38. BY WAY OF EPILOGUE

Evaluating the theological and historic-critical aspects of the DRC Mission in Sekhukhuneland, right at the end of this dissertation, I would like to enquire into what has happened to Gerdener’s projection (1958:267):

“Another fifty years on and Part One of a discussion on Recent Developments in the South African Mission Field will probably be entitled: The New Bantu Churches that have merged. Part Two may then bear as title: Farewell Scenes as the Older Churches and Missions withdraw. Who knows, but Part Three will have to outline the challenging task of the Bantu Churches of Southern Africa in the evangelization of the waiting sub-continent! But these things belong to another day. Today, the waxing role of the younger and the waning role of the older Churches have engaged our attention, as well as the intermediate services that have played so large a part in the transfer.

“Let us have no doubt that the unerring Hand of the great Taskmaster will guide us surely from the first to the second half of this century as He has guided us from the former great century of tearful sowing to this time of the ripening and joyful gathering of the harvest.”

Only five years after he closed this histography with the words above, the different DRC Mission churches merged into the new NGKA in 1963 (Crafford 1982:63) and only thirty years later the NGKA and the NG Sendingkerk in SA merged to form the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. In view of Gerdener’s projection and our reflection, we ask in this histography what has happened to the partnership in the second part of the century.

First priority was given to the preaching of the Gospel, with a view to the gathering of souls for the Kingdom of God. But within the DRC family the policy of the DRC for a self-supporting and independent church was questioned. According to Kritzinger (1988:37) it was the NG Sendingkerk who requested a change in policy. The result was that a workshop was held in April 1986. A new constitution for missions was drawn up with strong emphasis on the unity of the church, which is the testing ground of witnessing to the Kingdom of God. This church must be trustworthy. The one church and the unity of the church is the cornerstone for witnessing to the Kingdom of God. “This unity implied that the unity within the DRC-family, as well as on local and wider level, be sought
urgently and seriously. This means that in the community of believers on congregational level, as well as on the wider structure of the church, the present isolation would experience a break-through” (Kritzinger 1988:39). The basic guidelines for missions as Kritzinger (1988:33) stipulated are as follows:

a) “Missions is God’s involvement in the world.

b) God’s mission (missio Dei) and the mission of the church (missio ecclesiae) are the coming and the extension of the Kingdom of God.

c) The emphasis on the Kingdom of God is the deepest driving force which provides the theological basis for the comprehensive view of the mission task.

d) The planting and the growth of the church is only the first phase of God’s purpose. Not the church but the Kingdom is the ultimate purpose. The church, however, is the prime medium in God’s hand, and therefore the church must be trustworthy in order to further the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

e) The visibility as well as the unity of the church within the world so as to combat evil, is of great importance. This theology must be applied in the DR Churches in the South Africa of 1986.”

Kritzinger (1988:39) closed this summary of the consultation of April 1986 by saying: “Without the DRC’s acceptance as such, the main point there-of became explicitly and implicitly the formulation of the DRC General Synod 1986.”

What could one say about the second half of the century up to 1994? The Gospel was preached, with a view to gathering souls for the Kingdom of God. Congregations, and eventually an organized church were established and the DRC kept to the policy of partnership as it was agreed to by the different DR Churches. The different churches of the DRC family developed and ultimately achieved independence. The load was gradually shifted to the mission churches and the daughter churches until they eventually became fully self-supportive, self-governing and self-expanding. They have attained complete autonomy. There is still hard work to be done regarding relationships within the Body of Christ.
39. SUMMARY

The first chapter deals with the concept of mission history, the choice of research method, the phases of mission work in Sekhukhuneland and the establishment of the different congregations in the Presbytery of Burger. The second chapter contains the story of the Pedi and their country, as well as that of other groups like the Swazi and the Ndebele. From Chapter 3 the pioneering mission work of evangelists and missionaries is described. The role that evangelist Phillipus Mantsene played since 1875 until his death in 1915, as well as his supporters, Rev and Mrs AP Burger, laid the foundation for the involvement of the Transvaal Vrouesendingvereniging, which was established on 15th November 1905. This led to the calling of Rev and Mrs AJ Rousseau, who pioneered the first mission station in Sekhukhuneland, called BURGER, which was officially opened in 1929 (Chapter 8).

