

A DESCRIPTIVE CHRONICLE OF TRANSITION
FROM MISSION TO INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP
IN TWO CHURCH OF CHRIST INSTITUTIONS
(ZIMBABWE 1976-1986)

by

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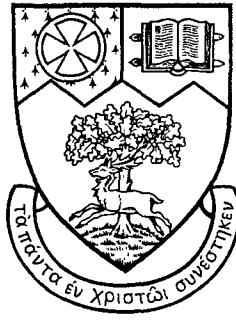
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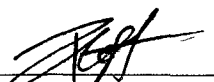
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ABSTRACT

“A Descriptive Chronicle of Transition from Mission to Indigenous Leadership in Two Church of Christ Institutions (Zimbabwe 1976-1986)”

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This thesis chronicles the leadership transition at two institutions affiliated with the Church of Christ, a branch of the Stone-Campbell Movement, in Rhodesia. The two institutions—Nhowe Mission and Umtali School of Preaching—were founded by missionaries from the USA who were also managers and technocrats, with the indigenous black Zimbabweans on the periphery of strategic decision-making powers. The status quo abruptly changed between 1976 and 1977 when the volatile political landscape became hostile for the missionaries who nearly closed or sold these mission centres. The unprepared Africans pleaded for an opportunity to lead these schools. The leadership transition was successful because the indigenous men and women had a deep sense of ownership. Moreover, the political landscape, after Zimbabwe’s independence, made it conducive for the indigene to lead such institutions. Furthermore, during the war of liberation, they morally and physically supported the guerrillas thereby saving the mission’s fixed assets from vandalism and destruction during the war while paving its future in a free Zimbabwe.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In my pursuit to write the history of our church—Church of Christ in Zimbabwe—I found the leadership transitional period at Nhowe Mission and Umtali School of Preaching difficult to understand. Therefore, I decided to write my thesis on this subject as part of the bigger goal. The following individuals and institutions played a pivotal role during the writing of this thesis.

Dr. James Peterson, my initial supervisor, was instrumental during the thesis proposal writing. After his departure, Dr. Gordon Heath guided me through the research process and writing. It was his guidance that aided me to complete this assignment.

I want to thank all the interviewees for sparing their valuable time and opening the contents of their hearts. Some of them accommodated me in their homes where I enjoyed rich Christian hospitality.

I want to thank the Hillcrest Church of Christ, Abilene, Texas, and the Fellowship Church of Christ, Edmonds, Washington, for their financial support. Without these two congregations, I would not be studying at McMaster Divinity College. From Hillcrest, I want to specifically mention Professor Everett Ferguson and Dr. John Tyson for their faith in me when others had given up. At Fellowship, I sincerely thank Don and Sara Brown.

My wife, Miriam, and our daughter Kudzai were a constant source of encouragement. I want to thank them for sharing the responsibility of babysitting our last member of the family—Kumbirai, who came as a surprise.

I also want to thank several members of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe who were a source of encouragement during information gathering.

Rev. Willard Pottinger assisted with the English grammatical constructions, although he is not responsible for any errors that might have slipped into this thesis.

Last, but not least, I sincerely want to thank my teachers who grounded me in the faith at Umtali School of Preaching. These godly men—Noah Gonzo, Ishmael Matangira, Timothy Matangira, Velaphi Mlangeni, and the late Xavier Goredema—showed me Christ and the power of his glory. I am what I am because of these men. I will forever be grateful for what you did in my life. To you, I dedicate this thesis.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Abilene Christian College
ACU	Abilene Christian University
AIC	African Initiated Churches or African Independent Church
ELCZ	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe
MBS	Mutare Bible School
MSOP	Mutare School of Preaching
NBC	Nhowe Bible College
NM	Nhowe Mission
RCBC	Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference
TEE	Theological Education by Extension
UANC	United African National Council
USOP	Umtali School of Preaching
WWM	Wuyu Wuyu Mission
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Liberation Army

FORWARD

In 1986 Loy S. Mitchell, a veteran Church of Christ missionary to Zimbabwe, at a Nhowe Mission fundraising dinner held at Park Lane Hotel, Harare, challenged those in attendance to seriously consider writing the history of the Stone-Campbell Movement in Zimbabwe. He argued that such a history would be informative because it stems from those who were converted by the missionaries. Since that year I have been interested in this subject.

When I started reviewing the extant literature on this subject, I was vexed with the leadership transition at Nhowe Mission and Umtali School of Preaching between 1976-1978. What transpired during that period was murky since the country was engulfed in the war of liberation. Since I still have an intention of writing the history of Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, I decided to work on the murky period first because this was the defining moment in the history of the Stone-Campbell Movement in Zimbabwe. The events surrounding the transfer of power from the western missionaries to the Africans were extremely fascinating. During information gathering, nearly all the interviewees were excited that at last someone is seriously researching about that period. I hope I have been sympathetic to their feelings while articulating their thoughts in this research which has humbled me.

Since I was not raised in the Church of Christ, I did not know most of the church “pillars” in Zimbabwe. This research has helped me appreciate the humble beginnings of these two missions and the financial and physical sacrifices that were done by the founders. The western missionaries succeeded in establishing these enduring institutions that they finally handed over to

the Africans. These institutions were a partnership between western missionaries and the Africans in Rhodesia.

The Africans who took over, some of whom have died, unfortunately, have not been acknowledged for their great sacrifice. The same can be said about some of the missionaries. These men and women sacrificed their lives for the sake of the Cross. This thesis, tries in a modest way, to acknowledge them by chronicling their heroic works. I hope that the future generation of students who will be educated at these centres will recognize that fact.

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INTRODUCTION

The arrival of John Sherriff in Bulawayo in September 1897 marks the commencement of evangelistic activities in Zimbabwe by western Christian missionaries affiliated to the Stone-Campbell Movement. Sherriff, a stonemason-cum-self-trained-missionary from New Zealand, was not sponsored by any congregation or association; he started the first Church of Christ congregation in Bulawayo.¹ For the Stone-Campbell Movement, Bulawayo was the epicentre for the gospel in Southern Rhodesia with John Sherriff constructing his first mission centre, Forest Vale, probably the first registered educational centre affiliated with the Stone-Campbell Movement in Africa.² Forest Vale was directly under his control, although he would not pass for

¹ By chronicling this history, Ogbu Kalu suggest that this is the institutional approach of writing church historiography as it, "Assumes that church history begins when missionary X arrives in a community, sets up shop and builds a congregation or a church. From that point, church history reconstructs the vertical and horizontal growth of the institution, the pattern of responses and the impact of the change-agent on the community. Kalu, "African Historiography," 11-19. Stanley Granberg identifies three periods of mission work by Churches of Christ in Africa, separating each other by nature of the work: "These are (1) the mission station; (2) the institutional era; and (3) the mission team eras." Granberg, "*Churches of Christ*," 7. The difference between one and two is slight. A mission centre like Forest Vale and Wuyu Wuyu were also institutions. The same can be said about Nhowe and Namwianga Missions. This method, although fraught with glaring problems, equips the historical chronicler to identify the arrival of white missionaries, like John Sherriff, in a specific year (1897) in a particular community. Kalu suggests that this method perpetuates church history as salvation history (*Heilsgeschichte*), or an extension of civilization history (Glory, Gold and God) undergirding denominationalism. See Kalu, "African Historiography," 11-19.

² In addition to Forest Vale Mission, John Sherriff partnered with natives, under the leadership of Jack Muzirwa, in the construction of Wuyu Wuyu Mission between 1927-1933 which closed its doors in 1934 when Willie N. Short, who was now in charge of it, wrote, "We are not now living on the Reserve. Being unable to meet the requirements of the government in order to hold the lease, we had to leave it, and the lease is now cancelled. But the government gave us a farm of three thousand acres about twenty-five miles from the mission site. We are to purchase that farm at one dollar per acre, payment to be spread over twenty years' time with no interest. Thus we will be purchasing our land instead of leasing always. We are moving the building material to be used again on the place. The church building, however, is not to be moved. It is to remain where it is and to be used by the congregation there. A large congregation meets every week, and we are to continue with this place as a preaching center." Short, "Brother Short Moves," 212. On the other hand, John Sherriff, commenting on the closure of Wuyu Wuyu wrote: "W. N. Short, who has been in charge of the Huyuyu Mission since I was compelled to leave it on account of my health breaking down, has now informed me that he has the mind of the brethren so far as he was able to get it, and their advice or instructions were to let the mission go and remove what he was able to do. So far as I know, he will now be pulling to pieces the buildings I and my family struggled to erect and over which I ruined my health. What I thought was the crowning and closing work of my life would now appear to be the biggest blunder and mistake I have made during my thirty-seven years' experience in Rhodesia. I cannot do any more myself, so must submit to the decision of the brotherhood. I am sorry for the effect it will have on churches of Christ missions in Rhodesia and the government." Sherriff, "A Foreign Mission Closed," 117.

an academic. This agrees with Norman Etherington's argument that pioneer European missionaries, after starting a mission centre, easily handed over the propagation of the Cross to natives but "two subsidiary branches of mission work, education and medicine, remained largely under the direction of overseas missionaries right up to the era of decolonization."³ A good example is what transpired in the educational centres associated with the Stone-Campbell Movement—A Cappella branch—in Rhodesia.⁴

White western missionaries worked in Rhodesia from 1897 to 1977 when the last family, that of Roy Virgil Palmer, left for the United States. During those eighty years, they constructed and established mission centres, a clinic, church buildings, congregations, and schools before leaving Rhodesia between 1976 and 1977 at the peak of the ravaging guerrilla war. Nhowe Mission (NM) and Umtali School of Preaching (USOP) were two of the major institutions that were well established before their departure. The former, located in a farming area, consisted of a clinic, a farm, and a primary and secondary school; whereas, the latter was a preachers' training school situated in an urban area. These two institutions became the Church's flagships. During the colonial era, as was typical, these institutions were led and managed by North American missionaries with the indigenous on the periphery of power. There was, however, an abrupt change in leadership from an all white American team to a black native Zimbabwean team in 1977.

This research chronicles and describes the formative events that took place at these institutions between 1976 and 1977, arguing that the leadership transition was successful for the following three critical reasons. First, the indigenous Christian leaders who took over were men

³ Etherington, "Education and Medicine," 261-284.

⁴ This thesis centers on one branch of the Stone-Campbell Movement—A Cappella Branch, also known as non-instrumental branch. The Christian Church, a part of the Stone-Campbell Movement, has a number of mission centers including Chadamoyo, Dadaya, and Mashoko. Savage, *Achievement*, 55.

and women who had a deep sense of ownership of the two institutions. They viewed these mission centres as their inheritance bequeathed to them by the North American Churches of Christ. In turn, they planned to hand them over to their children in the faith. This motivated the new administrators to operate NM and USOP effectively and efficiently despite their poor academic, administrative, and managerial skills. Their inarticulate candour spurred success in the midst of opposition, compounded by a poor financial base, when compared to their missionary counterparts who had worked in Rhodesia for years.

Second, the economic and political environment in Rhodesia gradually became conducive for black native Zimbabweans to lead and manage mission centres that were previously operated by white missionaries.

Third, the native leadership, particularly at NM, read the political landscape and covertly participated in the war of liberation. They morally and physically supported the guerrillas; although the western missionaries were not aware. It was partially through this involvement that saved the mission's fixed assets from being looted and destroyed during its temporary closure. Moreover, the guerrillas assured the black "leadership" at NM that their moral and physical support would be recognized and rewarded in a free Zimbabwe. Consequently, this gave them a rare perception of the troubled country's future under a black-led majority rule government. By participating in the liberation struggle, the black Christians at NM supported the end of the British Empire. The western missionary, unfortunately, relied on the electronic and print media that was controlled by the white regime whose reports were skewed in its favour.

This research, therefore, is a historical descriptive account that "traces events over a period of years in the life of a family, organization... to depict what occurred, sticking to the facts

without speculating about why events happened as they did.”⁵ Nevertheless, an evaluation of the motives behind this leadership change will also be carried out. John Tosh points out that, “Analysis can serve to elucidate the connectedness of events and process occurring at the same time, and especially to lay bare the workings of an institution or a specific area of historical experience.”⁶ In order to appreciate what transpired at NM and USOP during the transitional period, this thesis, therefore, will analyse these institutions’ financial positions, geographical locations and human resources during that period. This was the period when the British Empire was collapsing.

The gradual disintegration and demise of the British Empire and the fading of its hegemony⁷ was precipitated by the Second World War, with the Cold War determining the course.⁸ Britain, after the war, could not “bear the cost of [its] Empire.”⁹ It borrowed \$3.75 billion from its former colony—the United States of America.¹⁰ This was the defining moment for the British Empire because after that event, “It took just three decades to dismantle, leaving only a few scattered islands – from Ascension to Tristan da Cunha – as mementoes.”¹¹ The rise of nationalism also fuelled its downfall.

In some of its colonies like India, Pakistan, and some parts of Africa, those who had participated in the war ignited and fuelled nationalism. This finally led to India’s independence in 1947¹² while in Africa, Ghana was liberated in 1957.¹³ When Rhodesians went

⁵ Thomas and Brubake, *Theses and Dissertations*, 25.

⁶ Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, 148.

⁷ Ferguson, *Empire*, xxii.

⁸ For a details about the rise and fall the British Empire the best sources are: James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, 525-622; as well as Judd, *Empire*, 346-410.

⁹ Ferguson, *Empire*, 300.

¹⁰ Ferguson, *Empire*, 300.

¹¹ Ferguson, *Empire*, 301.

¹² Judd, *Empire*, 323-345.

¹³ Judd, *Empire*, 354.

to war–1972-1979—it was part of the British Empire crumbling although its academic influence, nurtured by the church, remained for years.

The Zimbabwean church historiography, for example, during the colonial era (1890-1980), as was common in colonial Africa, was dominated by western white scholars.¹⁴ This is analysed in *African Church Historiography: An Ecumenical Perspective*, edited by one of Africa's eminent historians Ogbu U. Kalu. These papers were presented at a workshop on African church history in Nairobi, Kenya, 3-8 August 1986. At the end of the workshop, the participants concluded that they “aimed at writing Church History in this part of the Third World from the standpoint of the African people, and not from the standpoint of the missionary or confessions as heretofore.”¹⁵ In the case of Zimbabwe, outstanding historians were based or affiliated with the University College of Rhodesia where Anthony J. Dachs edited *Christianity South of the Zambezi, Volume I* that was followed by Volume II entitled *Christianity South of the Zambezi*. These marked the emergence of scholarly historical studies related to the church. Some of the contributors to these two volumes like J. Kumbirai, Gordon L. Chavunduka, M. L. Daneel, C. M. Dillon-Malone, Ngwabi Bhebe, Michael Gelfand, Peter Hatendi, and Chengetai J. M. Zvobgo became notable historians or specialists in their respective disciplines. Of particular interest to this research are Ngwabi Bhebe, Chengetai Zvobgo, and Janice McLaughlin. The latter did not contribute to these volumes.

Since Zimbabwe went through an enduring and protracted war that finally led to its independence, historians have written monographs on the topic, War of Liberation. The major battlefields were fought in the rural areas, the location of most Christian missionary schools. St. Albert's Mission, the first centre to be affected in 1972 was located in Mt. Darwin while St.

