshop was called for in April 1986 and a new work definition for mission was drawn up. It was clear that, at that time, the DRC was not regarded as trustworthy.

The historical facts regarding dialogue between the DRC and the younger churches, and the development of further dialogue did not bring any solutions. After the unification of the two churches, the NGKA and *NG Sendingkerk in Suid-Afrika*, to form the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, the dialogue about unification continued. The approval of the partnership for mission in 1975 by the NGKA General Synod and the DRC General Synod in 1978 opened up other aspects which caused division, such as the mission policy of the DRC as described above.

One shortcoming according to Crafford (1982:571) was that little emphasis was placed in the partnership on the existence and the functioning of joint commissions which could function as an instrument for the execution of the work. Perhaps, if joint commissions had functioned, the partnership would have continued in spite of division and tension.

#### **36.12 EVALUATION OF PART FOUR**

This phase was not easy for both churches, the DRC and the URCSA. However, this move was important because the leaders of the URCSA realized that their members had to

undergo, as Maluleke called it, a mindshift (34.4). Each church had to consider its position, some to survive, and some DRC congregations considered new fields for mission work.

After the unification of a section of the NGKA and the *NG Sendingkerk* in 1994 in forming the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, several DRC congregations are still supporting the URCSA in some way or the other, but one cannot call it partnerships. The ideal of partnership has largely disappeared. The ideal of church unification has not been reached. In many local areas new relationships are being formed.



### 37. IS PARTNERSHIP A PARADIGM SHIFT IN MISSIONS IN MODERN TIMES?

Partnership as it arises from the DRC Mission in Sekhukhuneland has been discussed as a model that has developed gradually. In my research of this history I have discovered that partnership was an underlying issue during the development from mission to church.

The DRC Mission did not draw up a blueprint for partnership during this time. Long after the DRC started with mission work in South Africa and in Africa, the first concept, *church and mission*, was coined at Tambaram (1938) which discussed under this term in a more theological manner the relationship between church and mission as well as between *older* and *younger* churches. The shift was from a church-centered mission (Tambaram) toward a mission centered church. Bosch (2006:463) states that, “Willingen (1952) began to flush out a new model. He recognized that the church could be neither the starting point nor the goal of mission. God’s work of salvation precedes both church and mission.” At a conference in Ghana (1958) a new consensus had been reached.

<sup>(a)</sup>‘the church is the mission’, which means that it is illegitimate to talk about the one without at the same time talking about the other; <sup>(b)</sup>‘the home base is everywhere’, which means that every Christian community is in a missionary situation; and <sup>(c)</sup>‘mission in partnership’, which means the end of every form of guardianship of one church over another (Bosch 2006:464 quoting Newbigin 1958:25-38).

Nothing is said anywhere that this theological development has influenced the DRC to establish an independent church and that partnership with the NGKA as from 1963 would be the basis for reaching out to other ethnic groups. This partnership was a natural development. The terms *mother* and *daughter churches* were often used and the missionaries and evangelists were the paid workers of the DRC in this partnership. When black ministers were placed, they also came onto the pay sheet of the sending body, the mother of the daughter.

In discussing the influence of the Ecumenical Movement, the term *partnership in obedience* (Whitby 1947) was often used in the dialogue between the DRC and the younger churches. Nussbaum (2005:119) in discussing Bosch’s book, *Transforming Mission* (1991) makes the following remark regarding this partnership:

“In the mid-twentieth century a number of ‘marvelous phrases’ were coined to point to the new goal of partnership between Western churches and those churches that had resulted from Western-based mission” (465.9).

The hollowness of these phrases is best summed up in a comment an Indonesian pastor made about the slogan of the Whitby missionary concerning in 1947, ‘Partnership in obedience.’ He said to a Dutch professor, ‘Yes, *partnership* for you but *obedience* for us” (466.1). Things have improved in the last fifty years, but there is still a long way to go. “We need new relationships, mutual responsibility, accountability, and interdependence” (466.4).

Partnership has become an important issue in missiology. The DRC and the new Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa have terminated their discussion on missions. The issue of *unity* remains which is still on the agenda of the dialogue between these two churches, although certain projects and work agreements still exist. In future, other partnerships may be considered. I hope that the partnership in reaching unevangelized ethnic groups could become an important issue on their agenda.

### **Partnership a Paradigm in Missions**

It seems that partnership will become an important model in future and particularly in a cross-cultural situation. Ott and Strauss (2010:219) reckons that there are several reasons why the sending of cross-cultural missionaries remains a biblical imperative:

1. *In many countries the church is still weak and welcomes foreign missionary assistance.*
2. *In many countries the church is small and inadequate to the task of evangelizing their nation.*
3. *The need for cross-cultural pioneer missionaries continues because of unevangelized people groups. Often within the same district one ethnic group responds to the gospel, while a neighboring ethnic group does not. Countries such as India, Indonesia, and Nigeria are composed of hundreds of ethno linguistic groups, many having no indigenous church or witness to the gospel. Due to historic ethnic rivalries, one ethnic group may reject the witness of Christians from another nearby*

*neighbor ethnic group. Culturally distant pioneer missionaries will be more effective in such situations.*

4. *Outside missionary personnel are needed to perform diverse tasks such as computer programming, literacy education, Bible translations, agricultural development and community medicine.*
5. *Long-term cross-cultural missionaries who have mastered the local language and culture can serve not only directly as relief workers but also as culture-bridge persons facilitating communications and ensuring that aid is given in culturally appropriate ways.*
6. *The Great Commission is mandated with the promise of Christ's presence 'to the very end of the age' (Matt 28:20).*

These reasons mentioned above prove that partnership is a close working relationship between denominations and/or organizations, who agree to work together for a specific purpose, because they can achieve more together than by themselves. The role of missionaries is necessary even when indigenous churches have become independent. In many situations *interdependence* still exists. Missionaries can play a key role in partnership in collaboration among members of the Body of Christ who are working together in functional unity and mutual respect to effectively achieve common goals in the advancing of God's Kingdom.