This is followed by a description of the monumental work done by missionary Jacobus Murray Louw at Maandagshoek Mission Station from 1st April 1944 to January 1962. The first black missionary for this area, Rev EM Phatudi, was ordained with him on 27th March 1943 at Mphahlele, and for a few years the two worked together in Sekhukhuneland. Phatudi’s mother, who was the daughter of the late Kgoši Sekhukhune and his father, chief Mmutle III, saw to it that he became a special person in the history of the DRC Mission. He was one of the great leaders of the NGKA, as will be seen in Chapter 10.

Since partnership is the theme that dominates in this research, ample space is given to the work of evangelists in the history of the DRC’s support mission in Sekhukhuneland. They were the missionaries’ partners in establishing the Kingdom of God among the Pedi, Swazi and Ndebele of Sekhukhuneland.

With the help of Rev MJ Mankoe who served in the congregation of Burger (Chapter 26), I have been able to paint several life-sketches of the early pioneering evangelists who worked diligently and under difficult circumstances, shoulder to shoulder with the missionaries (Chapter 11).

The history of each of the mission stations which functioned in Sekhukhuneland is dealt with in Chapters 12 to 14. The missionaries who pioneered these stations and their co-workers made a major contribution to the growth of the mission church and the forming of
the Presbytery of Burger. The history of each of these mission stations, as well as the different congregations resulting from these stations, is described.

The time came for consolidating the borders and the placing of black ministers. This was the work of the Planning Commission of the Presbytery of Burger in 1965 and 1966. Chapters 16 to 22 describe the borders, different wards and names of the congregations. The strategy behind this was to ensure that the missionaries, white and black, could occupy equal posts. Once this was completed, a new phase of partnership came into being, as described in Chapters 24 to 30.

During this time the phasing out of evangelists took place, as is dealt with in Chapter 31. The two legs that carried missionary work up to this stage became weaker and weaker. Firstly, evangelists left or became full ministers, and secondly the need for a white minister or white missionary fell away.

It has also been necessary to describe the circumstances, experiences, views and contributions made by missionaries to prepare the step-out and take-over stages of the phasing-out period from Church-Mission partnership towards full independence and Church-Church partnership.

In Chapter 33 a bird’s eye view is taken of the phases of partnership in the DRC’s mission work in Sekhukhuneland. One has to conclude that the circumstances and conditions of the members of the NGKA were harsh. They were struggling against poverty, difficult living conditions, sickness and unemployment. The endeavour for unity among churches, the great topics of church growth and the development of their church to full financial independence could not receive their full attention.

In conclusion, I reflect on post-1994 developments in a wider context, based on the study of the previous phases. I also look at the DRC since 1994, asking whether the DRC is still serious about mission work and the mission call.

Another chapter was added to reflect on partnership, asking whether this was the answer to problems and tensions. A historical journey since Whitby (1947) is taken and the role the Ecumenical Movements have played since then in the young churches in South Africa is summarized. The great concepts of missio Dei, kerygma, diakonia and koinonia are evaluated in the light of partnership and obedience which was the theme of Whitby, but
also the theme that caused continual dialogue, especially amongst the Evangelicals and the Ecumenical Movements.

**KEY WORDS**

Mission  
Missionary  
History  
Dutch Reformed Church (DRC)  
*Ned Geref Kerk in Afrika* (NGKA)  
Congregation  
Minister  
Presbytery  
Partnership  
Unity
The parsonage of Rev and Mrs Abraham Rousseau at Burger Mission Station

Rev AJ Rousseau and his family

Burger Mission Station
The congregation of Burger and the presbytery of Burger was named after them

Mrs Rev AP Burger
Treasurer 1905-1913
Vice-president 1913-1920

Mrs Rev HS Bosman
President 1905-1915
Treasurer 1919-1924

The management of the TVSV with Rev LC van der Merwe
Ordained together as missionaries for Sekhukhuneland

The church at Maandagshoek

Prof and Mrs AS van Niekerk
(Later professor of Theology at Stofberg)

Pioneer of Klipspruit
Mission station
Sekhukhuneland

Dr JN du Plessis (Groothoek Mission Hospital)