¹⁴ Most African countries got their independence from the colonial masters between 1957 and 1975; Zimbabwe gained its independence in 1980.

¹⁵ Kalu, “Consultation on Church History of Africa,” 93-94.

Paul's Musami, where missionaries lost their lives was located in Murewa. The same applies to Manama Mission, in Mberengwa, where close to 700 children were abducted in January 1977. Scholarly books on this topic include *Guns and Rain* authored by David Lan in 1985 that is informative on the role of spirit mediums in the Muzarabani area, north of Harare. Along the same lines is *Church and State in Zimbabwe: 1965-1985* that was jointly edited by C. F. Hallencreutz and A. Moyo. The following three books, however, are germane for this research: Ngwabi Bhebe's *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare* and *The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*, Janice McLaughlin's *On the Frontline: Catholic Missions in Zimbabwe Liberation War*, and Chengetai Zvobgo's *A History of Missions in Zimbabwe 1980-1939*. These books, particularly the first two, describe in detail how the war directly involved missionaries, mission schools, the indigenous clergy, and the lay people. Leadership is central in these books; for that reason, this research will compare and contrast the activities at NM, part of the subject of this thesis, and mission centres like Manama, Chegato, St. Paul's Musami, and others.

Bhebe confesses, unapologetically, that he is a member of the ELCZ with missions in the Mberengwa area where he was born and bred. He had intimate knowledge of the people and these Christian mission centres giving him a rare insight. The same applies with Sister Janice McLaughlin, a Catholic nun, whose book describes life at four Catholic missions: St. Albert's in Mt. Darwin, Avila in Nyanga, St. Paul's in Murewa, and Mutero in Masvingo. These two authors wrote about mission centres with which they were affiliated, Bhebe as a product of missionary work while McLaughlin as a missionary. This gives the reader two different perspectives of missionary work. Carl F. Hellencreutz, reviewing Bhebe's book wrote, "Bhebe's most important

contributions, however, is his account in Chapters Four and Five of what actually happened at different Church centres in the heartland of the ELCZ.”¹⁶

Like Bhebe, I am writing as a member of the Church of Christ about what transpired during the war at NM, a Church of Christ affiliated institution. This thesis attempts to weave together narratives accounts from the missionaries’ point of view and contrast them with the Africans’ perspective. Since NM was started around 1940 at the peak of colonialism, the political environment is similar to the description given by Gerdien Verstraelen-Gilhuis in her book *From Dutch Mission to Reformed Church in Zambia: The Scope for African Leadership and Initiative in the History of a Zambian Mission Church*. In this book, Dr. Verstraelen-Gilhuis describes in detail the activities at several Dutch Reformed Mission centres from 1924 when they were under white management up to 1966 when they were handed over to the indigenous people of Zambia. To her credit, she vividly describes the traumatic and agonizing treatment of the natives by missionaries. Some of the harrowing accounts are identical to what Eldred Echols experienced at Nhowe Mission during the genesis of that mission.¹⁷ Echols’s experiences were similar to Taruwinga Banza’s that he described during an oral interview nine years ago.¹⁸

When the thesis proposal was accepted in April 2011, I made plans to interview people who were involved with work at these institutions. Most of the former missionaries are in the USA with the majority of the indigenous workers in Zimbabwe. Most of them, missionaries and indigenous workers, especially for NM, have died. Andrew Bamu, Elias Feremenga, Roy Palmer, and Zebedee Tandi, who were the pillars during the period under discussion, passed away at the end of the last century. Jaxie Palmer could not even recognize me during my visit to

¹⁶ Hallencreutz, “The Lutheran Church and the Liberation of Zimbabwe,” 463-475.

¹⁷ Verstraelen-Gilhuis, *From Dutch Mission to Reformed Church in Zambia*, 167-172. See Echols, *Wings of the Morning*, 44-51.

¹⁸ Banza, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

her home.¹⁹ J. C. McCurdy, who was the chief fundraiser for USOP, as an elder at Hillcrest Church of Christ, was in hospital when I was in Abilene gathering information. He passed away two weeks after my visit. For USOP, Xavier Goredema, the first black principal passed away in 2003. Interviewing these people would have enriched the research. I struggled to get biographical information about some of the deceased African leaders. Although they worked at NM and MSOP for years, the extant records at these institutions lack substantial details. Furthermore, some family members, with due respect, were not forthcoming with their late parents' academic, educational, and biographical information; although these men and women were pivotal during the transitional period. This vital information would have assisted in the analysis of human resources at NM.

When NM and USOP were handed over by the white missionaries to the indigenous Zimbabweans, it seems though vital records were not handed over to the successors. If records were handed over, they were not properly filed because from 1975 to 1977 there are no proper records for these schools. For NM, institutional records probably were displaced when it temporarily closed in 1979. Fortunately, some of the missionaries filed their reports with USA-based institutions.

Loy Mitchell, Roy Palmer, and some of the missionaries filed their reports with the missions department at Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas. Some of these records were kept by their supporting or overseeing congregations. At the Hillcrest congregation, J. C. McCurdy handed over some of the correspondence he had with missionaries in Zimbabwe. I obtained extremely informative material like personal correspondence and audio reports from James Petty who handed power to Xavier Goredema in 1977. During this period, the Swartz

¹⁹ Mrs. Palmer lives in Abilene, Texas. I was in Abilene during the beginning of November 2011 researching for this thesis.

Creek Congregation in Michigan was pastoring NM and a visit to this congregation, which was not successful, would have complemented the reports I photocopied from ACU. I managed to interview some important informants when I visited Zimbabwe in 2011.

In August of that year, I carried out interviews with some of the individuals who were involved with these institutions during the transitional period, amongst them Noah Gonzo, Ishmael Matangira, and Timothy Matangira who were at USOP. For NM, I met with Philemon Gezi, Chris Chetsanga, and Washington Mhlanga. I also compared current information with what I collected in 1991 when I planned writing the history of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. With that plan in mind, I interviewed a few elderly people like Nyari (Sekuru) Muganhi, Samson (Sekuru) Mhlanga, and Taruwanga Banza. Telephone interviews were also conducted and recorded with Loy Mitchell and August Nyamatore. Since the leadership transfers at both NM and USOP were abrupt, with some sensitive transactions taking place, in this research, I have worked my way around such information trying to avoid opening healed wounds. During these interviews, I was surprised, if not shocked, to find out that some people were willing to give me information though I am still considered an outsider in the Church of Christ because I was not born and bred in the church.

Chapter three, USOP, was shaped by two books. Donna Mitchell (1933-2002) wrote *The People of the Sun* that details their life at NM and USOP. Loy Mitchell was the first principal when the school relocated from NM. In 1976, maybe some of the missionaries after reading *Theological Education by Extension* that was edited by Ralph Winter favoured the extension programme instead of the four-walled method that had been operating since the school's inception in 1958. This proposal, which is summarized in this research, became a controversial topic dividing some of the missionaries with the indigenous teachers at USOP. This research

attempts to clarify issues from both the missionaries' and indigenous teachers' points of view although I could not reach a clear conclusion because some of the information is sensitive. Some of my interviewees, although they were involved with these two institutions, were not aware that authorities nearly sold this school.

Although NM was founded in 1939, no scholarly historical work has been penned about this effort. Articles on missionaries and their activities in Africa in the *Stone-Campbell Movement Encyclopaedia* that was jointly edited by Douglas Foster, Paul Blowers, Anthony Dunnavant, and D. Newell Williams is probably the only extant work close to a published history of NM and USOP. These articles, as expected in a church that used not to generally support higher education for Africans, were contributed either by former missionaries or a historian from the west.

Since the inception of these institutions, most of the written records were done by the western missionaries with little input from the indigenous. Reports were filed overseas and the indigenous Christians did not know what was being reported about them, especially during the transitional period. As an "outsider" when I became a member of the Church of Christ, indigenous oral historians told me about the transition that painted some of the missionaries as people who did not have a conscience or the African Christian at heart. I was surprised at reading the positive reports filed at ACU by these former missionaries whom the indigenous portrayed as hard-hearted. I could not easily reconcile these two supposedly conflicting stories. That motivated me to start researching about the leadership transitional period, 1976-1977, at these institutions.

In chronicling the transitional period, three themes are interwoven throughout this research. They relate to the political, economic, and social landscape in which both the

missionaries and indigenous operated. First, this research details, through the available sources, what transpired between 1976 and 1977, by expanding what missionaries reported as happening in Rhodesia and their pragmatic responses to the dire situation. Second, what the indigenous, again through the available sources, reported as happening in Rhodesia and how they interpreted the missionaries' response to the situation. Finally, the approach that the indigenous envisaged the missionaries would have taken given the prevailing situation.

Bhebe, McLaughlin, and partially David Maxwell in his book *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe: A Social History of the Hwesa People* answers these questions for the denominations they researched about.²⁰ Bhebe researched about the ELCZ, McLaughlin the Roman Catholic Church, while Maxwell was mainly concerned with the Hwesa chieftainship but touched on the Pentecostals, particularly the Elimites, and Catholics as they related to his topic. All these denominations differ organizationally from the Church of Christ. In this church, every congregation enjoys congregational autonomy; there is no organizational structure above the local elders. This organizational structure, which is grounded in the scriptures, has worked effectively in the USA. This research partially shows the challenges of this structure vis-a-vis foreign funded mission centres resulting in difficult, if not hard and constructive questions, being asked.²¹

Most Christian mission centres that were operating in Rhodesia were managed from the national denominational head-office or overseas-based headquarters. The head-office was responsible, directly or indirectly, for the micro- and macro-management of such institutions. Mission centres affiliated with the Churches of Christ, however, with their doctrine of congregational autonomy were operated differently. At their mission centres, strategic decisions

²⁰ Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe*, See particularly chapters 4 and 5.

²¹ See Cox, "Finishing Well: Phase-Out or Partnership," 303-304.

during the colonial era were made by the pastoring congregation's appointee—mission superintendent—with little if any contribution from the nationals who were in the majority. They were the sole beneficiaries who felt the impact of such decisions. This management style, unique to the Churches of Christ, nearly had disastrous consequences since vital decisions were pushed by one person. This research, after acknowledging the critical role of pioneer missionaries, illustrates the disconnect between the benefactor and beneficiary by relying on one person's advice. Bhebe and McLaughlin wrote about the war of liberation and leadership at mission stations with a leadership hierarchy above the local congregation. This thesis chronicles the transfer of power at mission centres without a leadership structure above the local church. It covers a ten-year period, consequently, it does not fully answer all historical questions concerning congregational autonomy and foreign funded missions. This research is not calling for the establishment of a head-office for the Churches of Christ nor is it calling for a change in congregational autonomy. It is simply a historical account of what transpired at two mission centres that were based in Rhodesia during the war. For that reason, they should be compared with similar mission centres that were operating in Rhodesia at that time while acknowledging the impact of American influences.

The hegemony of North American Churches of Christ is ubiquitous in Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe since their genesis in 1897. This can be identified by doctrine, practice, and teaching. Most congregations, moreover, depended on the USA for financial assistance despite the change in the geography of Christianity. North American Churches, including Churches of Christ, have abundant financial resources, but, as suggested by Justo González, "From the point of view of vitality, missionary and evangelist zeal, and even theological creativity, the centres have been shifting south for some time... the emerging geography of Christianity is

polycentric.”²² The church no longer has a geographic centre. This compels pragmatic writing and reading of the entire history of the church, instead of accepting what González identifies as “orographic” where, previously, studying “church history was to skip from mountain top to mountain top without ever descending into the valleys, much as a flat rock skips and bounces over the water without ever really getting wet.”²³ This research, therefore, will adopt part of González’s methodology where historians acknowledge “new mountain ranges lift[ing] up their heads.”²⁴ These valleys, streams, hills and mountains have to be acknowledged objectively, utilizing C. T. McIntire’s historical process method.

C. T. McIntire’s historical process method argues for historians to recognize that the world “exists according to three dimensions, which we may call the historical dimension, the structural (ontic) dimension, and the ultimate dimension.”²⁵ These can also be referred to as time, space, and spirit; alternatively “historical, structural (ontic), and ultimate.”²⁶ This methodology studies the genesis, revitalization, and finally extinction—or perpetuity of a phenomenon. This thesis, consequently, using the historical study method, offers “to describe, analyze, and explain in what way and how any particular phenomenon or types of phenomena temporally came into being, carried or are carrying on with modifications if appropriate,[and] have ceased to exist.”²⁷ P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins emphasize that the context must be interpreted aiming to establish why certain

action[s] took place; that is, to understand why actors of a certain kind were where they were when they were, and why their views of the world inclined them to act in the way they did. Translated into historical practice, this task involves the description of two contexts, one at home and one abroad, and of the links between them.²⁸

²² González, *The Changing Shape of Church History*, 14.

²³ González, *The Changing Shape of Church History*, 22.

²⁴ González, *The Changing Shape of Church History*, 32.

²⁵ McIntire, *Historical Study and the Historical Dimension of our World*, 18.

²⁶ McIntire, *Historical Study and the Historical Dimension of our World*, 18.

²⁷ McIntire, *Historical Study and the Historical Dimension of our World*, 20.

²⁸ Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion 1666-1914*, 49.

Historically, between 1976 and 1977, when circumstances compelled the North American missionaries to hand over mantles of power to unprepared natives at NM and USOP, most independent governments in Africa, especially Mozambique, were nationalising faith-based educational institutions and health facilities, particularly those affiliated to Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. In Rhodesia, guerrilla war was wreaking havoc on the country. Worse, most of the African states that had attained independence were aligning themselves to a form of Marxist-Leninist political ideology, which was anathema to many North Americans. Irrespective of these historical facts, Church of Christ missionaries successfully handed two important mission centers to the indigenous Christians who were ill equipped academically, financially, and administratively. To understand what actually transpired, this thesis explains the past of NM and USOP.

The historical process methodology, as defined by McIntire, does not recognize the past on its own but rather as “past-present-future.” In studying history, we accept things, people, and even cultures since they “relate backward and forward: they relate forward into their futures. For them and for us, there is a past history, current history, and future history and we study all three.”²⁹ The methodology has an advantage of understanding change.

Change is inevitable in any organization and it is “two-sided: it entails the ending of a previous continuity and the beginning of a new continuity.”³⁰ To acknowledge change, the historical method requires that, first, clear definitions of these institutions be given. Their mission statement, reason for existence, established through the identification and use of relevant and significant primary sources. Second, the research asks, “who and what parts, functions, and characteristics properly belong together in the structure” of NM and USOP before, during, and

²⁹ McIntire, *Historical Study and the Historical Dimension of our World*, 27.

³⁰ McIntire, *Historical Study and the Historical Dimension of our World*, 27.

after the leadership transition?³¹ Third, the research asks what McIntire calls questions of ultimateness, that is “what ultimate meanings and orientations did the participants understand and their actions and their results disclose?”³² Finally, McIntire’s historical methodology requires us to ask questions of time, noting exactly who was at NM and USOP during the years under discussion. Since individuals associated with the Stone-Campbell Movement established these two institutions in Zimbabwe, a brief history of the country is sketched below.

³¹ McIntire, *Historical Study and the Historical Dimension of our World*, 39.