However, questions regarding the missionary vocation are complex, but Ott and Strauss (2010:236) find a strong biblical case for the following theses:

*The nature of world Christianity has dramatically changed over the last century, making a reassessment of the role of missionaries necessary. The distinction between sending countries and mission fields has broken down, requiring greater cooperation. International partnership in mission is no longer an option; it is an imperative. Nevertheless, the Great Commission has been neither withdrawn nor fulfilled. There remain yet many peoples unreached by the gospel of Jesus Christ. No church faithful to its Lord can cease to give, pray, and send its daughters and sons for the cause of Christ's global mission.*

Each member, his or her congregation and their denomination must realize that missionaries are still needed. Kritzinger, *et al.* (1987:99, 100) agree by saying: “from what we have said it is evident that missionaries as specialized witnesses are still necessary. It is however, a prerequisite that they should be sent out and placed only with the co-operation of all churches or congregations concerned. When used as staff for specialized ministries, missionaries will not replace ‘the testimony of the congregation but extend and deepen it’.”

Partnership, whether missionaries are involved or not, is designed to take joint collaborative action and to achieve things together that one cannot achieve separately. The co-operation of the churches or congregations is a prerequisite. Their focus is on a partnership which is being formed to reach an unreached ethnic group or the people of a country, region or city with the Gospel. Partnership, however, does not function on the contract or agreed-upon goal only. Partnership is also connected with the notion of *missio Dei*. For this reason I close with a remark from Bosch (2006:492):

“On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the *missio Dei* notion has helped to articulate the conviction that neither the church nor any other human agent can ever be considered the author or bearer of mission. Mission is, primarily and ultimately, the work of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for the sake of the world, a ministry in which the church is privileged to participate” (cf LWF1988:6-10). Mission has its origin in the heart of God. God is a fountain of sending love. This is the deepest source of mission. It is impossible to penetrate deeper still; there is mission because God loves people.

It is true that God has honored man with an exalted place of co-operation and partnership with Himself in mission.

### **Partnership in the Bible**

Partnership must be essentially functional, says Sinclair (1988:219). All projects need to be watchful over their continuing usefulness. “Some forms of partnership are graciously impeccable: a kind of ecclesiastical diplomacy with a missionary flavour, but the issue appears to be nothing more significant than the struggling survival of the institutions themselves. Undoubtedly partnership is not just for partnership; nor should structures be for structures. There is a kind of ecumenical partnership which is so bureaucratic and self-

absorbed that it strangles any useful action. There must also be a place for an agile response to the urgings of the Holy Bible. There are many structures that serve their time. Some continue a little longer than they should. At best they are mother of pearl; the costly stones of *koinonia* love out-price them.

### **Koinonia**

The New Testament word *koinonia* is grounded in the Triune God. This New Testament word is related to relationship. When Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath day he responded to the Jewish leaders by saying: “My Father is always at work to this very day, and I too, am working (John 5:17). God’s work in creation and redemption shows partnership between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Paul’s share in the Lord’s service also shows great intimacy with God. But Paul also identified him as partner with others. For Paul missionary partnership was a very personal, intimate and local thing working with Jews and Gentiles. The gift of the gentile churches of Macedonia and Achaia to the famine stricken church of Judeah was an act of Christian compassion, which Paul eagerly encouraged. For him it was a mutuality of giving and receiving in material and spiritual gifts” (2 Cor 8:14).

### **Partnership of Reconciliation**

I agree with Sinclair (1988:210) in saying: “So in Christ the global partnership is intact after all. The bonds are unbreakable. Because Jesus identified with all, sinned against and sinners, all have the possibility of identifying with each other. Through the grace of Christ all, black and white, military and revolutionary can see themselves in each other. They can say: ‘If I had walked in the other person’s shoes, I could have so easily done the same.’ This is no trite formula; it requires a new kind of obedience, a shared exploration of faith, a costly entry into other people’s worlds, and a demanding co-operation in missionary service. Like all else, the global missionary partnership is the fruit of the reconciling dying of the Saviour.”

### **Give-and-take Partnership**

Sinclair (1988:211) quoted Robert Ramseyer in asking: “How can we truly be partners when one side is strong and wealthy and the other is poor and weak?” It assumes that

because the churches of the First World are wealthy, have elaborately developed institutions, a highly trained ministry, and a long history, their contribution to any missionary partnership must completely overshadow anything that the Third World churches might provide.

“Robert Ramseyer believes that we, as Christians, need new attitudes: An understanding that ‘we are strangers and pilgrims even in the land of our birth.’ Only as we achieve a measure of personal detachment from what we have always considered our native socio-cultural settings do we become capable of perceiving both our own needs and the resources which God provides to and through our fellow Christians.” *Partnership is not also understanding* that others should repent, rather it requires the esteeming of the others more highly than ourselves.

### **Partnership in Prayer**

Prayer can change and transform other relationships, however difficult or distorted. Yet it is also an indispensable part of missionary support.