Rev JT Jordaan
(Matlala Mission)
41. ADDENDUM ONE

Annual Report, Dutch Reformed Mission: Burger Congregation

1 July 1958 to 30 June 1959, Rev Murray Louw:

“Firstly I want to thank the TVSV for the manner in which they have supported our mission work. When Rev Stephen Njuweni was called by the Lord to return to his country of birth, Nyasaland, the TVSV decided that another missionary had to be appointed in his place, to continue with the outstations. After working with me for 13 years, first as evangelist and later as full-time minister, Rev Njuweni returned to his people on 2 February 1959. He started his work at Mlaud, but only for three months, as he died on 7 September 1959 of a heart attack. For thirteen years he was an example of friendliness, humility and uprightness. When thinking about him, we are reminded of Psalm 18:13.

Personnel

“During the last 12 months things have changed. Rev Koos Louw was ordained as missionary on 31 January 1959 at Maandagshoek. Dr and Mrs DP Cronjé replaced Dr Chris Jacobs, while Dr and Mrs JM Smalberger left for further studies abroad. Fortunately, Sister C Spaargaren returned to our hospital and Sister I Dickinson also helped for a few months. It was a great loss when Sister Lettie Calitz, as well as Sister Annie van Zyl, got married. Our handy-man, Mr W Smit, was wise enough to marry Sister Anna Schröder, so that we still have their services! Evangelist E Marokana left us when he accepted a call to Soekmekaar. At this moment we have the services of five evangelists, but we have vacancies for four more. Most evangelists and ministers prefer to work in urban areas.

Spiritual Work

“We cannot measure the spiritual work according to figures, but must admit that most of our members are still at a low spiritual level. Yet we are grateful that the Word of God is more and more acceptable in Sekhukhuneland.

During this year we baptized 59 adults and 31 children. In our membership register 125 new names are entered, 82 of them having become members by confirmation while 43, mainly nurses and mine workers, came with certificates from other places. Our net
increase was 49 members, since 76 left for further study and other reasons. Our congregation has 588 members in a population of 50,000, but we must state that not even 10% are converted. Sadly, some members are still living in sin. These people hinder others from joining the church. Last year five members were placed under censorship because of theft.

Moruti Kutumela is doing a fine work at Mphahlele, about 60 miles from Maandagshoek. He serves seven outstations. He and his wife are acceptable among the people, but they also have their own problems and need our prayers. We are grateful for their attitude and co-operation. Moruti Kutumela is also Chairman of the Church Council of the Burger congregation.

It meant so much to our work that a second missionary, in the person of Rev Koos Louw, could join us at Maandagshoek. He is taking care of 14 outstations while I attend to members and non-believers around Maandagshoek, as well as caring for the hospital, its personnel and patients, doing administrative work and the revision of the Pedi Bible. For two months now I have been helping three new missionaries with their study of the Northern Sotho language. Four of our five evangelists have seen the fruit of their work. Many people, however, are still very much against the Gospel. Some parents forbid their children to attend Sunday school.

“This year we were able to open one church building – the one at Mooifontein. We thank Mr de Wit, the Mine Manager and his personnel for their continued help. We are also grateful for many farmers who are supporting our mission task. A new outstation, Shai, was added by Rev Koos Louw.

The Hospital

“The hospital was extended by a new section with 160 beds for TB patients. It now has room for 316 patients, with a staff of 100 nurses and workers. Many Scripture texts and tracts were distributed. We also received donations for Bibles, so that we were able to subsidise these as well as to sell Bibles at four shillings each and New Testaments at two shillings. Student nurses are keen to study and the first eight completed their courses. They are now working as staff nurses. We appreciate the work of Drs. Boshoff, De Jager,
Smalberger and Cronjé, assisted by the Mission sisters. They are taking part in morning devotions and regularly attend the staff prayer meetings.

The Government is providing subsidies for 286 patients every day. A total of 857 operations were done by the doctors and 39 385 patients were treated at the clinics, 3 246 x-rays were taken and 3 967 laboratory tests executed. We also managed to build another doctor’s house, a big rondavel with a kitchen, as well as three houses for married workers. Eight rooms for nurses were added. Dr Boshoff also runs a profitable pig farm for mission work projects. Mr Nortjé is responsible for delivering and supplying vegetables, fruit and milk. Miss Sarie Kritzinger runs a workshop for knitting jerseys and blankets made from off-cut materials. She and Miss W Neethling and Mr NJ Bos of the office are also conducting services for the patients.