³² McIntire, *Historical Study and the Historical Dimension of our World*, 39.

CHAPTER ONE

RHODESIA

Zimbabwe, formerly known as Southern Rhodesia, with an area of approximately 150,333 square miles, is a small landlocked country in Southern Africa.¹ It borders with Mozambique on the east, Botswana on the west, Zambia on the north and South Africa to the south. Zimbabwe is bounded by the two great rivers: Zambezi on the northern side and Limpopo on the southern side, with the mighty Victoria Falls found on the former. The country is populated mainly by blacks—the majority of whom speak predominantly Ndebele and Shona with the latter comprising the majority.² After the discovery of gold and diamonds in South Africa, Lawrence Vambe, argues, from a controversial African economic historian's point of view, “the white world, including Australia and America, oblivious to the Africans' interest, began to offload its human flotsam and jetsam onto the African soil.”³ Although this description is subjective, the majority of whites came from Europe; for that reason, in Zimbabwe, they are generally called Europeans.⁴ In addition to Europeans, some of its citizens are Coloureds and

¹ The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was dissolved in 1963 paving the way for Northern Rhodesia's and Nyasaland's independence. The former became Zambia, while the latter became Malawi. Southern Rhodesia did not officially change its name although it was commonly known as Rhodesia.

² According to Hughes, “The Rhodesian Ndebele speak an Nguni language and are found in the western parts of Southern Rhodesia” and they have at least one of the following characteristic “(1) Speak Ndebele (Sindebele) as their home language. (2) Refer themselves as Ndebele. (3) Were themselves, or had ancestors who were, part of the Ndebele state and subjects of the Ndebele King. (4) Order their lives according to a pattern they call “the Ndebele custom” or “the Ndebele way” (umtetu wamandebele).” Kuiper, Hughes and van Velsen *The Shona and Ndebele*, 41. The Shona can be distributed ethnically and linguistically. Ethnic distribution: Karanga, Zezuru, Korekore, Rozwi, Ndau, Manyika, Ungwe (Maungwe), Tawara, Hera, and finally the Tonga. Linguistic Distribution: Karanga or Southern Shona, Zezuru or Central Shona, Korekore or Northern Shona, Manyika, Ndau, Kalanga or Western Shona. For a detailed description of this ethnic and linguistic distribution see, Kuiper, Hughes and van Velsen, *The Shona and Ndebele*, 10-12.

³ Vambe, *An Ill-fated People*, 82.

⁴ Some of the pioneer settlers were graduates from Cambridge and Oxford. Rasmussen, *Historical Dictionary*, 72.

Indians.⁵ Currently, the country has thirteen million people; however, during the period under review, the population was estimated at around seven million. Rhodesia was a unique British settler colony where Christianity preceded colonialism.⁶

London Missionary Society

The European Christian missionaries, under the auspices of the London Missionary Society (LMS), were the first to “settle” in this small country.⁷ LMS opened its first mission station in Matebeleland at Inyati in 1859 under the leadership of Dr. Robert Moffat who became a close friend of Mzilikazi the king of the Ndebele. Hope Fountain Mission was established next in 1870. Chenjerai Zvobgo, interestingly, points out “from 1859 to 1880 the LMS missionaries laboured in Matebeleland but did not win a single convert.”⁸ It was a catastrophic drought for the Cross, which Daniel Beach argues convincingly that “the main reason was undoubtedly ... Shona traditional religion was solidly entrenched, and had not been shown to be particularly wanting.”⁹ For that reason, it is important to summarize the historical events that transpired between 1888 and 1898. After the latter date, the Shona people opened their hearts to the gospel resulting in the establishment of mission centres some of which are still existing. In the following sections, the arrival of Cecil John Rhodes, the quintessential settler, and his British South Africa Company and its invasion of Mashonaland are succinctly narrated. This is followed by chronicling the Matabeleland and Mashonaland uprisings and how these events influenced the

⁵ Coloureds are mulattos—a mixture of blacks and whites. During the colonial era, the period under review, whites were the first class, followed by Indians and Coloureds with the blacks, although they were the majority, occupied the lowest rank—third class citizens.

⁶ Michael Eze categorizes four types of colonial systems in Africa, which are, “(1) colonialism, type experienced in Ghana and Nigeria, and its characteristic feature of an export-oriented agricultural economy; (2) colonialism, type experienced around the Great Lake regions characterised by the brutal exploits of the Belgian companies in the Congo with no investment in human and capital project; (3) colonialism typical of “Africa of labour reserves” – experienced in Kenya, plantations economy of Tanganyika; (4) colonialism of permanent settlement – typical of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa.”⁶ Eze, *Politics of History*, 126.

⁷ Gundani, *The Mission School*, 69-84.

⁸ Zvobgo, *A History of Christian Missions*, 1.

⁹ Beach, *Initial Impact of Christianity*, 37.

spreading of Christianity, especially the establishment of mission centres that doubled as sources for spreading the gospel, educating, and civilizing the natives.

Cecil John Rhodes and the British South Africa Company

On 30 October 1888 Cecil John Rhodes's agents: C. D. Rudd, F. R. Thompson and J. R. Maguire signed a minerals prospecting concession with King Lobengula, with Charles Daniel Helm, an LMS agent interpreting. The king, unfortunately, was duped that the concession solely facilitated Rhodes and his group to prospect and mine minerals; yet Rasmussen points out, "there were two versions of the Concession: one written in English and fully accepted by the BSAC and the British government; the other an oral version communicated to the Ndebele by interpreter."¹⁰ The agreement included a section that recognized Lobengula as the chief of the Mashona, a misconception amongst the whites. Lobengula was promised a boat, guns, and money as part of the treaty. Unfortunately, the cunning pioneer settler, just like his counterpart in Buganda tricked the king.¹¹

Armed with the written version of the Rudd Concession that was signed in 1888, Cecil Rhodes in 1889 started the British South Africa Company, BSAC, through a royal charter. Whites started flocking into Rhodesia leading to the hoisting of the Union Jack by the pioneer settlers on 13 September 1890 at Kopje, Salisbury in Mashonaland. This heralded the beginning of the white settler community in Rhodesia. After establishing themselves in Mashonaland, the white settlers went to Matebeleland where they received a hostile reception because they were confiscating native land and cattle, leading to the Matebeleland uprising.

¹⁰ Rasmussen, *Historical Dictionary*, 280.

¹¹ Lugard commenting on these two treaties writes in his diary, as quoted by Boahen, "No man if he understood would sign it, and to say that a savage chief has been told that he cedes all rights to the company in exchange for nothing is an obvious untruth. If he had been told that the Company would protect him against his enemies, and share in his wars an ally, he has been told a lie, for the Company have no idea of doing any such thing and no force to do it with if they wished." Boahen, *African Perspectives*, 38.

When war broke out in 1893 with the Ndebele, “there would be no shortage of volunteers, [whites], eager to lay their hands on Ndebele cattle and land.”¹² King Lobengula, after noticing that he was losing, cried:

Matebele ... The white men will never cease following us while we have gold in our possession, for gold is what the white men price above all things. Collect now all my gold ... and carry it to the white men. Tell them they have beaten my regiments, killed my people, burnt my kraals, captured my cattle, and that I want peace.¹³

The white man, however, did not leave Matebeleland; he was there to stay. Lobengula and his “mighty” soldiers were defeated at the decisive battle of Shangani. In addition to losing the war, “Land was given out so lavishly not only to reward the volunteers but also to give important sections of English society a stake in the success of the new Colony.”¹⁴ Some historians have pointed out that the whites confiscated almost half of the Ndebele herd that stood at 280,000 during the 1893 Matebele War.¹⁵

There was a critical shortage of human labour on newly illegally acquired farms and even in the construction of national infrastructure with the natives unwilling to work. Money as a unit of exchange was not part of their commercial system since they bartered for commodities, goods, and services. The crafty settler, however, furtively introduced the tax regime inducing people to work. Just like in Mozambique, this was called *chibaro*.¹⁶ Eshmael Mlambo points out, “It took

¹² Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 91.

¹³ Todd, *Rhodesia*, 16.

¹⁴ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 103.

¹⁵ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 113.

¹⁶ The word literally means raping someone. The working conditions were not good for both forced and paid labour. Rev Carnegie, as quoted by Ranger, initially supported the white settler but after the rebellion he was not happy and he wrote in 1893, “A proud and hitherto unconquered Matebele cannot be turned in a month, or a year, into a useful servant by kicks, sjambok and blows. You cannot civilize him by quarrelling with him a few days before his pay is due, by stoning or unjustly beating him, by cursing him for not understanding an order given in English ... The whole question of native policy has been left since the war in an unsettled and, therefore, most unsatisfactory condition.” Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 120. Interestingly, in Mozambique, natives were complaining bitterly about conscript labour and they asked: “What kind of *shibalo* is this ... It catches everyone, even the women [mothers, grandparents, parents, brother, sisters] ... [The Portuguese] don’t even let us rest ... We are killing ourselves Why don’t you [Portuguese] go back to your country? Penvenne, *African Workers and Colonial Racism*, 50. In some parts of Africa, especially East Africa, “Missionaries fought and put an end to the conscripted

Africans three months of labouring in the mines and on the farms to be able to raise the money for the hut tax, which was 10s.”¹⁷ John Sherriff, the pioneer missionary from the Stone-Campbell Movement, also sheds light on this subject:

I paid a native sixteen shillings last week for working, the first money he had earned for six months. Out of that he gave me six shillings and six pence to send to Central Africa for his hut [sic] tax and *seven shillings and six pence* to send to England for a Bible.¹⁸

Furthermore, there were a series of droughts between 1894 and 1897, and the outbreak of rinderpest that wiped out their cattle; the Ndebele attributed these disasters to the coming of the white people.¹⁹ The settlers, moreover, were not treating the natives as human beings although some missionaries fought tenaciously for the native rights.²⁰ Finally, it led to the uprising in both Mashonaland and Matebeleland.

Just like their Ndebele counterparts, as Vambe informs us, “The Shona had been the victims of land-banditry, police thuggery, forced labour and the hut tax, to mention only a few of their grievances.”²¹ Faced with these seemingly insurmountable problems, the natives consulted the *Mwari* cult, whose shrines were located in the Matopos, near Bulawayo, in 1896. Ranger writes, “most of the senior *Mwari* priests came to the conclusion that the whites must be driven out. Only then could the rain fall, the cattle recover, the locusts pass on.”²² The medium spirits concluded that the catastrophes and calamities that the natives were enduring since the coming of the white people would end if the latter could be driven away; consequently, the country would

labour system, while in the Central African territories of Sothern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland they turned a blind eye to it, in some cases even justifying it on the grounds that it taught the Africans how to earn a living.” Mlambo, *Rhodesia*, 80.

¹⁷ Mlambo, *Rhodesia*, 12.

¹⁸ Sherriff, “South Africa,” 9. Along the same line Bourdillon points out that, “Men have regularly left their homes to seek employment since the turn of the century when the new white administration started to impose taxes on the black population precisely in order to induce men to hire their labour on farms and mines.” Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 88.

¹⁹ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 128.

²⁰ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 130-131.

²¹ Vambe, *An Ill-fated People*, 113.

²² Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 148.

return to its autochthonous state. With this reasoning, the rebellion started in 1896 ending in 1897, but as expected, the Ndebeles were defeated. While the whites were fighting in Matebeleland, the supposedly cowardly and peaceful Mashona rebelled as well.

Just like their counterparts in Matebeleland, the Mashona consulted with their mediums like Nehanda and Kaguvi who encouraged them to drive out the white community.²³ Surprise uprisings erupted simultaneously against the whites at Chishawasha, Headlands, Mazowe Valley, Murewa, around Salisbury, Rusape, and other places. Some of the native pioneer missionaries from South Africa who were accompanying the whites were killed during these uprisings since they were considered white collaborators. The Nhowe people, for example, murdered Bernard Mzeki, near Mangwende Village.²⁴ The rebellion, now called *Chimurenga I*, intensified with the Mashona resorting to guerrilla war tactics.²⁵ After ambushing the enemy, they hid in caves. The settlers, using the latest lethal weapons like dynamite, however, finally quashed the insurrection.²⁶ This brought the iron-willed and indomitable Chief Chingaira Makoni, of the Maungwe people, to his knees. Although he negotiated his surrendering, he was court-marshalled and executed within a few hours after coming out of the cave where he had been hiding. The white man had conquered the land between the two rivers—it was his colony.

The natives, consequently, reluctantly accepted the British settler rule and its people's religion—Christianity—after the British imperial forces working under the BSAC ruthlessly

²³ The two were executed in 1898 after the war for inciting the insurrection.

²⁴ Zvobgo, *A History of Christian Missions*, 45-46.

²⁵ Gundani, "The Mission School," 69-84.

²⁶ Ranger quotes "Wiri" Edwards's description of one incident in the Makoni area about how the whites used dynamites against natives who were hiding with their families in a cave. "A wagonload of dynamite arrived from Umtali. 'One case was fixed up with a long fuse and lowered down against the downstream entrance [to the cave]. I again warned the natives but as before was laughed at. The fuse lit and we ran for safety. The explosion blew in the poles and rocks at the entrance and a rebel who must have been on guard there came staggering out. He was a terrible sight. He was skinned from top to toe, but still grasping his rifle.' Despite this experience the men inside still refused to surrender, though they sent out of the caves about sixty women and children. 'Next day several cases of dynamite were laid along the fissure on top of the caves and fuses timed so that they all went off at once... The fuse was fired and we retired to a safe distance. The explosion rent the cave from end to end. It was the end so far as the rebels in the cave were concerned. Two natives only escaped.'" Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 276-277.

subdued them. The whites were no longer mineral prospectors, but as Ranger informs us, “from 1898 onwards Southern Rhodesia moved steadily towards settler supremacy.”²⁷ Prime, lush land was furthermore parcelled to whites while the natives were allocated barren, inhabitable land that was not suitable for their needs. This was the birth of the Tribal Trust Lands in Rhodesia that, ironically, became fertile grounds for the gospel of Christ. Historian after historian informs us that the defeat turned the tide in favour of Christianity. For example, Paul Gundani succinctly points out that, “The defeat had tremendous consequences for the Christian religion. Christianity emerged the greatest beneficiary since it emerged as the new spiritual power that both the victor and the vanquished would in future identify with.”²⁸ Lawrence Vambe argues that after the rebellion natives became receptive to the gospel because the spiritual sacrifices they had offered during the war had apparently failed them. Religious sacrifices were directed and supervised by spirit mediums—*mhondoro* possessed mediums—like Nehanda and Kaguvi who were captured and finally beheaded by the authorities.

Accordingly, the Shona inquisitive mind searched for something better and Christianity was the best option at that time.²⁹ Therefore, “The centuries long Shona resistance to Christianity broke down at last.”³⁰ Other historians, however, disagree with this conclusion. Rev. Samkange, as quoted by Zvobgo, contends that at that time the Shona were losing more by being Christians: “The people have everything to lose. Polygamy must go. Witchcraft must go. The orgies of beer drinking must go. These things have deep roots.”³¹ Even in Matebeleland, some of the chiefs and their subjects were converted after witnessing the invincibility of the white people’s military

²⁷ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 336.

²⁸ Gundani, “The Mission School,” 69-84.