Sinclair (1988:214) further mentioned that *suffering in partnership* when doing missionary work is to be as surely experienced as fellowship in Christ’s sufferings. Together with the partnership of suffering is the *partnership of reaping*. One could not always see success, but in mission work every witness counts as part of the harvest at the end.

### **Structures for Partnership**

Sinclair (1988:215) says the authentic features of the Christian *koinonia*, or partnership, that we have described as reconciliation, understanding, mutuality, prayer, suffering and reaping, cannot produce these results itself. The structures can, however, stifle the desired relationship or allow them to grow. Mission requires partnership; partnership requires structures (Sinclair 1988:216).

### **CONCLUSION**

It seems that ‘partnership’ will always be an important dimension in mission strategy. As shown above, the DRC and the DRC family partnership was characterized with much tension. The drive for unity was placed at the top of the agendas.

We need to strive for unity, because this is indicated in the prayer of Jesus, namely that mission and unity are intertwined. But if full unity is not within reach, we still have to consider forming partnerships as a form of unity, and a necessary way to obey the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20).

Partnership is usually seen as a mutual agreement on contractual base between two or more partners in accomplishing a purpose. However, God's mission involves each congregation as a co-worker (*mission ecclesiae*). All congregations which are co-workers of God should at least co-operate with other churches in the same area, possibly in a Church-Church partnership.

Mission remains a call from God which is to be obeyed. He initiated mission and his church is called as humble partner by grace in this great commission. That means that each DRC congregation and the congregations of the old DRC family have to consider their position in reaching out and becoming witnesses in a world that is fast becoming post-Christian.

If we do not do this with other congregations called by the same God, we may fall short of our calling.

### **38. BY WAY OF EPILOGUE**

Evaluating the theological and historic-critical aspects of the DRC Mission in Sekhukhuneland, right at the end of this dissertation, I would like to enquire into what has happened to Gerdener's projection (1958:267):

“Another fifty years on and Part One of a discussion on *Recent Developments in the South African Mission Field* will probably be entitled: *The New Bantu Churches that have merged*. Part Two may then bear as title: *Farewell Scenes as the Older Churches and Missions withdraw*. Who knows, but Part Three will have to outline the challenging task of the Bantu Churches of Southern Africa in the evangelization of the waiting sub-continent! But these things belong to another day. Today, the waxing role of the younger and the waning role of the older Churches have engaged our attention, as well as the intermediate services that have played so large a part in the transfer.

“Let us have no doubt that the unerring Hand of the great Taskmaster will guide us surely from the first to the second half of this century as He has guided us from the former great century of tearful sowing to this time of the ripening and joyful gathering of the harvest.”

Only five years after he closed this histography with the words above, the different DRC Mission churches merged into the new NGKA in 1963 (Crafford 1982:63) and only thirty years later the NGKA and the *NG Sendingkerk in SA* merged to form the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. In view of Gerdener's projection and our reflection, we ask in this histography what has happened to the partnership in the second part of the century.

First priority was given to the preaching of the Gospel, with a view to the gathering of souls for the Kingdom of God. But within the DRC family the policy of the DRC for a self-supporting and independent church was questioned. According to Kritzinger (1988:37) it was the *NG Sendingkerk* who requested a change in policy. The result was that a workshop was held in April 1986. A new constitution for missions was drawn up with strong emphasis on the unity of the church, which is the testing ground of witnessing to the Kingdom of God. This church must be trustworthy. The one church and the unity of the church is the cornerstone for witnessing to the Kingdom of God. “This unity implied that the unity within the DRC-family, as well as on local and wider level, be sought



urgently and seriously. This means that in the community of believers on congregational level, as well as on the wider structure of the church, the present isolation would experience a break-through” (Kritzinger 1988:39). The basic guidelines for missions as Kritzinger (1988:33) stipulated are as follows:

- a) “Missions is God’s involvement in the world.
- b) God’s mission (*missio Dei*) and the mission of the church (*missio ecclesiae*) are the coming and the extension of the Kingdom of God.
- c) The emphasis on the Kingdom of God is the deepest driving force which provides the theological basis for the comprehensive view of the mission task.
- d) The planting and the growth of the church is only the first phase of God’s purpose. Not the church but the Kingdom is the ultimate purpose. The church, however, is the prime medium in God’s hand, and therefore the church must be trustworthy in order to further the establishment of the Kingdom of God.
- e) The visibility as well as the unity of the church within the world so as to combat evil, is of great importance. This theology must be applied in the DR Churches in the South Africa of 1986.”

Kritzinger (1988:39) closed this summary of the consultation of April 1986 by saying: “Without the DRC’s acceptance as such, the main point there-of became explicitly and implicitly the formulation of the DRC General Synod 1986.”

What could one say about the second half of the century up to 1994? The Gospel was preached, with a view to gathering souls for the Kingdom of God. Congregations, and eventually an organized church were established and the DRC kept to the policy of partnership as it was agreed to by the different DR Churches. The different churches of the DRC family developed and ultimately achieved independence. The load was gradually shifted to the mission churches and the daughter churches until they eventually became fully self-supportive, self-governing and self-expanding. They have attained complete autonomy. There is still hard work to be done regarding relationships within the Body of Christ.