**Church Movements**

“The CVV (also called prayer ladies) has 86 members. The Christian Youth Movement only functions at the main branch here at the hospital. We have 16 Sunday school branches with 800 children from non-believing parents. I conduct the two services at Maandagshoek, the main station, and Mr Cronjé has a Sunday school 5 miles from here. More than half of the teachers at our school are of good conduct, as well as good examples for the Lord’s Kingdom. One teacher, however, is not co-operating. She influenced many school children not to attend church meetings.

**Expression of Thanks**

“We thank the members of the TVSV and management sincerely for their prayers and support. Your attitude towards our difficult task with complex people is noble. You will forgive me if I close this 17th Year Report from my pen with a personal remark:

“Firstly, I want to thank God for His undertaking during the last year after I had a kidney operation and difficulty with my health. I also thank you for your prayers. I accept your support as shown to me as a servant of God and not for me as a person only. Thank you for two months of sick leave. I request further prayer for my health, but also for the salvation of the Bapedi, our staff members, and their attitude towards our mission work. Please persevere in prayer (Rom 12:12 and 1 Th 7:17).” Maandagshoek – Pk. Driekop: Murray Louw.
**Rev Koos Louw**

“I am most grateful to our Heavenly Father for His blessings during this year. Surprisingly, new doors opened: people in quite a few places urged us to come, and four new outposts were started. Many were accepted as full members after confirmation. Some small children were also baptized, which shows that the Christian influence is spreading.

**Old Outposts**

“The 18 outposts under my care are doing well, although Waterkop and Mafafe have not developed satisfactorily. Membership at the other posts is increasing. Teachers and chiefs at some of these places are co-operative. Evangelist Motau willingly continues at Krommelenboog. At Mashishi, Evangelist Stefaans Nkosi is doing excellent work and through his devotion the work has extended. He pays special attention to the chiefs and they favour his ministry. At Kasete, home of Chief Lejane Masete, membership increased to 12. At Shai, which was started as outpost in 1959, the membership is also growing and the Chief is co-operative. The beer-drinkers sometimes influence the services with their abnormal behaviour.

“The new rules instituted for mine labourers resulted in some of our women members having to leave the mine property. Only 3% of the mine workers’ families could remain on mine property. Foreign families had to return to their countries and we lost many members that way. We found that the Nyasa men are very good members. If married to local women, the whole family had to return to the husband's country of origin. This meant that the wives and children had to reside in their husband's country of origin, among people of a different tongue and culture, which is most difficult.

**New Outstations**

1. “Chief Mmutlane invited us, in preference to the Roman Catholic Church, to work among his people. We were able to start a school with one teacher, a Sunday school and services. People are very co-operative.
2. Chief Diphole, a widow, reigning over quite a few other chiefs as well, invited us to place a third teacher at one of her schools with 400 pupils. The traditional ways are still strongly practiced. Prayer is requested for her and for our work.

3. Weltevreden is a mine near Penge, where so far little work was done, although a few coloured and black mine workers joined our church. These miners are hungry for the Word, but unfortunately we have no full-time worker to place here.

4. At Mafafe, a big village, we cannot build a church as yet because a stand has not been allocated by the Chief.

**Planned Outstations**

“We are planning to open three new outstations, but there are problems to overcome: the farmers refuse to give us ground for a new outstation, as they are not keen that the farm children should attend school. Pray that their attitude changes.

“Because of a shortage of workers we are unable to start in areas where there is a big concentration of non-believers. Pray for new workers.

**New Church Buildings**

“At nine outstations, buildings are needed, so that people can meet and regular services can be conducted. At Penge the old building was demolished, but we managed to obtain a new stand. The congregation of Shai built their own little church, even before a stand was approved. One of the Trust field workers took the initiative single-handed. At other stations we still await approval for new stands.

**Youth Camps**

“At Mphaaneng on the Olifants River, we camped with 40 boys for three days in September. Previously, in June, we camped for six days at Shai with 60 boys and girls. Several young people committed themselves to follow the Lord. At both camps the discipline and behaviour of the kids was good and God blessed us. We trust these camps can still be held in the future and that many young people will make a commitment to Christ. We have a great need for more workers. Three houses have been built for
evangelists, but we await applications. Several young people have expressed a desire to become evangelists.”