²⁹ Vambe, *An Ill-fated People*, 133, 142-144.

³⁰ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 338. Ranger on the same page writes, “The missions now entered upon a period of great power and influence.” Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 338.

³¹ Zvobgo, “Shona and Ndebele Responses,” 41-54.

hardware. This reduced the natives into servants in their country of birth—the beginning of colonialism.

The natives, from the villages to the chief's palace, were shocked by the suddenness of the colonial system. This agrees with A. Abu Boahen's point that, "The most surprising aspects of the imposition of colonialism on Africa were its suddenness and its unpredictability. By 1880, there were no real signs or indications of this phenomenal and catastrophic event."³² The native was caught because, as argued by Frantz Fanon, "His [sic] metaphysics, or less pretentiously, his [sic] customs and the sources which they were based, were wiped out because they were in conflict with a civilisation that he [sic] did not know and that imposed itself on him [sic]."³³ In the case of Mashonaland and Matebeleland, it took only six years for the whites to subdue totally the natives. Western Christian missionaries took advantage of the openings although as Ranger points out "there was the ambiguity ... for themselves of operating within the context of white supremacy from which they could not and often did not wish to dissociate themselves."³⁴ Missions were given land by the BSAC to establish educational institutions like Old Umtali, which was handed over to the American Methodist Episcopal Church.³⁵ Although the rebellion was finally quashed, the settlers did not understand the major causes.

In the metropolitan, "A propaganda campaign was mounted in the United Kingdom to convince the public that natives wanted to destroy the nascent, imported 'civilization' in Rhodesia."³⁶ In turn, Britain introduced in 1898 a Constitution for Rhodesia that, according to the Crown, would safeguard both the natives and BSAC interest.³⁷ When Cecil Rhodes died in

³² Boahen, *African Perspectives*, 1.

³³ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 110.

³⁴ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 338.

³⁵ Africa University campus is located at Old Mutare.

³⁶ Mlambo, *Rhodesia*, 2.

³⁷ Mlambo, *Rhodesia*, 2. Mlambo furthermore informs us that, "The 1898 Constitution was a great improvement on the Charter of 1889. It was based on the following ideas: (a) preventing the recurrence of the 1896-7 revolt; (b) all

1902, the white settler community demanded self-governance from the Crown, which was not immediately granted. After the First World War, however, the British government gave the settlers three options: “incorporation into the Union, a provision which already existed under Clause 150 of the South Africa Act 1909; Responsible Government; and the continuation of Company rule.”³⁸ As expected, just like at the Berlin Conference, the natives were not informed or given a choice over their fate. The voters opted for a Responsible Government, leading to the drafting of a constitution, which was rejected by the natives that “governed the political activities of [the] country for thirty-seven years until it was replaced in 1961.”³⁹

With the majority of Africans rejecting the proposed constitution, whites clandestinely started working towards their own independence from Britain. If the natives had accepted the proposed constitution, it would have made them second-class citizens in their country of birth, disposed of their land forever, and forced to live in poor Tribal Trust Lands. The whites, however, finally declared Unilateral Declaration of Independence (U.D.I.) on 11 November 1965. Ian Douglas Smith, the Prime Minister said:

We have struck a blow for the preservation of justice, civilisation and Christianity, and in the spirit of this belief we have this day assumed our sovereign independence.... The decision which we have taken today is a refusal by Rhodesians to sell their birthright.⁴⁰

The settlers, interestingly, were now considering Rhodesia as their country of birth although their parents had deceitfully disinherited it from its autochthonous people. Britain, the mother country, and the international world did not recognize this independence, leading to the imposition of sanctions by the United Nations. Britain, South Africa, the United States of America, and other

matters concerned with African interests to revert to the British Government; (c) provision of constitutional framework as a foundation for a future white domination in Southern Africa.” Mlambo, *Rhodesia*, 3.

³⁸ Mlambo, *Rhodesia*, 5.

³⁹ Mlambo, *Rhodesia*, 7. See Dumbutshena, “Why the Nationalists rejected the 1961 Constitution,” 75-90.

Wakatama argues that if the 1961 Constitution is accepted, then the African is disadvantaged since “the European [white] is in a privileged position politically, economically and educationally.” Wakatama, “What must now be done?” 94-101.

⁴⁰ Todd, *Rhodesia*, 13.

nations, however, privately financed the Rhodesian government; hence, it was able to beat the sanctions.⁴¹ During all this period, the church and state had an irresolute relationship.

Church, State, and Education

During the colonial era, the relationship between church and state was ambivalent.

Missionaries were whites, the majority coming from Britain and North America. The colonial government comprised of white minority, governed unfairly without equal justice the black majority with whom the missionaries were working. Commenting on this situation, Mlambo wrote:

The church in Rhodesia was caught in a cleft stick. On the one hand, it recognized the need to deliver Africans from oppression, yet on the other it could not possible countenance an African government. Its basic attitude towards black people was different only in degree from that of the ordinary settlers. It denied equality to the African, practised racialism, lived within the settler community and worked hand-in-glove with the Native Affairs Department. Most of the labour and pass laws were enacted with its approval.⁴²

It will, however, be naive and unfair to treat all missionaries as working in collaboration with the white supremacist minority government. Some fiercely fought against the “apartheid” “pocket edition of South Africa.”⁴³ Three missionaries deserve mentioning. First, Arthur Shearly Cripps (1869-1952) was associated with the Anglican Church. He graduated from Oxford and later trained for ministry before coming to Africa in 1916 where he founded Maronda Mashanu Mission with the assistance of natives like Leonard Mamvura, his secretary. Cripps, when compared to his counterparts, “shunned Western materialism and lived much as an average African... using his pen to condemn every government policy inimical to African interests, from the hut tax in 1903, to the establishment of the Federation.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ Mlambo, *Rhodesia*, 228-230.

⁴² Mlambo, *Rhodesia*, 35.

⁴³ Vambe, *An Ill-fated People*, 35.

⁴⁴ Rasmussen, *Historical Dictionary*, 72.

From the Roman Catholic Church the towering figure of the Irish-born priest Donald Raymond Lamont (1911-2004) became the quintessential audacious voice against the Ian Smith regime. He served as Bishop of Umtali from 1957 where he was arrested in 1976 and sentenced to ten years in prison for “failure to report the presence of nationalist guerrillas in his diocese.”⁴⁵ Bishop Lamont was stripped of his Rhodesian citizenship before being deported in 1977.

The final cleric representing an opposing voice to the Rhodesian government is John White (1866-1933) of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. He founded Waddilove Institute and laid the foundation work at Epworth Mission. Rasmussen informs us “he was one of the first Europeans to point out the abuses which led to the Shona Revolt of 1896-7.”⁴⁶ Other missionaries and whites criticized him for his “negrophilia” when he was fighting for the rights of Africans to their land.⁴⁷ A sample of these missionaries represents the minority who fought racism, but above all, they established enduring educational institutions that are still serving the needy in Zimbabwe.

It needs to be pointed out that most of the western Christian missionaries in Rhodesia were responsible for educating the majority of Africans, with two prime ministers having a strong missionary background. H. U. Moffat started as a cabinet minister from 1923 to 1927 and in 1927 he was elected the prime minister of Rhodesia, a post he held for six years.⁴⁸ He was the grandson of Dr. Robert Moffat the pioneer LMS missionary to Africa. The second, Garfield Todd was born in New Zealand where he graduated from Otago University and Glen Leith College. He was a minister of the Church of Christ, New Zealand, from 1932 to 1934 and came to Southern Rhodesia as superintendent of Dadaya Mission from 1934 to 1953. He joined

⁴⁵ Rasmussen, *Historical Dictionary*, 145.

⁴⁶ Rasmussen, *Historical Dictionary*, 347.

⁴⁷ Rasmussen, *Historical Dictionary*, 347.

⁴⁸ Mlambo, *Rhodesia*, 73-79.

politics in 1945 and became the Member of Parliament for Shabani from 1946 to 1958. He was elected Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia in 1953 before being booted out in 1958 because of his pro-African policies. During those years, “African education was regarded as a missionary responsibility because of the belief that education was a constituent of Christianity.”⁴⁹ It was missionaries like these who educated natives that turned nationalists like Robert Mugabe, Abel Muzorewa, Ndabaningi Sithole, and Joshua Nkomo, to mention a few. These, painfully and patiently, negotiated with the white regime for the country’s independence.

When the white supremacist government persistently refused to recognise and negotiate in good faith with the native leadership, who were an integral part of the country, the latter resorted to guerrilla warfare.⁵⁰ The nationalists “endorsed Mao Tse-tung’s dictum that what has not been won on the battle-field cannot be secured in the conference hall.”⁵¹ It should be pointed out clearly that the European (white), Coloured, and Asian community in Rhodesia was prepared to die for the country because any majority government would encroach on the privileges, as a minority, which they were enjoying.⁵² To fight against this injustice, the blacks started the guerrilla war that was partially financed by the communist bloc, especially China, USSR, and African states that had gained their independence. Preparations for the guerrilla war started in 1963 when the first freedom fighters received their training in USSR, China, and North Korea as well as in African countries like Ghana and Tanzania. This war reached its peak between 1976

⁴⁹ Mlambo, *Rhodesia*, 73. In addition to Garfield Todd, H.L. Hadfield was a minister with the Church of Christ. He was one of the founding fathers of Dadaya Mission, which is a Church of Christ (Disciples) mission. See Savage, *Achievement*, 87-98

⁵⁰ In this research, the term guerrilla(s) refer to freedom fighters that were pejoratively termed terrorists by the Rhodesian government and most whites, including missionaries.

⁵¹ Gann and Henriksen, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, 53.

⁵² Mlambo claims that, “no majority government could tolerate a situation in which a sector of the population as small as that which the whites form in Rhodesia had a standard of living higher than that of the U.S.A., the richest country in the world, while 96 per cent of the people lived in perpetual poverty. It is their awareness of this obvious contradiction that causes the whites to fear majority rule.” Mlambo, *Rhodesia*, 281. See Bourne, *Catastrophe*, 48.

and 1979, part of the period covered by this thesis; therefore, the political situation prevailing in Rhodesia during that time deserves summarizing.

Mozambique won its independence in 1975 through the barrel of the gun after the Lisbon coup d'état in 1974 and "the main effect of the coup was to hasten the process whereby the metropolitan Portuguese accepted a Government which was determined to quit Angola and Mozambique."⁵³ The new regime in Mozambique, an avowed Marxist-Leninist government led by Samora Machel, supported the African cause in Rhodesia. It "opened" its borders to young Africans willing to train as freedom fighters in order to liberate Zimbabwe from the racial and tyrannical rule of the whites. The new Government of Mozambique closed its borders with Rhodesia including railways, denying Rhodesia, a landlocked country, access to the sea. In return, the Smith regime "carried out a series of military strikes, audacious and well executed, at guerrilla camps in Zambia and Mozambique."⁵⁴ The nationalists argued that these strikes killed refugees sparking an international outcry.

Therefore, in October 1976, the British government organised a conference at Geneva for all the warring parties in Rhodesia. The conference ended in January 1977 without any solution leading to the escalation of the guerrilla war. The nationalists concluded that Smith and his supporters were not serious about peaceful negotiations. Moreover, Josiah Tongogara, the Commander of Zimbabwe People's Army, (ZIPA), was released from detention in Zambia boasting the management of the guerrilla forces.⁵⁵ During that year, 1977, Fidel Castro and the Soviet President Podgorny separately visited southern Africa promising moral and physical support for the liberation cause. The western bloc, after noticing these political manoeuvres from

⁵³ Verrier, *The Road to Zimbabwe*, 171.

⁵⁴ Gann and Henriksen, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, 56.

⁵⁵ He had been arrested in connection with the assassination of Herbert Chitepo. See White, *The Assassination of Herbert Chitepo*, 73-76.

the communist bloc, increased its material support to Rhodesia. Carol Thompson states that even when President Carter took office in 1977, “The American goals remained the same: to preserve US strategic interests in the Southern African region, a stable ‘non-communist’ state was needed in Rhodesia.”⁵⁶

Smith, after the aborted Geneva Conference, courted moderate African nationalists and came out with an “Internal Settlement Agreement” in 1978. Bishop Abel Muzorewa of United African National Council (UANC), Rev Ndabaningi Sithole of Zimbabwe African National Council (ZANU) and Chief Jeremiah Chirau of Zimbabwe United People’s Organization (ZUPO) signed the agreement on 3 March 1978.⁵⁷ Smith thought the Internal Settlement Agreement would end the ravaging guerrilla war, something he was promised by Muzorewa and Sithole. Nearly all the rural areas at that time became war zones with the government increasing the number of the so-called “protected villages” which had been introduced in 1973.⁵⁸ Rasmussen points out that protected villages were “designed to sever communications between guerrillas and uncommitted Africans.”⁵⁹ Neither the notorious and inhumane protected villages nor the Internal Settlement Agreement, however, deterred guerrilla war; they fuelled the armed struggle on the part of the freedom fighters.

The Rhodesian army recruited soldiers from abroad to augment its regular forces.

Volunteers, or as they were appropriately called mercenaries, came from Britain and the United

⁵⁶ Thompson, *Challenge to Imperialism*, 149.

⁵⁷ Nicodemus John Booker Mutuma, a Church of Christ preacher, was the Secretary General of ZUPO.

⁵⁸ McLaughlin. *On the Frontline*, 23.

⁵⁹ Rasmussen, *Historical Dictionary*, 225. The author adds “The villages averaged about 2,500 residents, living within chain-link fence enclosures...illuminated by electric lights at night. Soldiers stationed at the villages had orders to shoot dusk-to-dawn curfew violators without challenging them. The government provided no food or supplies for the residents, who typically had to walk long distances to work their farms. Malnutrition became a serious problem in the villages, as farms fell prey to neglect, untended livestock, and vermin.” Rasmussen, *Historical Dictionary*, 225. In Honde Valley, not all the protected villages had electricity. From 1979 to the end of the war, they were manned by Muzorewa’s *Pfumo reVanhu* (Spear of the People)–auxiliary forces collaborating with the Rhodesian government. Gann and Henriksen, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, 65. The author, for two years 1977-1978, lived at Gatsi Protected Village, Samanga, in Honde Valley.

States.⁶⁰ At the peak of the war, they numbered close to 1,400.⁶¹ In addition to these mercenaries, all Europeans, Coloureds, and Indians aged between 18 and 50, went for call-up. In 1977, call-up duration was increased from three consecutive months in one calendar year to six months. This was in response to the intensity of the war.

The guerrillas attacked whites, especially farmers, rural business-people and “missionaries [who] were ‘soft’ target.”⁶² Most rural mission schools were closed with large churches like the Roman Catholic losing “25 priests, brothers and sisters” through murder, although McLaughlin claims the “Selous Scouts or other Government troops were suspected of being responsible for the murders at Lupane and St. Paul’s Musami [Missions].”⁶³ The war became costly to the Rhodesian treasury and the Internal Settlement Agreement was not working. The Frontline Presidents, who provided logistics to the guerrillas, and the British Prime Minister met in Lusaka, Zambia, and concluded that the warring parties should be brought together for a conference.⁶⁴

Therefore, in 1979, Margaret Thatcher and the Frontline Presidents, agreed during the Commonwealth Head of Governments meeting held in Zambia that the only solution to the Zimbabwe issue was through a conference involving all the warring parties, including signatories of the Internal Settlement Agreement document. The conference that was held at the Lancaster House, London, Britain, was a success since it ended the war leading to free and fair elections in

⁶⁰ According to Gann and Henriksen, the mercenaries from the USA “considered that the United States had let them down over Vietnam; service in the Rhodesian forces was to them as much a social protest as an adventure. Some idealistic young Westerners were searching for their generation’s Spanish Civil War.” Gann and Henriksen, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, 70.