### **39. SUMMARY**

The first chapter deals with the concept of mission history, the choice of research method, the phases of mission work in Sekhukhuneland and the establishment of the different congregations in the Presbytery of Burger. The second chapter contains the story of the Pedi and their country, as well as that of other groups like the Swazi and the Ndebele. From Chapter 3 the pioneering mission work of evangelists and missionaries is described. The role that evangelist Phillipus Mantsene played since 1875 until his death in 1915, as well as his supporters, Rev and Mrs AP Burger, laid the foundation for the involvement of the *Transvaal Vrouesendingvereniging*, which was established on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1905. This led to the calling of Rev and Mrs AJ Rousseau, who pioneered the first mission station in Sekhukhuneland, called BURGER, which was officially opened in 1929 (Chapter 8).

This is followed by a description of the monumental work done by missionary Jacobus Murray Louw at Maandagshoek Mission Station from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1944 to January 1962. The first black missionary for this area, Rev EM Phatudi, was ordained with him on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1943 at Mphahlele, and for a few years the two worked together in Sekhukhuneland. Phatudi's mother, who was the daughter of the late *Kgoši* Sekhukhune and his father, chief Mmutle III, saw to it that he became a special person in the history of the DRC Mission. He was one of the great leaders of the NGKA, as will be seen in Chapter 10.

Since *partnership* is the theme that dominates in this research, ample space is given to the work of evangelists in the history of the DRC's support mission in Sekhukhuneland. They were the missionaries' partners in establishing the Kingdom of God among the Pedi, Swazi and Ndebele of Sekhukhuneland.

With the help of Rev MJ Mankoe who served in the congregation of Burger (Chapter 26), I have been able to paint several life-sketches of the early pioneering evangelists who worked diligently and under difficult circumstances, shoulder to shoulder with the missionaries (Chapter 11).

The history of each of the mission stations which functioned in Sekhukhuneland is dealt with in Chapters 12 to 14. The missionaries who pioneered these stations and their co-workers made a major contribution to the growth of the mission church and the forming of

the Presbytery of Burger. The history of each of these mission stations, as well as the different congregations resulting from these stations, is described.

The time came for consolidating the borders and the placing of black ministers. This was the work of the Planning Commission of the Presbytery of Burger in 1965 and 1966. Chapters 16 to 22 describe the borders, different wards and names of the congregations. The strategy behind this was to ensure that the missionaries, white and black, could occupy equal posts. Once this was completed, a new phase of partnership came into being, as described in Chapters 24 to 30.

During this time the phasing out of evangelists took place, as is dealt with in Chapter 31. The two legs that carried missionary work up to this stage became weaker and weaker. Firstly, evangelists left or became full ministers, and secondly the need for a white minister or white missionary fell away.

It has also been necessary to describe the circumstances, experiences, views and contributions made by missionaries to prepare the step-out and take-over stages of the phasing-out period from Church-Mission partnership towards full independence and Church-Church partnership.

In Chapter 33 a bird's eye view is taken of the phases of partnership in the DRC's mission work in Sekhukhuneland. One has to conclude that the circumstances and conditions of the members of the NGKA were harsh. They were struggling against poverty, difficult living conditions, sickness and unemployment. The endeavour for unity among churches, the great topics of church growth and the development of their church to full financial independence could not receive their full attention.

In conclusion, I reflect on post-1994 developments in a wider context, based on the study of the previous phases. I also look at the DRC since 1994, asking whether the DRC is still serious about mission work and the mission call.

Another chapter was added to reflect on partnership, asking whether this was the answer to problems and tensions. A historical journey since Whitby (1947) is taken and the role the Ecumenical Movements have played since then in the young churches in South Africa is summarized. The great concepts of *missio Dei*, *kerygma*, *diakonia* and *koinonia* are evaluated in the light of partnership and obedience which was the theme of Whitby, but

also the theme that caused continual dialogue, especially amongst the Evangelicals and the Ecumenical Movements.

**KEY WORDS**

Mission

Missionary

History

Dutch Reformed Church (DRC)

*Ned Geref Kerk in Afrika* (NGKA)

