

## **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 (Turffloop) 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, Haakdongdraai, 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* 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 Hugonote 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. Eskom 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 Roosenekal congregation. This congregation was terminated and Laersdrift became an outpost of Sekhukhuneland congregation.



‘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).