⁶¹ Gan and Henriksen, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, 70.

⁶² Gann and Henriksen, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, 93.

⁶³ McLaughlin, *On the Frontline*, 227. The frontline states were Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia. All the states, except Botswana, offered military support to the guerrillas. These states provided military training, assisted in uniting the nationalists and provided diplomatic bases. Thompson, *Challenge to Imperialism*, 2-3.

⁶⁴ According to Thompson, “General Peter Walls, had publicly stated that the war could not be won militarily. Rhodesian records later found by independent Zimbabwean government analyzed that the economy could not last more than six months.” Thompson, *Challenge to Imperialism*, 66.

February 1980. The results were overwhelmingly in favour of the two political parties that had waged the guerrilla war resulting in Zimbabwe's independence.

This chapter summarized the history of Rhodesia, from 1890 when the white man hosted the Union Jack at Fort Salisbury to 1980 when Prince Charles, representing the colonial ruler, handed the country back to its autochthonous people—the black Zimbabweans. This was a result of the ten-year bloody guerrilla war waged by the blacks against the white minority government. It was, however, during the colonial rule that different denominations established mission centres in Rhodesia where natives received primary and secondary education. At some of these centres, biomedical services were also provided. These services were used as an avenue of leading people to Jesus Christ. It was during this period that the Stone-Campbell Movement established Nhowe Mission, amongst other centres, which is the subject chapter two.

CHAPTER TWO

NHOWE MISSION

The Stone-Campbell Movement in Zimbabwe is fragmented in a country where Christian religious identity is akin to blood relationship. Members of the Churches of Christ are identified by their affiliation to either one of the two major Stone-Campbell mission centres: Mashoko and Nhowe. The former is a Christian Church/Church of Christ mission, instrumental group; while the latter is a Church of Christ, A Cappella, associated institution. These two mission centres are the “headquarters” of the two Stone-Campbell branches in this country; hence, their history is pivotal in understanding the western missionaries’ evangelistic endeavours in Zimbabwe. This chapter, therefore, chronicles the humble beginnings of NM by acknowledging the pioneer North American missionary families, their evangelistic strategies, and the often overlooked contributions of the indigenous Christians. These North Americans worked in a British Colony where they were accorded a special status as fellow westerners. They were collaborators in expanding western civilization and when the empire was ending, they panicked just like their fellow Britons. The end was abrupt and unexpected resulting in some of these North American missionaries making unexpected decisions during the end of the empire. This chapter details the leadership structures at NM prior and during the leadership transitional period between 1976 and 1977 and its aftermath. It closes with a brief explanation of the leadership composition that emerged as a direct consequence of Zimbabwe’s independence in 1980. Throughout the chapter, these noble evangelistic goals are compared and contrasted mainly with those of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ) as detailed by Ngwabi Bhebe.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church, like the Churches of Christ, was not founded in Britain, the colonial master in Rhodesia. It was headquartered in Sweden and its white missionaries operating in Rhodesia were treated like the North Americans by the white colonial settler regime. ELCZ concentrated its efforts in the Mberengwa area while the Churches of Christ focused its activities in and around Murewa. These areas became hotbeds during the war of liberation; hence, it is constructive to compare western missionaries' endeavours, especially the leadership transition, at mission centres operated by these two denominations.

Nhowe Mission (NM) is located 120 kilometres east of Harare, Zimbabwe's capital city or 40 kilometres north of Mackeke town. It comprises a primary and secondary school, clinic, and farm. From a legal point of view, the Church of Christ is the responsible authority. The Church of Christ's evangelistic strategies in Zimbabwe, just like those of the ELCZ that are detailed by Bhebe, were achieved "through preaching, teaching and healing."¹ The preaching strategy involves the work of pastors and Christians who directly aim at converting indigenous people to Christianity with Bhebe arguing that western education, and the provision of biomedical services, indirectly attracts people to Christ.² On the contrary, other historians like Paul Gundani, conclude, "there is a preponderance of evidence that shows that schools run by the mission churches were not 'mere bait' for conversion."³ For this thesis, however, it does not matter what conclusion historians reach; it is unequivocal that Christian missionaries provided quality education during the colonial era. NM exemplifies this point and that is why in Southern Africa, according to Simon Gqubule, "Education and missionaries have always travelled

¹ Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 128.

² This is the thesis of Bhebe's book, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare* that I have used extensively in this chapter to contrast the work at NM and the mission centres mentioned by Bhebe.

³ Gundani, "The Mission School," 69-84.

together.”⁴ But what missiological strategies were utilised in Zimbabwe by Church of Christ missionaries in achieving this goal?

Christian missionary work is succinctly defined by L. Dale Richesin as “the church’s active witness of Christian love in the world by outreach, service and prophetic voice against injustice.”⁵ This apt definition anchors mission work in the church, in its ecclesiology; but how does the church accomplish its missiological goals? Is this accomplished by a local congregation under the oversight of elders, as is the case with the A Cappella Branch or through a quasi-church organisation like a missionary society? The Stone-Campbell Movement divided in 1849 over the missionary society. In this movement, as Paul Allen Williams notes, there are “those who accept the formation of mission societies as an expedient...a ‘parachurch agency’, and those who reject the formation of mission societies as an unbiblical innovation.”⁶ In a church without “bishops” who has the final word or where does authority reside?

For years, editors of periodicals and journals mapped theological trajectories in the Churches of Christ but that trend has changed.⁷ During the middle of the last century, editorial influence has been gradually waning; it has been replaced by the teachings of influential teachers and professors based at institutions of higher learning affiliated to the Churches of Christ. Although these nascent authorities are averse to missionary societies, they differ on mission methodologies. One school of thought argues, convincingly, that the local congregation is a redemptive fellowship and not a social fraternity; consequently, when its elders commission a missionary to a foreign country, his or her primary occupation will be to help unbelievers accept

⁴ Gqubule, “Theological education in the Church,” 211-221.

⁵ Richesin, “The Church Exists by Mission,” 180-205.

⁶ Williams, “Missions, Missiology,” 537-542.

⁷ Each congregation is autonomous under the leadership of qualified men who are called either elders, bishops, presbyters, shepherds, or overseers. See Ferguson, *The Church of Christ*, 298-345.

the lordship of Christ.⁸ When, therefore, the missionary enters the mission field, poverty, poor housing, or deplorable living conditions should not distract his or her attention. Gailyn Van Rheenen and Bob Waldron exemplify this point by encouraging mission leaders and missionaries to prioritise the saving of souls while eschewing being sidetracked by worldly issues like education and health delivery systems that will lead missionaries to set up academic institutions.⁹ Institutions at NM like the primary and secondary schools, hospital, farm, and Mutare School of Preaching, will not be accommodated by this methodology. This methodology takes one prong, preaching, from Bhebe's three-prong missionary strategies: education, healing, and preaching.¹⁰ Bhebe is convinced that the provision of these services to the indigenous people would address the whole person; in turn, it gives the gospel the dignity it deserves. Although some quarters in the Churches of Christ principally avoid the provision of agricultural, educational, and health delivery services, in the mission field, the Churches of Christ have successfully implemented exceptional humanitarian and development work in Africa that is coordinated by the White's Ferry Road Church of Christ.¹¹

As the responsible authority of NM, the Church of Christ identifies with the former category, which was Alexander Campbell's early doctrinal position. Campbell "was reluctant to

⁸ Van Rheenen and Waldron, *The Status of Missions*, 3.

⁹ Van Rheenen and Waldron argue that when missionaries from the First World enter the Majority World, "They almost always are shocked as they see hundreds of people crowded into run-down apartment buildings and shanty towns in urban centers or living in clapboard or mud-walled, thatched-roofed houses cooking food over open fires. Amazingly, their attention frequently focuses on the great disparity between the rich and the poor rather than on the lostness of people without Christ or the power of the gospel to overcome the bondage of sin. Thus a response to poverty, rather than an understanding of lostness, increasingly shapes both motivation for and understanding of world missions. The American response, in bred by and resulting from our pragmatic heritage, is to naively cast small doses of money at new converts to help and encourage them.... Costly service ministries are created which can only be maintained by Western economic help. Western style training institutions are developed." Van Rheenen and Waldron, *The Status of Missions*, 3.

¹⁰ Bhebe, *The ZANU and ZAPU Guerrilla Warfare*, 128.

¹¹ See Yelton and McVey, "Humanitarian and Development," 323-340.

support any organization that would usurp the role and authority of local church.”¹² In his later life, however, he accepted missionary societies as expedient, an unacceptable doctrinal position in the Churches of Christ where elders of a local congregation oversee all missions, foreign or local. This was the position of most missionaries set apart to NM. They were supported either by a single congregation or by a group of congregations. In certain cases, individuals, usually the missionary’s family members collaborated with a congregation(s) in financially supporting a missionary. In all cases, it should be emphasised, a specific congregation was responsible for overseeing the missionary’s work, even if the missionary was a technocrat.¹³

At times, missionaries came as specialists like primary or secondary school teachers, medical staff, and industrial arts managers.¹⁴ These would preach during weekends and holidays, when not tied to their professions, establishing congregations in that way. Some of these technocrats taught in the Nhowe Bible College, which was dedicated to the training of indigenous preachers and their wives. These were some of the strategies used by pioneer North American missionaries from the Churches of Christ who went to Africa. These men and women laid the foundation for academic institutions like NM.

Brief History

William Leslie Brown is the celebrated founder of NM whose foundation was laid at the end of 1939. The Leslie Brown family came to Southern Rhodesia in 1939 from Northern Rhodesia hoping to revive the Wuyu Wuyu Mission (WWM) that had collapsed in 1933 during the great

¹² Priest, “Missionary Societies,” 534-536.

¹³ In the Churches of Christ, this method of raising missionary funds, in the absence of a missionary society, is called the direct support. David Filbeck, writes, “[Through] this model, a missionary seeks funds from congregations and individuals (as opposed to a denominational missionary agency) and then serves in faith that funds will be sent, normally on a monthly basis, during his or her missionary tenure.” Filbeck, “Direct Support Missions.” 271.

¹⁴ The Government of Rhodesia required that incoming missionaries be qualified in a specific discipline, for example, as teachers. In that way it was easier to get a working visa. Some missionaries like Jerry Hayes taught science in the secondary school with the government paying part of his salary. Jerry and Kay Hayes, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

world depression. To contextualise the genesis of NM, a brief chronicle of the pioneering missionary families—*The Dew Breakers*—to Northern and Southern Rhodesia is summarised in the next few pages since most of them ended up working directly or indirectly for this iconic mission.¹⁵

William Newton Short (1894-1980) and his wife Delia (1896-1982) was the first missionary family from the North American Churches of Christ—A Cappella Branch—commissioned to Rhodesia. Short and his family arrived in November 1921. He was employed at Kabanga Mission, Kalomo, Zambia. During the great depression, he was at WWM until a combination of administrative and financial constraints forced the closure of the mission. Before coming to WWM, the family went on a furlong to the USA in 1929, creating a chronic shortage of missionaries in the Rhodesias. This prompted Dow Merritt to request reinforcement from the USA. His request was answered by the arrival of William Leslie Brown and family in the middle of March 1929.¹⁶ During the same year, Merritt welcomed the Alva Reese family who settled at Sinde Mission, taking Short's place, while the Browns settled at Kabanga Mission occupying the Lawyers's house.¹⁷ The Browns left Kabanga Mission in July 1932 after purchasing a 1,300 acre farm, naming it Shamrock. Shamrock was less than five kilometres from Kalomo town and Brown wanted to start a new mission where he would apply new evangelistic methodologies that were different from what Merritt was doing. He operated the mission for four years before leaving for the USA on furlough. Opposite Shamrock was Eureka Farm, a 3,200 acre piece of land, which was purchased by George Scott another missionary who was based at Sinde Mission.

¹⁵ Dow Merritt was one of the veteran Church of Christ missionaries to Southern Africa who wrote *The Dew Breakers*.

¹⁶ Brown, a native of Morrilton, Arkansas, was accompanied by his wife and four children: Robert 13, Adrath 9, William Jr. 4, and Betti Lee 1.

¹⁷ It was the same year that J. M. McCaleb, a former missionary to Japan, visited Northern Rhodesia and wrote "*On the Trail of the Missionaries*."

After purchasing and shifting to Eureka in March 1932, Scott left Sinde Mission under the competent hands of Reese. These new missions, Eureka and Shamrock, later on became the famous Namwianga Mission.¹⁸ While the work in Northern Rhodesia was expanding, WWM in Southern Rhodesia was disintegrating.

When the Shorts returned to Rhodesia in 1932, after their furlong, they settled at WWM teaming with John Sherriff and Dewitt Garret. In addition to white missionaries, there were a number of native teachers and evangelists like Jack Muzirwa and Sampson Mhlanga. In 1933, Sherriff was forced to leave WWM after contracting a severe skin disease. He had overexposed himself to the harsh sunny conditions of Southern Africa during the construction of buildings at WWM.¹⁹ His deteriorating health forced him to settle for a few months at Cape Town, before coming back to Bulawayo. At WWM, Short took over from Sherriff as the superintendent. His administration, principles, objectives, and goals ran parallel to the natives' expectations creating acrimony, probably one of the major reasons that led to the closure of WWM in 1933. WWM was the crown of John Sherriff's missionary efforts in southern Africa, a source of pride for the indigenous Christian. Its collapse was followed, in 1935, by the death of its founder, the stonemason-cum-missionary, founder of FVM, Dadaya, and other mission centres.²⁰ It was the end of an era for the Churches of Christ, for he was one of the few self-supporting missionaries who earnestly had a burning passion for Christ. Sherriff opened doors, and laid the foundation

¹⁸ Merritt, *The Dew Breakers*, 46.

¹⁹ Amongst the buildings is a church that is still standing, majestically displaying the profundity of Sherriff's hand as a stonemason, which should be treasured by the Churches of Christ for its historical significance.

²⁰ Molly Sherriff, his daughter, wrote, "Daddy was ill only a short while, though his strength had been failing for some months. For a week he did not work. He rose at 10 A.M. and retired at 4 P.M. Two and half days before he died he kept to his bed. On Lord's day morning, June, 30, [1935] he was quite conscious, though very tired and sleepy. At 11 A.M. he remembered the Lord, and his expressed wish was that everything should be done decently and in order. Shortly after breaking bread he murmured: 'Lord hold me.' Just half hour before passing away he opened his eyes and smiled, saying: 'Eager eyes are watching, waiting for the lights along the shore.' He then went peacefully to sleep, and a few minutes later passed from death unto life eternal. We laid him to rest on a rocky hill, just a little distance from the house. It was his favourite spot." Sherriff, "Death of Brother Sherriff," 214.

for the establishment of Church of Christ missions in the Rhodesias, if not the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. When he died, unfortunately WWM mission, his flagship, was in ruins. Brown tried, but failed, to revive it in 1939.