Congregation

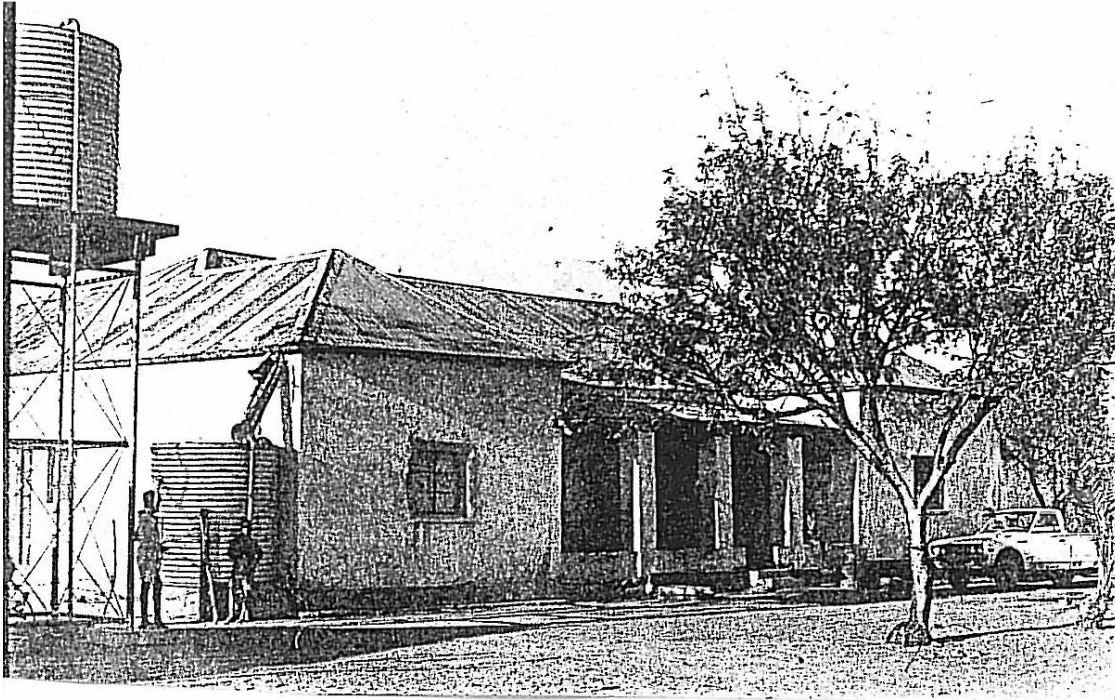
Minister

Presbytery

Partnership

Unity

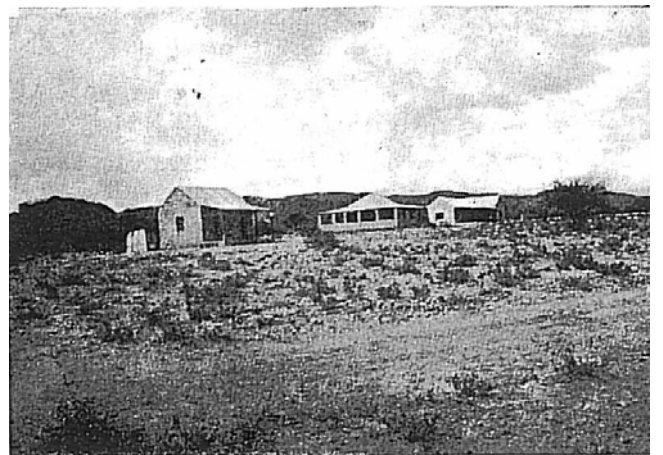
**40. PHOTOS**



**The parsonage of Rev and Mrs Abraham Rousseau at Burger Mission Station**



**Rev AJ Rousseau and his family**



**Burger Mission Station**





**The congregation of Burger and the presbytery of Burger was named after them**



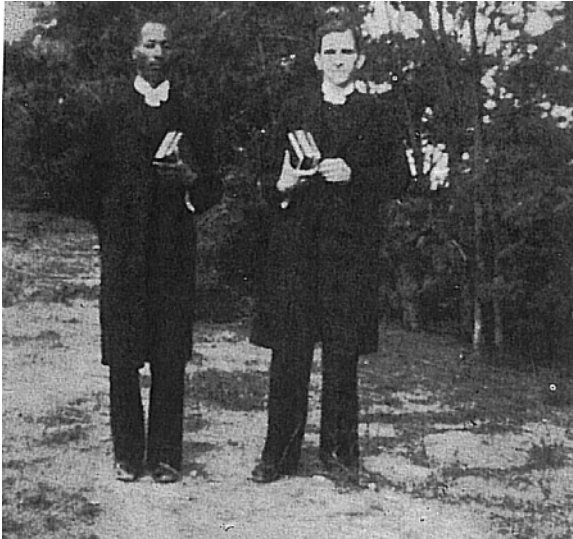
**Mrs Rev AP Burger  
Treasurer 1905-1913  
Vice-president 1913-1920**



**Mrs Rev HS Bosman  
President 1905-1915  
Treasurer 1919-1924**



**The management of the TVSV with Rev LC van der Merwe**



**Ordained together as missionaries for  
Sekhukhuneland**



**The church at Maandagshoek**



**Prof and Mrs AS van Niekerk  
(Later professor of  
Theology at Stofberg)**

**Pioneer of Klipspruit  
Mission station  
Sekhukhuneland**



**Dr JN du Plessis (Groothoek  
Mission Hospital)**



**Rev JT Jordaan  
(Matlala Mission)**

#### **41. ADDENDUM ONE**

##### **Annual Report, Dutch Reformed Mission: Burger Congregation**

##### **1 July 1958 to 30 June 1959, Rev Murray Louw:**

“Firstly I want to thank the *TVSV* for the manner in which they have supported our mission work. When Rev Stephen Njuweni was called by the Lord to return to his country of birth, Nyasaland, the *TVSV* decided that another missionary had to be appointed in his place, to continue with the outstations. After working with me for 13 years, first as evangelist and later as full-time minister, Rev Njuweni returned to his people on 2 February 1959. He started his work at Mlaud, but only for three months, as he died on 7 September 1959 of a heart attack. For thirteen years he was an example of friendliness, humility and uprightness. When thinking about him, we are reminded of Psalm 18:13.

##### **Personnel**

“During the last 12 months things have changed. Rev Koos Louw was ordained as missionary on 31 January 1959 at Maandagshoek. Dr and Mrs DP Cronjé replaced Dr Chris Jacobs, while Dr and Mrs JM Smalberger left for further studies abroad. Fortunately, Sister C Spaargaren returned to our hospital and Sister I Dickinson also helped for a few months. It was a great loss when Sister Lettie Calitz, as well as Sister Annie van Zyl, got married. Our handy-man, Mr W Smit, was wise enough to marry Sister Anna Schröder, so that we still have their services! Evangelist E Marokana left us when he accepted a call to Soekmekaar. At this moment we have the services of five evangelists, but we have vacancies for four more. Most evangelists and ministers prefer to work in urban areas.