**Annual Report, Dutch Reformed Mission Burger Congregation, 1 July 1960 to 30 June 1961: Rev Koos Louw**

“We are grateful for the Lord’s blessing during this financial year. The camp at Stellenbosch (a farm in this area) was blessed and at the Ohrigstad church eleven candidates for membership received confirmation. Most of them were baptized on the same occasion. Parents also brought their children for christening.

“Chief Mampshe Masete requested that we start a preaching post at his village and even at Chief Mmtlane Mahlo's place our work prospered, so much so that the Roman Catholic Church withdrew. At Mafafe the school was closed a few years ago, but new interest in school and church has been shown. At Mafafe, quite a large community, our work did not prosper because the Chief’s council members are unwilling to approve a new stand. The lay-preacher was also dismissed because of his lack of interest in God’s work. Evangelist Stefaans Nkosi was a great disappointment. He confessed at one of our evangelistic campaigns that he is an alcoholic.

“Another setback for our work is the continuous dispute between the two chiefs, Malepane Shai and Kgashane Shai. This is hindering progress at schools and work. We erected a church building at Lejane Masete's place. This church can easily accommodate Masete and his group too, but they refused to work together. We ask prayer for these four groups to lay aside their quarrels and to start co-operating.

“At the mines only a few women members remain on mine property, as many were forced to return to their home countries – mainly Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Nyasaland. Those who remain are very faithful. They have permission to stay on temporarily.

“At Ohrigstad, on a farm called ‘Sterkspruit’ (also called ‘Phiring’) chief Victoria Dinkwanyane requested us to work among her people. We are assisting the Ohrigstad congregation with the ministry. A group of one hundred members of the Lutheran Church joined our church.
“In December 1960 we managed to place a keen evangelist, Zacharias Mafurutsi, among them. Under his care the congregation is prospering. The first Christian women were clothed with the prescribed dress of the CVV (Christian Women’s Ministry) on Saturday 17th July and in September the first youth were likewise clothed.

“We placed two teachers (male and female) at Chief Diphalale’s place. The work was prospering, but the Chief’s followers are rejecting her authority. They kidnapped her and surrendered her to Chief Sekhukhune at Mohlaletsi. She had to walk all the way back, a distance of about 20 miles. After a few months she returned and during this period there was a decrease in Sunday school attendance, because her faithful followers were afraid and slept in the mountains during the night. The other teacher, Titus Paka, however, faithfully continued with his work. We held another camp for school children and some senior youth at Stellenbosch, the stock-breeding station of the Government. This was blessed. Scriptural truth was discussed during group sessions.

“I so wish I had a large tent to be used for tent evangelization everywhere! I am particularly grateful to the school teachers for their help at all our outstations. I am also very grateful to the management of TVSV and their members for assistance and continued prayer support. Above all we are grateful to God, who is blessing us and the work we are doing for Him.

Koos Louw.”


“After nearly 20 years of faithful service, Rev Murray Louw left in January. Rev J Zeeman of Ficksburg accepted the call to replace him. Rev Kutumela accepted a call to Boschpoort. Fortunately we still have Rev Ramaipadi, who arrived in March 1961. He is our third co-minister. Evangelist Foroma, who was unemployed for one year, was replaced by a young man, Petrus Phalamohlaka.

At Maandagshoek, Evangelist and Maria Ramakose are still doing well. At the moment we have five evangelists in total, as well as one evangelist at Phiring, within the Ohrigstad congregation. Rev Ramaipadi is stationed at Morotse and Evangelist Motau moved to Mashishi.
“We divided the congregation into three sections: Rev Zeeman manages Maandagshoek and nearby stations, I am responsible for all the outstations and Rev Ramaipadi is working on the other side of the Olifants River. At Hoepakranz our little church was burnt down by rioters. However, members of the congregation collected poles and corrugated iron and carried them on foot to the top of the mountain, where they restored the church building by themselves!

At Shai we are also erecting a small church building. At Praktiseer, Mr and Mrs Faan Potgieter, a farmer and his wife, helped us to build a school. At Penge and also at Mphaaneng, new church buildings were dedicated with the help of the mine management. Many of our church buildings need restoration.