When he arrived at WWM, Brown noticed that most of the infrastructure had been desecrated, with the exception of the church building. He immediately collaborated with the indigenous Church of Christ leaders that included Zuma Banza, Godi Karimanzira, Muwirimi Makunde, Samson Mhlanga, Penny Mupondi, Jack Muzirwa, and Simon Nheweyembwa, to mention a few, mapping the way for a new mission centre. The group approached Mr. “Wiri” Edwards, the District Native Commissioner for Murewa with a proposal that the government lease land for the establishment of a mission affiliated to the Churches of Christ. The Native District Commissioner was willing to give the church land on the condition that it had a new white missionary to lead the work.²¹ When this was agreed upon, Edwards, in 1939, leased 1,900 acres of land to the Church of Christ on condition that it would be used solely as a mission centre to educate, train, and equip indigenous Africans.²² The new mission, twenty kilometres south of WWM, fell under the traditional jurisdiction of the Mangwende Chieftainship of the *waNhowe* people.²³ The mission, accordingly, was named Nhowe in recognition of the owners of the land. The Mangwende dynasty originally controlled most of the land that stretches from Macheke to WWM, before the colonisers drove all natives out of the fertile Maryland to the arid Wuyu Wuyu Tribal Trust Land.²⁴ With this background, this thesis will summarise some of the

²¹ Mhlanga, interview by Paul Chimhungwe. See also Muganhi, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

²² Introducing Nhowe Mission Program, 1962. The 99-year-old lease was formally approved by the Government of Rhodesia to start from 1954.

²³ Gelfand. *African Crucible*, 73.

²⁴ Jack Muzirwa started his preaching work at Maryland, about ten kilometres from Macheke town before the natives were relocated to WuyuWuyu. The first Church of Christ congregation in Mashonaland started at Maryland before relocating to WuyuWuyu at the end of the First World War, around 1919. Banza, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

programs at NM from its inception in 1939 up to 1980 when Zimbabwe obtained its independence.

As the Second World War was just starting, W. L. Brown was supervising the moulding and burning of bricks to lay the foundation of Nhowe Primary School. According to Taruwinga Z. Banza, one of the pioneer students, “The initial buildings were a result of concerted community effort. Villagers volunteered manual, non-technical labour with the missionaries providing *sadza* [stiff corn porridge] and vegetables.”²⁵ Samson Mhlanga was one of the builders with Cyprian Mutswairo and Shereni Chitendeni assisting. Philemon Gezi, who taught at NM between 1944 and 1946, points out “it was Brown and Mhlanga who built the first buildings at Nhowe Mission. A lot of credit should go to that man [Samson Mhlanga] for building Nhowe Mission.”²⁶ The mission was officially opened in January 1940 and the occasion was graced by Chief Mangwende, Sub-chief Mukarakate, with villagers and church members coming from as far as WWM. It was an indelible event marking the genesis of an enduring institution owned by the Churches of Christ. Three of the notable pioneer indigenous teachers were a Mr. Kuture, Nathaniel Hakata, and Beulah Chindungwe. Hakata and Chindungwe married the following year with their wedding becoming the first at NM.²⁷ The couple worked as boarding master and matron, respectively, in addition to their teaching duties.²⁸

²⁵ Banza, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

²⁶ Gezi, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

²⁷ Banza, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

²⁸ Some of the students were boarders. The school experienced its first strike in 1941, over what Banza termed “Brown’s ruthless treatment of students and also the quality of food. Brown was hardworking but very cruel to the Africans. He used to beat us like young boys.” The second strike was in 1942, again over the same issues. In both cases, according to Banza, Jack Muzirwa intervened bringing peace between the two warring factions with some students being expelled amongst them, the informant, Taruwinga Z. Banza. Banza, however, highly appreciates the academic contributions done by Brown and the early missionaries under extremely difficult cultural, economic, spiritual, and political conditions. Banza, interview by Paul Chimhungwe. Eldred Echols, who was a young missionary from the USA, concurs with Banza’s assessment of life at NM during those years. Echols wrote “my tenure at Nhowe Mission was brief and stormy. I could not reconcile what I considered to be harsh and peremptory

With the years progressing, student enrolment and teaching staff increased from the initial seventy-five boys and twenty-five girls. Aaron Chihwai was the first captain of NM. In 1941, Isaac Chiwara became the first native qualified teacher after graduating from Old Mutare Methodist Mission. Other qualified teachers who came during the early forties were Philemon Gezi, Mr. Negani, and Aaron Ndlovu. The latter was an excellent teacher, according to Banza, since he had matriculated, but was forced to resign after proposing to a Standard Five girl.²⁹ Infrastructure was greatly improved during the next three years under the financial and spiritual oversight of the Central Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee, Brown's supporting congregation. Brown wrote his first major extant report at the end of 1943 emphasizing the centrality of schoolwork:

In addition to preaching the Gospel and healing the sick, the Mission has also fully recognized the value of education as an auxiliary to evangelism and general uplift of the people. Since the beginning of our work, we have held the conviction that there should be no separation between religious teaching and education, and that all education must have the distinctly religious background, and should furthermore be adapted to actual life. These principles we unhesitatingly emphasize to all who are interested in the future progress of our work.³⁰

In pursuance of these principles, students were taught the three Rs: Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic as core academic subjects. As a Christian mission school, Bible, and vocational courses like agriculture, carpentry, and building formed part of the curriculum. Female students were taught different crafts and hygiene, as was expected during those days, equipping them to

treatment of native blacks with the Christian message of love. The missionary-in-charge sometimes assaulted students and teachers physically for some real or supposed breach of rules." Eldred, *Wings of the Morning*, 49.

²⁹ Banza, interview by Paul Chimhungwe. Banza also pointed out that during those days your average Standard Five girl-student was of marriageable age(i.e. between eighteen and twenty years) this was not child abuse.

³⁰ Brown, *Report on the Nhowe Mission Work*, 2.

become better wives and mothers, while assisting their husbands.³¹ The mission continued to grow resulting in the need for more qualified teachers.

As the superintendent, Brown recruited missionaries from the United States of America to execute secular and spiritual duties. George F. Hook, a qualified teacher, was one of the few missionaries from North America who came to teach at NM in 1946. His arrival ushered in the beginning of Standard Six, which terminated primary school education in Rhodesia those days.³² From its inception in 1940, Nhowe Primary School was the only notable academic institution affiliated with the Churches of Christ. One of the most illustrious teachers at Nhowe Primary School was Nicodemus John Booker Mutuma who previously worshipped with the Salvation Army, before becoming a member of the Church of Christ. He taught at Nhowe from 1946 to 1965.³³ The mission was also the responsible authority for four lower primary schools—ending with Standard Three—namely Magunje, Morris, Rukunguhwe, and WWM.

At the end of the decade under discussion, the mission was rocked by the doctrine of Pre-millennialism with Vernon Lawyer as its chief proponent. Brown had left Lawyer as the acting superintendent in 1949 when he went to fundraise in the USA. In turn, Lawyer invited Arthur Phillips in 1949 to deliver lectures on Pre-millennialism, a subject that was unacceptable to the

³¹ These men and women who were educated at mission schools became the nucleus of Christian influence in many working places. In Zambia, for example, Jane L. Parpart wrote about the situation in compounds in the 1930s that “the wives of the better educated and more skilled Africans on the Copperbelt were often products of mission schools. Their husbands were primarily teachers, clerks, and skilled workers, had often attended mission schools ... These women and men put a high stock on Christian behavior, and set a standard for “proper” marriage among the small elite in the compounds.” Parpart, “Where is your Mother,” 241-271.

³² Most Standard Six graduates became teachers in rural, village or kraal schools, with some going into teacher training colleges. Most of the teachers’ training colleges were operated by Christian Missionaries like the British Methodists who had Waddilove while the American Methodist had Nyadiri and Old Mutare. Zvobgo, *History of Missions*, 79.

³³ After leaving Nhowe Mission, Mutuma, who was described by the Palmers, in one of their reports, as “one of our most outstanding co-workers ... and is probably known by as many people in Rhodesia as any African. He serves on the Bible Society Advisory Council, Bible Society Auxiliary, Harare Hospital Advisory Board, and the Rhodesian Broadcasting Council.... [his] vice is the one dubbed on Herald of Truth films in the Shona language for that of Batsell Baxter. We have been good friends and close associated since 1957.” Palmer, *Rhodesian Report*, May-April 1970.

majority at NM.³⁴ It ended with the resignation of W. L. Brown while travelling from the USA to Rhodesia.³⁵ His supporting congregation, Central Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee, in December 1949 requested him to resign, paving the way for Boyd Reese, who was in Northern Rhodesia, to become the superintendent of NM in 1950. Alex Ray Ndlukula, who had just finished his teacher's training at Namwianga Mission, accompanied him. Reese remained in that position for the next seven years before being succeeded by Roy Vigil Palmer who came to NM in 1957.

In the mid-fifties the University Avenue Church of Christ, Austin, Texas assumed the oversight of NM from the Central Church of Christ. Immediately after taking over, it went on a countrywide financial campaign entitled "Africa: Awakening Giant,"

The mighty giant that is Africa is truly awakening, the Light is shining in the darkness. This tremendous continent with its two hundred million people of various races, religions and civilizations, is one of the last great frontiers of the world. The opportunities facing the church are arising to this great challenge. From Tripoli on the north, Nigeria in the east [sic], Tanganyika on the west [sic], to Capetown[sic] on the southern tip, efforts are being made to plant the truth.³⁶

Will the Churches of Christ respond? This was the challenge that was forwarded by this congregation in its appeal for funds from the USA to construct a preachers' training school for natives, a new church building, houses for American evangelists, water and sanitation system, a clinic, and financial support for American, and native evangelists. There was a positive response,

³⁴ Since the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe has two branches, the Premillennialist and Postmillennialist we need to point out that in 1949, this doctrine was fully supported by the Browns and S. Dewitt Garrett who was based in Salisbury. Garrett had taught this doctrine during a gospel meeting at WWM with George Hook opposing him. During those years, some of the outstanding missionaries, based in the Rhodesias, who did not support this doctrine, were W.N. Short, J.D. Merritt, and J.C. Shewmaker. In 1950, however, J. C. Shewmaker's \$5 monthly support from Springfield Church of Christ was terminated after he was requested in writing to explain his position over this doctrine, in which he (Shewmaker) requested to meet the congregation and discuss in detail. Henry P. Ewing wrote, "For the benefit of all Christians who are anxious that the pure gospel of Christ shall be taught throughout the world, I wish to say that I do not believe the doctrine of premillennialism. I am not in sympathy with those who teach it." Ewing, "Premillennialism," 828.

³⁵ Eldred Echols who worked at NM under Brown wrote that the missionary-in-charge was forced to resign because of the poor treatment he gave to the natives. Echols, *Wings of the Morning*, 50.

³⁶ University Avenue Church of Christ bulletin. N.d.

it can be assumed, since it was reported in 1962 that at NM there were seven classrooms, boarding facilities able to accommodate 250 boys, and 75 girls. There was also a change in the leadership during that decade with the arrival of Roy Virgil Palmer.

Roy Virgil Palmer replaced Boyd Reese in 1957, as the superintendent/principal/manager of NM. Palmer features prominently in this chapter because he was involved, directly and indirectly, with the mission for the next twenty years, from 1957 to 1977, making crucial decisions, especially during the transitional period at NM. In passing, it should be noted that for six years, from 1962 to 1968, Lloyd Gifford was the superintendent and his major achievement was managing the construction of the secondary school. It was, however, Palmer who consolidated these efforts.³⁷

Roy Virgil Palmer (1918-2004) was born in Arizona and his wife, Iva Jaxie Palmer nee Lewis was born in 1917 in San Antonio, Texas. The couple married in 1940 and graduated that same year from Abilene Christian College (A.C.C.).³⁸ Roy majored in music and education, graduating magna cum laude. Jaxie majored in English and physical education. She also graduated magna cum laude.³⁹ After teaching and preaching for a few years in the States, the couple accompanied Otis Gatewood (1911-1999) in 1947 into Germany establishing “a base in Frankfurt for coordinating missions to West Germany.”⁴⁰ Palmer and his family came back to the USA in 1951 but went back in 1953 for two more years. In 1955, he taught at Abilene Christian

³⁷ The following account about Roy Virgil and Iva Jaxie Palmer, unless otherwise stated, was researched by J. Beth Reese in May 1998 for a class paper at Abilene Christian University titled “Life Review: Heroes of Faith – Roy and Jaxie Palmer.” Beth Reese interviewed Roy and Jaxie Palmer at their house in Abilene, Texas and she gave the author a written permission to quote from this paper for this research. The paper is filed at Mutare School of Preaching, Mutare, Zimbabwe.

³⁸ They were blessed with eight children: Jerrell Dean (1941), Carroll Jean (1942), Roy Virgil Jr. (1945-1980), Mary Etta (1950), Rebecca Ruth (1952), Charles Alan (1956), Richard Harvey (1957) and finally Phillip David (1959). Reese, *Life Review*.

³⁹ This puts to rest a belief amongst some Africans that the majority of missionaries who came to Southern Africa were not academically sound.

⁴⁰ Magnusson, “Gatewood.” 353.

College up to 1957 when he left for NM as superintendent/principal where he stayed until 1961, before returning to Salisbury, Rhodesia in 1968.

After working in Salisbury for two years, he was appointed the head of mission in 1970 until December 1977 when he finally left Zimbabwe because of the guerrilla war “*Chimurenga II*.” Academically, Roy Palmer earned an M.A. in Bible from Pepperdine University and his doctorate from Michigan in 1967. He was influential in recruiting missionaries to Zimbabwe, Loy S. Mitchell being one of them.⁴¹ Palmer arranged for Chris Chetsanga, who was teaching in the primary school, and Washington Mhlanga to go to the USA for further education.⁴² These two became pillars in the Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe fulfilling Dr. Palmer’s goal that he shared with Eldred Echols who wrote, “I am of the firm conviction that the work in Africa can become indigenous through Christian education.”⁴³ Armed with this conviction, Palmer facilitated the establishment of Nhowe Bible College and strengthened Nhowe Secondary School during his tenure as a superintendent.⁴⁴

Just like Nhowe Primary School, Nhowe Secondary School was constructed through concerted community effort. Villagers and church members within the vicinity moulded and burnt bricks with the mission providing financial and technical support. The project was commenced in 1968 with the secondary opening its doors to Form I students in January 1969.

⁴¹ In March 1958, Palmer requested Alexander J. Claassen to come and teach at Nhowe when there was a shortage of teachers. Later on, he taught in the Nhowe Bible College. Alex moved to Gwanda in 1961 with his wife Helen Guilaudeau of Ocean Port, N. J. to supervise seven village schools operated by the Churches of Christ. He was killed on 28 January 1962 on a Sunday afternoon while coming from a preaching tour in the Gwanda area. Alex was born in South Africa, 21 January 1921. He attended Abilene Christian College from 1948 to 1952. He was buried at NM cemetery next to the remains of his one-day-old baby who had preceded him. Helen was left pregnant with a baby girl. In 1963, she married Jesse Brown, a fellow missionary. See Mitchell, *Among the People of the Sun*.