##### **Spiritual Work**

“We cannot measure the spiritual work according to figures, but must admit that most of our members are still at a low spiritual level. Yet we are grateful that the Word of God is more and more acceptable in Sekhukhuneland.

During this year we baptized 59 adults and 31 children. In our membership register 125 new names are entered, 82 of them having become members by confirmation while 43, mainly nurses and mine workers, came with certificates from other places. Our net



increase was 49 members, since 76 left for further study and other reasons. Our congregation has 588 members in a population of 50 000, but we must state that not even 10% are converted. Sadly, some members are still living in sin. These people hinder others from joining the church. Last year five members were placed under censorship because of theft.

Moruti Kutumela is doing a fine work at Mphahlele, about 60 miles from Maandagshoek. He serves seven outstations. He and his wife are acceptable among the people, but they also have their own problems and need our prayers. We are grateful for their attitude and co-operation. Moruti Kutumela is also Chairman of the Church Council of the Burger congregation.

It meant so much to our work that a second missionary, in the person of Rev Koos Louw, could join us at Maandagshoek. He is taking care of 14 outstations while I attend to members and non-believers around Maandagshoek, as well as caring for the hospital, its personnel and patients, doing administrative work and the revision of the Pedi Bible. For two months now I have been helping three new missionaries with their study of the Northern Sotho language. Four of our five evangelists have seen the fruit of their work. Many people, however, are still very much against the Gospel. Some parents forbid their children to attend Sunday school.

“This year we were able to open one church building – the one at Mooifontein. We thank Mr de Wit, the Mine Manager and his personnel for their continued help. We are also grateful for many farmers who are supporting our mission task. A new outstation, Shai, was added by Rev Koos Louw.

### **The Hospital**

“The hospital was extended by a new section with 160 beds for TB patients. It now has room for 316 patients, with a staff of 100 nurses and workers. Many Scripture texts and tracts were distributed. We also received donations for Bibles, so that we were able to subsidise these as well as to sell Bibles at four shillings each and New Testaments at two shillings. Student nurses are keen to study and the first eight completed their courses. They are now working as staff nurses. We appreciate the work of Drs. Boshoff, De Jager,

Smalberger and Cronjé, assisted by the Mission sisters. They are taking part in morning devotions and regularly attend the staff prayer meetings.

The Government is providing subsidies for 286 patients every day. A total of 857 operations were done by the doctors and 39 385 patients were treated at the clinics, 3 246 x-rays were taken and 3 967 laboratory tests executed. We also managed to build another doctor's house, a big rondavel with a kitchen, as well as three houses for married workers. Eight rooms for nurses were added. Dr Boshoff also runs a profitable pig farm for mission work projects. Mr Nortjé is responsible for delivering and supplying vegetables, fruit and milk. Miss Sarie Kritzinger runs a workshop for knitting jerseys and blankets made from off-cut materials. She and Miss W Neethling and Mr NJ Bos of the office are also conducting services for the patients.

### **Church Movements**

“The CVV (also called prayer ladies) has 86 members. The Christian Youth Movement only functions at the main branch here at the hospital. We have 16 Sunday school branches with 800 children from non-believing parents. I conduct the two services at Maandagshoek, the main station, and Mr Cronjé has a Sunday school 5 miles from here. More than half of the teachers at our school are of good conduct, as well as good examples for the Lord's Kingdom. One teacher, however, is not co-operating. She influenced many school children not to attend church meetings.

### **Expression of Thanks**

“We thank the members of the *TVSV* and management sincerely for their prayers and support. Your attitude towards our difficult task with complex people is noble. You will forgive me if I close this 17<sup>th</sup> Year Report from my pen with a personal remark:

“Firstly, I want to thank God for His undertaking during the last year after I had a kidney operation and difficulty with my health. I also thank you for your prayers. I accept your support as shown to me as a servant of God and not for me as a person only. Thank you for two months of sick leave. I request further prayer for my health, but also for the salvation of the Bapedi, our staff members, and their attitude towards our mission work. Please persevere in prayer (Rom 12:12 and 1 Th 7:17).” Maandagshoek – Pk. Driekop: Murray Louw.

**DR Mission, Burger: 1 July 1959 to 30 June 1960 – Report on work:**

**Rev Koos Louw**

“I am most grateful to our Heavenly Father for His blessings during this year. Surprisingly, new doors opened: people in quite a few places urged us to come, and four new outposts were started. Many were accepted as full members after confirmation. Some small children were also baptized, which shows that the Christian influence is spreading.

**Old Outposts**

“The 18 outposts under my care are doing well, although Waterkop and Mafafe have not developed satisfactorily. Membership at the other posts is increasing. Teachers and chiefs at some of these places are co-operative. Evangelist Motau willingly continues at Krommelenboog. At Mashishi, Evangelist Stefaans Nkosi is doing excellent work and through his devotion the work has extended. He pays special attention to the chiefs and they favour his ministry. At Kasete, home of Chief Lejane Masete, membership increased to 12. At Shai, which was started as outpost in 1959, the membership is also growing and the Chief is co-operative. The beer-drinkers sometimes influence the services with their abnormal behaviour.

“The new rules instituted for mine labourers resulted in some of our women members having to leave the mine property. Only 3% of the mine workers’ families could remain on mine property. Foreign families had to return to their countries and we lost many members that way. We found that the Nyasa men are very good members. If married to local women, the whole family had to return to the husband's country of origin. This meant that the wives and children had to reside in their husband's country of origin, among people of a different tongue and culture, which is most difficult.