“At one place Lawrence Ntwampe became one of our members just before taking over the chieftainship from his mother. The Lord is still opening new doors for us and new outstations are being planned. The three ministers and five evangelists are being assisted by Christian teachers. We still need more workers. They are a great help because together with education, it remains one of the most fruitful fields in mission work. One of our schools at Mpiti was closed because of other surrounding schools, but at Mooihoek a new school was started with the help of the mine management.

“During this year we had a visit from the management of the TVSV Head Office. We also received a donation of R100,00 from the local branch of the TVSV at Burgersfort. During the year many young people from different congregations visited us. At Maandagshoek we were glad to welcome Mr Hanekom as the new hospital mechanic, and his wife as assistant bookkeeper of the Mission. After two years service, Dr and Mrs du Plooy left us, but we welcomed our third doctor, Dr Kobus Erasmus. Occasionally other doctors came to assist us – Drs Dippenaar, Coetzee, Roos and Wessels. Nursing Sisters Van der Merwe, Retief and De Putter are doing a wonderful job at the hospital. The hospital administration is in the hands of Dr Boshoff, Mr and Mrs Bos, Messrs le Roux and Hanekom. Dr D de Jager is mainly responsible for the clinics. Sometimes he has to work alone. The clinics are held four times a week.

God bless you,

Yours faithfully, Koos Louw.”
Interpretation

During the guardianship period – Church-to-mission – the missionaries had to submit regular reports to the management committees of the subsidiary bodies regarding the situation at the mission stations. In the case of Maandagshoek, the reports were sent to the TVSV (Transvaal Women’s Mission Association). These reports served as an important source of information in writing the history of mission work by the DRC.

The secretary of missions of the synod also received a copy for the archives and for his synodical mission reports. All these documents are being kept in the archives of the DRC in Stellenbosch.
ADDENDUM TWO

Questionnaires and Interviews

This is the most important part of the research. When the results of these questionnaires and interviews were analyzed, these were written out in the form of a sketch. These sketches of missionaries, black ministers and evangelists appear under the heading of each congregation where they worked. Their stories are valuable, because they tell the story of partnership, with whom they have worked and their own contributions toward the development of the young denomination in partnership with the DRC.

An example of such a questionnaire follows:
Postbus 751
Silverton
0127
9/9 2008

Mev P C Phetla
Postbus 54,
Bronkhorstspruit
1020

Geagte mevrou,

GEBIKERDENS VAN DS J S PHETLA

Soos ek vir Ma gesê het is ok besig met die geskiedenis van die N C Kerk in Sekhukhuneland. De Phetla het 'n baie belangrike rol gespeel daar. Ons mag nie sonder daardie stories wees nie, want hy was 'n kind van Sekhukhuneland. Sal Ma asseblief vir my sy storie skryf. Hier is riglyne:

1. Volle naam en geboorte data 4-1-1930, off. 27-7-2005
   Waar begraaf?

2. Waar groot geword?

3. Wie was sy ouers?

4. Waar skool gegaan:
   - Maapula High School
   - Sekondêr:

5. Opleiding as onderwyser:
   - Bronkhorstspruit
   - Gemeente:
   - Opleiding:

6. Opleiding as leraar:

7. Met wie getroud: Elkeer:
   - Volle naam:
   - Datum:

8. Eerste gemeente:
   - wanneer bevestig:

9. Ander gemeentes:

10. Met watter leraars en evangeliste saam gewerk:

11. Sy gesin:
    - kinders:

12. Sy werk as leraar:
    - kort geskiedenis:

13. Al die werk wat by Sekhukhuneland gedaan is deur hom moet ons uitig. Hy het my bevestig by Teimanyane en vir Wy Matemane by Schoeman. Hy het gehelp met die inwyding van die kerkgebou by Mothopong. Die wyk wat hy bedien het ens binne dankie movi, die geld hi het vir my gestuur.

Ek sê baie dankie Ma. Ingesluit is 'n geldje om dankie te sê ... nie betaling nie.

Mag die Here u spaar en goeie gesondheid gee. Dy het altyd vir my gesê dat u huissaal Afrikaans was. Wat was die rede?

Grootse groete,

Gustav Roopen	

Die rede was dat het groot gerus in die plaas in Cuyanberga.
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