⁴² Chetsanga got a B.Sc. from Pepperdine University, a M.Sc. and Ph.D. in biochemistry from the University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, before proceeding to Harvard University for three years of post-doctoral studies. Mhlanga got an associate degree from Michigan Christian College, B.A. from Abilene Christian College, M.A. and Ph.D. in education from Wayne State University. Chetsanga and Mhlanga, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

⁴³ Echols, *South Africa*, 215.

⁴⁴ Nhowe Bible College is the subject of Chapter Three.

These became the first Form IV graduates, after sitting for the Cambridge General Certificate of Education (G.C.E) in 1972. However, the academic foundation for the secondary school had been laid by Whaley.

When the secondary school was being constructed, Lloyd Gifford approached the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for a qualified secondary school headmaster since there was no qualified candidate in the Churches of Christ. Graham Whaley was seconded to NM where he groomed Jeremiah Masaraure (1939-2009) who had just graduated from the University College of Rhodesia with a B.A. in English. According to Nesta Molly Masaraure, Jeremiah's wife, Whaley, was thrilled to train Masaraure since his village was close to NM. He was the right candidate to become the headmaster, although as a practicing Anglican, he was considered spiritually deficient at a Church of Christ affiliated institution. The family was finally converted to the Church of Christ in 1972.⁴⁵ Masaraure went on to become the first black secondary school headmaster, a position he resigned from in December 1977, during the middle of the guerrilla war, when he was appointed deputy headmaster of Mufakose Government High School in Harare. Molly Masaraure noted that this was a senior position when compared to what Masaraure was doing at NM. T. J. Mudonhi, who, like Masaraure came to NM as a non-member of the Church of Christ, jockeyed for the position and won.⁴⁶ He was reluctantly forced to resign from NM close to the end of 1981 after student riots, although, he was not to blame. Andrew

⁴⁵ Nesta Molly Masaraure, wife of Jeremiah Masaraure, interview by Paul Chimhungwe. Molly credits Court Chidowe, who was then an outstanding preacher in the Churches of Christ, in helping them leave the Anglican Church for the Church of Christ. They were baptized at Kambuzuma Church of Christ, Harare, in 1972. Philemon Gezi, in a separate interview, comments that "Masaraure was truly a Christian leader. He did not become a Christian to get a position. He was converted to Christ and died faithfully in the Lord." Gezi, interview by Paul Chimhungwe. Jeremiah Masaraure died in Hamilton, Ontario, where he was buried, in 2009 after battling liver cancer.

⁴⁶ He argued that there was no reason why he should not be appointed since he was a graduate of Gwelo Teacher's College, a college meant to train secondary school teachers. In addition to this, he had been baptised to become a member of the Church of Christ. The authorities at NM had no option but to appoint him. The source of this information requested anonymity.

Bamu, who had just graduated from the University of Zimbabwe, replaced him. At this juncture, it is prudent to delineate the leadership structure at Nhowe during those years.

As a Church of Christ operated Christian institution, NM was under the oversight of elders of a particular congregation. The Central Congregation, Nashville, Tennessee, for example, was responsible from 1939-1950. From 1951-1962 the University Avenue Congregation, Austin, Texas, pastored this work before handing it over to the Hillcrest Church of Christ, Abilene, Texas, in 1962. Hillcrest passed the baton to Swartz Creek Church of Christ in 1971 when NBC relocated to Mutare. The responsible congregation used to coordinate all activities by appointing an American missionary as the mission superintendent.

The mission superintendent/principal/manager was responsible for the management of fixed assets, finances, human resources, policy development, administration effectiveness, and Christian spiritual development. He was responsible for the micro- and macro-management of NM. This agrees with Van Rheezen and Waldron's argument that if North American missionaries start establishing mission schools in addition to preaching Christ they end up operating "as superintendents of mission workers, making decisions about issues that they only partially understand from afar."⁴⁷ At NM, the superintendent got advice from an Advisory Board of Directors, whose members he handpicked. Missionaries and indigenous Christian leaders composed this board and Mark Legg was its first chairperson in 1970. In 1974, Alex Ndlukula replaced Mark Legg when the latter returned to America. The other members of the board were Godi Karimanzira, Norman Madanhi, Dave Meikle, Loy Mitchell—secretary, James Petty, Lyle Pomeroy, and Francis Zhangazha. "These men," Palmer wrote, "are a great encouragement and

⁴⁷ Van Rheezen and Waldron, *The Status of Missions*, 61.

bear the responsibility to see that the schools are operated in an acceptable way.”⁴⁸ This leadership structure was altered during the war of independence.

Leadership and Development Projects During the War Years

The Second War of Liberation started earnestly when Zimbabwe National Liberation Army (ZANLA) details attacked Altena Farm, in Mt. Darwin, about 200 kilometres north of Salisbury, on 21 December 1972. This was the dawn of spasmodic attacks on white community structures by guerrillas, which received swift reaction from Rhodesian military forces. Nearby African rural communities, however, endured the repercussions. McLaughlin points out that “collective fines were imposed, cattle were confiscated, and villagers were detained and interrogated in an attempt to extract information from them and to discourage them from assisting the guerrillas.”⁴⁹ The severe treatment of indigenous people who were living close to St. Albert’s Catholic Mission was brought to the attention of the Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference (RCBC), which investigated their veracity and found them to be true. The RCBC, in turn, harshly denounced them, but the government responded by constructing Protected Villages in 1973. St. Albert’s Mission was affected by these moves, but some mission centres like NM were not affected. For in August 1973, Palmer wrote:

All in all, things are tranquil, and we live in a peaceful and safe situation. A lot has been published about the “terrorists” incursion into Rhodesia ... but the government security forces have taken effective counter-action so far. ... There is more real freedom, and better educational and economic opportunity for Africans in Rhodesia than in any other country in Africa. I really believe ... we have good hopes that Southern African will be spared the holocaust which has devastated many of the African States to the North of us. It is amazing how mis-informed the world-community is, generally about the conditions it this part of the world.⁵⁰

Palmer was convinced that the United Nations imposed sanctions against Rhodesia, the unstable

⁴⁸ Palmer, *Nhowe Newsletter*, 7 November 1974.

⁴⁹ McLaughlin, *On the Frontline*, 21.

⁵⁰ Palmer, *Nhowe Newsletter*, 6 August 1973.

political situation or even the guerrilla invasions, would not affect the activities at NM. The mission had adequate expatriate personnel and funding even after Jerry and Kay Hayes left at the end of their four-year tour of duty in July 1973.⁵¹ Jerry Hayes taught science in the secondary school and he was also responsible for coordinating the electrification of some of the major buildings when NM was connected to the Kariba hydro-power system. During his stay at NM, Hayes managed the construction of a water reservoir at Munyukwi River, four kilometres from the mission, which has been, since then, a dependable water system.⁵² As the Hayes family was leaving, Steve and Gail Rorabacher came to the mission as teachers, where the infrastructure was continually improving under the wise leadership of Palmer.

In addition to the water reservoir, the mission purchased two new Peugeot light trucks and a Ford five-tonne truck. A number of teachers' houses were refurbished and a new house for Andrew Bamu, the primary school headmaster, was constructed. Plans were afoot to construct an F2 secondary school.⁵³ With this conviction, Palmer started arranging for a sabbatical to the USA where he would raise funds to improve the mission infrastructure, especially at the mission farm which was being managed by Isaac Mupondi.⁵⁴ After persuading Budd Farmer to act as the

⁵¹ Jerry Hayes graduated from Abilene Christian University with a degree in industrial arts. Jerry and Kay Hayes, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

⁵² Pinakuwa Makarichi, a plumber at the mission, played a pivotal role in these water projects at NM.

⁵³ F2 Secondary Schools were introduced by the Smith regime to train African boys and girls industrial and practical subjects in addition to academic subjects. The academic standards were low when compared to F1 Secondary Schools. Palmer proposed that "for an outlay of around \$20,000 (U.S.) we can provide facilities to carry out this new program. This would be over a period of four years, beginning in 1976. I believe this could more than double the effectiveness of our work here, without a tremendous increase in financial outlay." Palmer, Nhowe Newsletter 10 November, 1973. On 5 November 1973, the missionary fraternity lost Marie Legg, the wife of Mark Legg who had worked at Nhowe Mission from 1963 to 1967. Her remains are buried at Nhowe Mission cemetery.

⁵⁴ Farmer reported that Isaac Mupondi was a man with versatile gifts: primary school teacher, animal and crop husbandry teacher, managing the farm including all the animals, taught Bible classes, and preached in the villages during the weekends. Rita, his wife taught first grade. When Loy Mitchell was at NM in the early sixties, he pointed out that Rita assisted, privately, Donna Mitchell in teaching their children on the mission since the Rhodesian government segregated educational facilities. Loy Stanly Mitchell, Telephone interview by Paul Chimhungwe. At the end of 1974, NM farm, with Isaac Mupondi as its manager, was forced by the harsh realities of the Rhodesian

superintendent for a year, 1975, Roy and Jaxie Palmer left at the end of 1974.

Budd Farmer, a graduate of Bear Valley School of Preaching, came to Salisbury in 1971 where he worked with African preachers. After accepting the position of acting superintendent of NM from January 1975, Farmer continued with Palmer's farming, healing, teaching, and preaching projects at NM. The primary school had an enrolment of 381 students with the secondary school having 210. In addition to formal education, Palmer had introduced vocational subjects like bricklaying, carpentry, plumbing, and the use of knitting machines for married women. These courses were open to both members of the Churches of Christ and other denominations.⁵⁵ On the academic side, both the primary and secondary school had impressive results.

Andrew Bamu, the primary school headmaster, reported that sixty-eight percent of the grade seven students had passed their national examination; hence, they qualified to enter secondary education. For that achievement, the primary school received "a commendation letter from the Education Inspector."⁵⁶ In the secondary school, under the headship of Jeremiah Masaraure, seventy percent of those who wrote the Rhodesian Junior Certificate of Education had passed with high marks. Hence, they could proceed to Form III. Finally, those who had sat for the Cambridge General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.) Ordinary Level, seventy percent "passed with first and second division passes which would qualify them to enter most of our

economy to borrow Claudius Nhandara's paraffin powered tractor to plough its fields. Palmer, *Nhowe Newsletter*, 9 July 1974.

⁵⁵ In his 12 February 1975 report, Farmer elaborated the rationale for this program, "Brother [Richard] Nyamanhindi and Brother [Kennedy] Kondo, two of our bachelor preachers, are teaching them week night classes with Brother [Sampson] Mhlanga, who is our building instructor and an old time gospel preacher teaches them on Sunday. It's very rare for one of these young people to stay at Nhowe for more than a few months without being a Christian." Farmer, *January Report*, 12 February 1975. Some of these young men proceeded to Mutare School of Preaching where they were trained as preachers and became outstanding leaders in the church. Amongst them are Golden Chiziwe, Daniel Gondo, Gibson Kamhera, and Matthias Nyamatore.

⁵⁶ Farmer, *Nhowe Mission February Report*, 10 March 1975.

colleges in the U.S.”⁵⁷ Farmer concluded his report by pointing out that “with these marks we have nothing to be ashamed of in our educational achievements. Credit must go to Brother Palmer for his leadership last year.”⁵⁸

In addition to Palmer’s leadership, Farmer mentions a number of outstanding teachers who were serving at NM those years. Hope Huni taught in the primary school and he was responsible for leading the school choir, which entertained Christians at gospel meetings in and around Mashonaland. Philemon Gezi was another outstanding primary school teacher. In 1975, he attended the Boy Scouts’ World Jamboree in Norway. “As an avid supporter and leader for Rhodesian Boy Scouts” Farmer reported that, “he had travelled out of the country on more than one occasion with the scouts and is always a good ambassador for Christ on these trips.”⁵⁹ Gezi’s wife worked as the clinic nurse.⁶⁰

Bhebe, as already pointed out, argues that health, in addition to education and preaching, was central to the western missionary’s activities.⁶¹ This concurs with Bosela Eale’s conclusion that “the most important things they [missionaries] left as a legacy to Africans were education and health care.”⁶² At NM, its founders had concrete plans of building a forty-bed hospital in the mid-forties. Financial constraints forced the mission to establish a small clinic, which was initially operated by the Browns. Dr. Marjorie Sewell operated it from 1950 to 1957.⁶³ In 1963 Betty Troup, a registered nurse, whose husband Rhinard taught in the School of Preaching, headed the clinic. Monika Steiniger, a native of Germany and graduate of Michigan Christian

⁵⁷ Farmer, *Nhowe Mission February Report*, 10 March 1975.

⁵⁸ Farmer, *Nhowe Mission February Report*, 10 March 1975.

⁵⁹ Farmer, *Nhowe Mission August Report*, 1975.

⁶⁰ Gezi, in addition to teaching, was an active physical education teacher. He raised vegetables, taught Bible classes and was mentioned by Farmer as an excellent interpreter. Farmer, *Nhowe Mission August Report*, 1975.

⁶¹ Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 128.

⁶² Eale, “Mission in Africa,” 260-272.

⁶³ See Mitchell, *Among the People*. 21.

College, who also came to NM that same year, assisted her. Steiniger, although she was not a registered nurse, had worked in many health institutions in the USA. That experience made her a central figure in the health delivery system at the Nhowe Mission Clinic, where she worked with Ellah Gezi (d. 2011). Gezi was a registered nurse who came to Nhowe initially in 1947 and left in 1950. When the Troups and Steiniger left NM, Gezi became the head of the clinic after the couple's second tour of duty at NM started in 1970 ending in 1979 when the mission was closed by the freedom fighters. Now that the background and state of affairs at NM have been chronicled and contextualised, the activities at this mission during the difficult years, 1976 to 1977, which is the transitional period, can now be chronicled.

In 1975, Mozambique gained its independence through the barrel of the gun, opening a new front for ZANLA. Many young men and women crossed into Mozambique to train as guerrillas. At St. Albert's Catholic Mission, Mount Darwin, students had been abducted for training in 1972.⁶⁴ Most rural schools, especially those close to the border with Mozambique and Zambia were gravely affected. NM was not spared although it lies 160 kilometres west of the Mozambican border. Farmer, in 1975, reported that,

Due to the political turmoil, we have been facing a new kind of problem this year. Throughout Rhodesia, secondary schools have been losing hundreds of children running away into neighbouring countries to train as revolutionary soldiers. This problem has not passed Nhowe by. We lost a few boys recently. They were subsequently caught by the Rhodesian police before they made it across the border into Mozambique. It is very sad to see Christian boys caught up in the emotionalism of the moment and to throw away the opportunity for education which they had been given.⁶⁵

Elias Kutadzaushe, who did both his primary and secondary school at NM, where he graduated

⁶⁴ McLaughlin, *On the Frontline*, 49.