**New Outstations**

1. “Chief Mmutlane invited us, in preference to the Roman Catholic Church, to work among his people. We were able to start a school with one teacher, a Sunday school and services. People are very co-operative.

2. Chief Diphale, a widow, reigning over quite a few other chiefs as well, invited us to place a third teacher at one of her schools with 400 pupils. The traditional ways are still strongly practiced. Prayer is requested for her and for our work.
3. Weltevreden is a mine near Penge, where so far little work was done, although a few coloured and black mine workers joined our church. These miners are hungry for the Word, but unfortunately we have no full-time worker to place here.
4. At Mafafe, a big village, we cannot build a church as yet because a stand has not been allocated by the Chief.

### **Planned Outstations**

“We are planning to open three new outstations, but there are problems to overcome: the farmers refuse to give us ground for a new outstation, as they are not keen that the farm children should attend school. Pray that their attitude changes.

“Because of a shortage of workers we are unable to start in areas where there is a big concentration of non-believers. Pray for new workers.

### **New Church Buildings**

“At nine outstations, buildings are needed, so that people can meet and regular services can be conducted. At Penge the old building was demolished, but we managed to obtain a new stand. The congregation of Shai built their own little church, even before a stand was approved. One of the Trust field workers took the initiative single-handed. At other stations we still await approval for new stands.

### **Youth Camps**

“At Mphaaneng on the Olifants River, we camped with 40 boys for three days in September. Previously, in June, we camped for six days at Shai with 60 boys and girls. Several young people committed themselves to follow the Lord. At both camps the discipline and behaviour of the kids was good and God blessed us. We trust these camps can still be held in the future and that many young people will make a commitment to Christ. We have a great need for more workers. Three houses have been built for

evangelists, but we await applications. Several young people have expressed a desire to become evangelists.”

**Annual Report, Dutch Reformed Mission Burger Congregation, 1 July 1960 to 30**

**June 1961: Rev Koos Louw**

“We are grateful for the Lord’s blessing during this financial year. The camp at Stellenbosch (a farm in this area) was blessed and at the Ohrigstad church eleven candidates for membership received confirmation. Most of them were baptized on the same occasion. Parents also brought their children for christening.

“Chief Mampshe Masete requested that we start a preaching post at his village and even at Chief Mmtlane Mahlo's place our work prospered, so much so that the Roman Catholic Church withdrew. At Mafafe the school was closed a few years ago, but new interest in school and church has been shown. At Mafafe, quite a large community, our work did not prosper because the Chief’s council members are unwilling to approve a new stand. The lay-preacher was also dismissed because of his lack of interest in God’s work. Evangelist Stefaans Nkosi was a great disappointment. He confessed at one of our evangelistic campaigns that he is an alcoholic.

“Another setback for our work is the continuous dispute between the two chiefs, Malepane Shai and Kgashane Shai. This is hindering progress at schools and work. We erected a church building at Lejane Masete's place. This church can easily accommodate Masete and his group too, but they refused to work together. We ask prayer for these four groups to lay aside their quarrels and to start co-operating.

“At the mines only a few women members remain on mine property, as many were forced to return to their home countries – mainly Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Nyasaland. Those who remain are very faithful. They have permission to stay on temporarily.

“At Ohrigstad, on a farm called ‘Sterkspruit’ (also called ‘Phiring’) chief Victoria Dinkwanyane requested us to work among her people. We are assisting the Ohrigstad congregation with the ministry. A group of one hundred members of the Lutheran Church joined our church.

“In December 1960 we managed to place a keen evangelist, Zacharias Mafurutsi, among them. Under his care the congregation is prospering. The first Christian women were clothed with the prescribed dress of the CVV (Christian Women’s Ministry) on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> July and in September the first youth were likewise clothed.

“We placed two teachers (male and female) at Chief Diphale’s place. The work was prospering, but the Chief’s followers are rejecting her authority. They kidnapped her and surrendered her to Chief Sekhukhune at Mhlaletsi. She had to walk all the way back, a distance of about 20 miles. After a few months she returned and during this period there was a decrease in Sunday school attendance, because her faithful followers were afraid and slept in the mountains during the night. The other teacher, Titus Paka, however, faithfully continued with his work. We held another camp for school children and some senior youth at Stellenbosch, the stock-breeding station of the Government. This was blessed. Scriptural truth was discussed during group sessions.

“I so wish I had a large tent to be used for tent evangelization everywhere! I am particularly grateful to the school teachers for their help at all our outstations. I am also very grateful to the management of *TVSV* and their members for assistance and continued prayer support. Above all we are grateful to God, who is blessing us and the work we are doing for Him.

Koos Louw.”

### **Report, DR Mission Burger Congregation, 1961 to 1962: Rev Koos Louw**

“After nearly 20 years of faithful service, Rev Murray Louw left in January. Rev J Zeeman of Ficksburg accepted the call to replace him. Rev Kutumela accepted a call to Boschpoort. Fortunately we still have Rev Ramaipadi, who arrived in March 1961. He is our third co-minister. Evangelist Foroma, who was unemployed for one year, was replaced by a young man, Petrus Phalamohlaka.

At Maandagshoek, Evangelist and Maria Ramakose are still doing well. At the moment we have five evangelists in total, as well as one evangelist at Phiring, within the Ohrigstad congregation. Rev Ramaipadi is stationed at Morotse and Evangelist Motau moved to Mashishi.

“We divided the congregation into three sections: Rev Zeeman manages Maandagshoek and nearby stations, I am responsible for all the outstations and Rev Ramaipadi is working on the other side of the Olifants River. At Hoepakranz our little church was burnt down by rioters. However, members of the congregation collected poles and corrugated iron and carried them on foot to the top of the mountain, where they restored the church building by themselves!

At Shai we are also erecting a small church building. At Praktiseer, Mr and Mrs Faan Potgieter, a farmer and his wife, helped us to build a school. At Penge and also at Mphaaneng, new church buildings were dedicated with the help of the mine management. Many of our church buildings need restoration.

“At one place Lawrence Ntwampe became one of our members just before taking over the chieftainship from his mother. The Lord is still opening new doors for us and new outstations are being planned. The three ministers and five evangelists are being assisted by Christian teachers. We still need more workers. They are a great help because together with education, it remains one of the most fruitful fields in mission work. One of our schools at Mpiti was closed because of other surrounding schools, but at Mooihoek a new school was started with the help of the mine management.

“During this year we had a visit from the management of the *TVSV* Head Office. We also received a donation of R100,00 from the local branch of the *TVSV* at Burgersfort. During the year many young people from different congregations visited us. At Maandagshoek we were glad to welcome Mr Hanekom as the new hospital mechanic, and his wife as assistant bookkeeper of the Mission. After two years service, Dr and Mrs du Plooy left us, but we welcomed our third doctor, Dr Kobus Erasmus. Occasionally other doctors came to assist us – Drs Dippenaar, Coetzee, Roos and Wessels. Nursing Sisters Van der Merwe, Retief and De Putter are doing a wonderful job at the hospital. The hospital administration is in the hands of Dr Boshoff, Mr and Mrs Bos, Messrs le Roux and Hanekom. Dr D de Jager is mainly responsible for the clinics. Sometimes he has to work alone. The clinics are held four times a week.

God bless you,

Yours faithfully, Koos Louw.”

## **Interpretation**

During the guardianship period – Church-to-mission – the missionaries had to submit regular reports to the management committees of the subsidiary bodies regarding the situation at the mission stations. In the case of Maandagshoek, the reports were sent to the *TWV* (Transvaal Women’s Mission Association). These reports served as an important source of information in writing the history of mission work by the DRC.

The secretary of missions of the synod also received a copy for the archives and for his synodical mission reports. All these documents are being kept in the archives of the DRC in Stellenbosch.



## **ADDENDUM TWO**

### **Questionnaires and Interviews**

This is the most important part of the research. When the results of these questionnaires and interviews were analyzed, these were written out in the form of a sketch. These sketches of missionaries, black ministers and evangelists appear under the heading of each congregation where they worked. Their stories are valuable, because they tell the story of partnership, with whom they have worked and their own contributions toward the development of the young denomination in partnership with the DRC.

An example of such a questionnaire follows:



Posbus 751  
Silverton  
0127  
9/(9) 2008

Mev P C Phetla  
Posbus 54,  
Bronkhorstspuit  
1020

Geagte mevrou,

GESKIEDENIS VAN DS J S PHETLA

Soos ek vir Ma gesê het is ek besig met die geskiedenis van die N G Kerk in Sekhukhuneland. Ds Phetla het 'n baie belangrike rol gespeel daar. Ons mag nie sonder daardie stories wees nie, want hy was 'n kind van Sekhukhuneland. Sal Ma asseblief vir my sy storie skryf. Hier is riglyne:

1. Volle name en geboorte *1.1.1930 Ds J S Phetla* oorlede *27.2.2005*  
Waar begrawe *Bronkhorstspuit begraaf plaas*
2. Waar groot geword *Nebo distrik*
3. Wie was sy ouers *Pa. Mashole, Nkgarietse Phetla, Ma. Thokodi, Motkai - the, Phetla*
4. Waar skool gegaan *Mogalatladi* Laerskool en Sekondêr *Erasmusboskspuit*
5. Opleiding as onderwyser *Stofberg* gee datums *1952* *Jare Furse, sekondêr*
6. Opleiding as leraar *Stofberg* *Gedenk skool 1952* *Waar stofberg datums 1963*
7. Met wie getroud *Baie* *opreiding Pieterburg* volle name *Christina* datum *1956*
8. Eerste gemeente *Lepelle* *1967* *wanneer bevestig 1967*
9. Ander gemeentes *Erasmus, Bronkhorstspuit*
10. Met watter leraars en evangeliste saam gewerk *Evangeliste Mate mane, Ma. Tsipe, Masombuka*
11. Sy gesin *4 kinders* *11 Kleinkinders*
12. Sy werk as leraar *het op baie kommissies van* kort geskiedenis. Wanneer demissie gekry? *1999* *die kerk gedien baie van Christelike beke* *Vertaal na N. Soto, Hosanna, Thuto ya Bekr* *ste puku na kekek.*
13. Al die werk wat by Sekhukhuneland gedoen is deur hom moet ons uitlig. Hy het my bevestig by Tsimanyane en vir Ev Matemane by Schoeman. Hy het gehelp met die inwyding van die kerkgebou by Mothopong. Die wyke wat hy bedien *het ens* *Baie dankie moruti die geld is het vir my gestuif* *Groete B.C. Phetla*

Ek sê baie dankie Ma. Ingesluit is 'n geldjie om dankie te sê .. nie betaling nie.

Mag die Here u spaar en goeie gesondheid gee. Ds het altyd vir my gesê dat u huistaal Afrikaans was. Wat was die rede?

Die rede *was* Ds het groot geword in die plaas by Lydenburg *Groete* *Erasmus*

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