⁶⁵ Farmer, *Nhowe Mission September Report*, 1975.

in 1977, confirmed this incident.⁶⁶ As 1975 was closing, with Farmer ending his term of office, the political situation in Zimbabwe was deteriorating.⁶⁷

In January 1976, Roy and Jaxie Palmer, notwithstanding the chaotic political environment in Rhodesia, came back to NM from their sabbatical with zest, optimism, and hope of continuing to manage NM. He had ambitious plans of starting an F2 secondary school although some missions, especially those headed by indigenous staff like ELCZ, were not comfortable with this type of school. Its educational committee, as Bhebe points out, “condemned the vocational F2 schools and said that a lot more could be achieved in the education of Africans if those schools were turned into general secondary schools.”⁶⁸ This was the opposite for the industrious Palmer who had NM at heart. In addition to these plans for an F2 secondary school, between 1976 and 1977, Palmer expanded the piggery project, increased the cattle head, bought a rebuilt Fordson Major tractor, and constructed two teachers’ houses and two 50,000 gallon water tanks. He also purchased from W. N. Short, now an old man, a two-year-old Heidelberg printing press that he reduced by half to \$1,000 since it was going to be used at NM.⁶⁹ Palmer increased NM’s fixed assets oblivious of the ominous clouds of war that were everywhere. He summarised his activities besides preaching as being

the manager of a print shop, a dairy, a pig farm, a furniture factory, a garage and repair shop, a building construction outfit, a plumbing shop, a bakery, a dining hall, a clinic, a tuck garden, a beef herd and maize crop, a grocery store, a sweater knitting operation, a mattress factory, in addition to two schools, and an apprentice training program for carpenters, brick-layers, plumbers, printers and mechanics.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Elias Kutadzaushe after NM went to Gweru Teachers’ College (GTC). He later on earned a B.A. in Geography and Developmental Studies from the University of South Africa. He is the current (2011) principal of NM. Kutadzaushe and Makunde, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

⁶⁷ Farmer went back to the USA on 3 January 1976 via South Africa. The Palmers arrived back in Rhodesia during the second week of January. Palmer, *February Report*, 1976.

⁶⁸ Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 159.

⁶⁹ Palmer, *Nhowe Newsletter*, May 1976.

⁷⁰ Palmer, *Nhowe News Letter*, August 1976.

These were phenomenal achievements at the sole Church of Christ affiliated mission school, but other churches and denominations had several mission centres.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),⁷¹ at that time had “a total number of fifteen primary and secondary schools and five clinics and hospitals.”⁷² While the ELCZ in 1970, “had 175 primary schools with 705 teachers and 24 842 pupils, 4 secondary schools with 28 teachers and 619 students, and a teaching hospital with 5 teachers and 63 students.”⁷³ The Church of Sweden, the mother church of the ELCZ, had a staff development programme aimed at replacing western missionaries with indigenous staff. Accordingly

by the beginning of the 1970s, the Church was growing to be self-sufficient in secondary school teachers, as its students returned from the local university [University College of Rhodesia], the Gweru Teacher Training College, Roma...Some of these were the teachers and headmasters in Church schools during the war.⁷⁴

During the middle of 1976, NM, like any other institution, started feeling the effects of the guerrilla war, especially when dusk to dawn curfew was legislated for war zones. At this point Palmer was barely seeing the reality although denying the facts. In August he wrote,

The political problems of Rhodesia do not seem to affect life very much, but recently there have been some incidents within fifteen and twenty miles of here, and our area has been put under curfew. Travel by car is allowed, but anyone walking on the roads or through the country at night may be shot (and some are). This has caused our students to stay in the dormitories in the evenings instead of going to the class rooms for study.⁷⁵

At this point, the Palmers were the only white family at the mission.

Palmer, based on available documents and recent interviews, had such a deep love for NM that he ignored advice from other missionaries that he should find accommodation in

⁷¹ The Christian Church is a branch of the Stone-Campbell Movement different from the Churches of Christ that managed NM, the subject of this chapter. In Zimbabwe these two denominations do not generally fellowship each other.

⁷² Mashoko, “The Need for Contextualization,” 40.

⁷³ Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 143.

⁷⁴ Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 144.

⁷⁵ Palmer, *Nhowe News Letter*, October 1976.

Marondera or Harare and visit the mission during the day. In response, Palmer wrote, “there seems to be no excitement, and no greater concern around the country than has been the case since the terrorist activity began in the end of 1972.”⁷⁶ He was defiant until one January 1977 Saturday night. Hopewell Huni, a former primary school teacher at NM, came to the mission and openly told him that “all the Africans were afraid to warn us but he felt we should not stay at Nhowe at night any more, although it is safe enough during the day time.”⁷⁷ The Palmers started packing that night and left Sunday afternoon immediately after worship service. The following Tuesday evening guerrillas arrived at NM looking for the Palmers who had secured a small house in Harare where they were operating from for the rest of 1977.⁷⁸ They would visit the mission twice a week under the protection of an armed guard. In that same report, Palmer reported two gruesome incidents in Rhodesia that had attracted the international media.

We have reports that 15 boys were shot from the Manama school children abducted a few weeks ago, because they refused to take terrorist training. The seven Catholic nuns and priests massacred a couple of weeks ago were on a mission [St. Paul’s Musami] about 25 miles (across the country) from Nhowe. It seems they are making missions a special target.⁷⁹

For the freedom fighters, mission centres were not a soft target to be brutalised, but on the contrary a vital source of essential supplies like clothing, food, medicine, and recruits.⁸⁰

The audacious abduction at Manama mission, which was being referred to by Palmer,

⁷⁶ Palmer, *Nhowe Newsletter*, February 1976.

⁷⁷ Palmer, *Nhowe Mission Newsletter*, 28 February 1977.

⁷⁸ In their February report, the Palmers reported that after leaving the mission on Sunday, when they visited the mission during the course of the week they “found that a terrorist group gang had come to the Mission on Tuesday night, the second night after we had moved into town. There were fifteen or twenty of them, with weapons. They routed out our chief clerk [Elias Feremenga] about 1:00 am and asked him where the Principal was. He told them we were in town. They asked if he had a key to the office, but he said no. They then forced him to go with them to the next farm where our neighbor has a store and warehouse. ... They found the night watchman and forced him to call out the storekeeper, and proceeded to rob the store.” Palmer, *Nhowe Mission Newsletter*, 28 February 1977.

⁷⁹ Palmer, *Nhowe Mission Newsletter*, 28 February 1977.

⁸⁰ As already pointed out, this is the major thrust of Ngwabi Bhebe’s book *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*.

was executed by just three Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) freedom fighters. They force marched between 500 and 700 Manama students on the 30 January 1977. Bhebe describes this "spectacular heroic [event] that was ... carried out with the full knowledge of the community around the school, of the school authorities and the Rhodesian security forces."⁸¹ Although the Rhodesian forces were stationed a few kilometres from the school, the abduction was "carried out so efficiently and with such lightning speed that the soldiers had no chance of knowing what was happening until the children and some teachers had left."⁸² Since mission centres were an essential source of survival for the guerrillas, the Rhodesian regime, through the notorious Selous Scouts, secretly massacred missionaries in order to discredit guerrillas. Robert Mugabe, in response to those cold-blooded murders, "declared that both ZAPU and ZANU were innocent of any attacks on mission stations. We have never done so and we will never do so. We regret all attacks on individual mission stations. ...the Selous Scouts... has massacred missionaries at Musami."⁸³

These events did not change Palmer's optimistic attitude over NM. Although he probably escaped death by a whisker when guerrillas visited the mission two days after his departure, he was still confident about the political environment. To Palmer "most of these incidents are isolated over a large area half the size of Texas, almost.... Outward signs of war are rare, but we feel it wiser not to spend the night at the Mission for the time being."⁸⁴ Even in June 1977 Palmer was convinced that the political environment around NM and the entire country would one day improve enabling him to settle at the mission. For the first time, however, he admitted, "If the terrorists plague gets worse we may have to close the school down. But so far we are able

⁸¹ Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 171.

⁸² Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 152.

⁸³ Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 260-261.

⁸⁴ Palmer, *Nhowe Mission Newsletter*, 28 February 1977.

to carry on quite well.”⁸⁵

After writing these words, the deteriorating financial situation at NM, which was compounded by the unstable political environment, forced Palmer to consult with the eldership in Michigan and Texas. As already pointed out, NM although situated in Zimbabwe, was under the oversight of an overseas-based Church of Christ congregation. Any major decision involving the mission must have the approval of the overseas-based eldership; although at NM Palmer had appointed an advisory board; it did not have executive powers. Confronted with a dire situation, Palmer flew to the USA for consultation. In addition to the dwindling financial base, North American missionaries were not willing to come to NM. Palmer was concerned that “due to the political situation in Rhodesia, and perhaps other factors, there has been little possibility of getting additional missionaries to come to help in the work at Nhowe.”⁸⁶

After his impromptu journey, Palmer, in response to these two critical issues, the reduction in NM’s traditional financial benefactors and failure to recruit white missionaries to work at the mission, in his June-July 1977 report wrote “the elders in Michigan and in Texas who have been most concerned with the work at Nhowe Mission have decided that it will be wise to close the Mission school at the end of this school year in December [1977].”⁸⁷ This was a critical decision that required wider consultation with all stakeholders.

Just like at the 1885 Berlin Conference, indigenous Africans were not involved in deciding issues critical to their physical welfare. In the Church of Christ, important decisions, during the colonial era, were made in the USA since it was the source of both finance and qualified human resources, two key assets in short supply at NM. Although NM was located in

⁸⁵ Palmer, *Nhowe Mission Newsletter*, 6 June 1977.

⁸⁶ Palmer, *Nhowe Mission Newsletter*, June-July 1977.

⁸⁷ Palmer, *Nhowe Mission Newsletter*, June-July 1977.

Zimbabwe, the indigenous “leadership” and its community was not accorded negotiating space to navigate the future of the mission. Closing NM was going to have devastating consequences within the African community both in and outside the church. The indigenous Christians, even Chief Mangwende and Sub-Chief Mukarakate, proudly regarded NM their own, but they were not aware that the mission was closing or might even be parcelled out to the Department of Education.

In a recent interview, Augustine Nyamatore, who was teaching at NM in 1977, described the atmosphere at NM as sombre when news started filtering that the mission might be closed.⁸⁸ Nyamatore had taken a one-year leave of absence from his graduate studies at the University College of Rhodesia in order to teach at NM. This was the only Church of Christ affiliated mission school and losing it brought back the sad memories about the destruction of WWM in 1933. Maybe indigenous Christians might ask, ‘Why do Church of Christ western missionaries, in collaboration with the locals, establish essential mission centres but when confronted with hostile external forces missionaries make decisions that are perceived by Africans to be retrogressive?’ In short, it was the norm; most missionaries did not prepare Africans to lead such institutions. What was unfolding in 1977 at NM and other mission centres in Rhodesia concurs with Ogbu Kalu’s conclusion that, “Though missionaries anticipated the end of colonial rule, they did little to prepare for it, perhaps in the belief that they could survive better than the colonial rulers.”⁸⁹

At NM, some Africans occupied “leadership” positions devoid of executive powers. This was in vogue during the colonial era. Jeremiah Masaraure, for example, was the secondary school headmaster answerable to the superintendent/principal. He was chiefly responsible for the

⁸⁸ Nyamatore, telephone interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

⁸⁹ Kalu, “Passive Revolution and Its Saboteurs,” 250-277.

academic work just like Andrew Bamu, his counterpart, at the primary school. All critical responsibilities like financial administration, human resources, and fixed assets management were in the principal's domain, with his wife working as the secretary. He delegated some of these to the chief clerk, Elias Feremenga, and his subordinates. The local congregation had ordained elders namely: Philemon Gezi, Elias Feremenga, Samson Mhlanga, and Zebedee Tandini who were deputised by three deacons: Andrew Bamu, Isaac Mupondi, and Dickson Mutadzakupa. It was these outstanding African leaders and others who met informally after hearing about the pending fate of the mission. They consulted with other outstanding Africans in Harare and concluded that the mission should not be closed; they were prepared to run it with or without funding from the Churches of Christ in America. This decision was relayed to Dr. Palmer.

In his June-July 1977 report, Dr. Palmer confirmed, "African brethren have requested that the school be carried on under the auspices of the African brethren in Rhodesia."⁹⁰ Some missionaries in the denominational world had positively approved such requests at the outbreak of African nationalism in the mid 1960s and early 1970s. The United Methodist Church consecrated Bishop Abel Tendekai Muzorewa (1925-2010) as its first black bishop in 1968. He was responsible for pastoring the church in Botswana and Zimbabwe. The ELCZ, headquartered in Sweden, signed the Document of Understanding on 3 March 1963 recognizing the relationship between the Church of Sweden Mission and the local ELCZ. Bhebe points out that "the remarkable character of the relationship is that of recognising the high degree of the independence of the local Church [based in Rhodesia] at the same time as it guarantees the flow

⁹⁰ Palmer, *Nhove Mission Newsletter*, June-July 1977.

of aid.”⁹¹

The Document of Understanding gave the ELCZ operating parameters that are crucial to the smooth running of the Church, quasi-church organisations, health delivery facilities, and educational institutions. Therefore, “in terms of the work of the Church the agreement said that all schools and education facilities previously registered in the name of the Mission [Church of Sweden Mission] would revert to the management of the local Church [ELCZ].”⁹² In 1975 Rev. J. C. Shiri was consecrated its first African bishop. He was a secondary school teacher at Chegato after obtaining a B.A. degree from the University College of Rhodesia. Rev. Shiri “was well suited for the post both in terms of academic qualifications in a Church which was rapidly acquiring university graduates and even PhDs as well as in terms of experience.”⁹³ Consequently, when the war of liberation engulfed the south-western parts of Zimbabwe, the stronghold of the ELCZ, this denomination’s leadership structures, and its related institutions, were already indigenised, when compared to the Church of Christ.

It should be noted, however, that since the ELCZ—the local Church—was going to continue receiving financial aid from the mother church in Sweden there was need for financial controls. The mother church recognized that if it pulled its financial support, the local church was going to struggle. Yet there was a major concern about financial mismanagement, a cancer that was affecting foreign supported mission churches under indigenous leadership. To overcome this hurdle, the Document of Understanding included a phrase to the effect that “as long as the Church of Sweden Mission continued to support the Lutheran Church financially, the latter must

⁹¹ Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 132.

⁹² Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 132-133.

⁹³ Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 139.

have its books and accounts examined by an auditor once a year.”⁹⁴ The implementation of this financial policy minimised the misappropriation of funds while creating confidence in the overseas-based financial benefactors.

The Roman Catholic Church, during the same decade, had proposed four exit possibilities for foreign missionaries operating ecclesiastical institutions. They opted to close down, give moratorium or a break in funding, remain nursing the young organisations until they reach maturity, or opt for a slow and phased transition.⁹⁵ The future of foreign operated missions in post-colonial Africa was vexing most missions with foreign leadership.

The white administration at NM in 1977 did not have confidence in the African staff that it would smoothly manage the mission, especially finances, in the absence of missionaries. Dave Meikle, a successful white farmer, businesses person, and member of the Church of Christ in Mutare, reminds us that “in the 70s black people were still regarded [by the whites] as not capable of running the show [schools] because they had no experience, no education, and all administration at NM was done by white missionaries.”⁹⁶ Faced with this daunting problem, the USA based eldership, which controlled the mission through the superintendent, concluded with good intentions, after wisely weighing all alternatives, and without any ill-motives, or malice that the “wiser course will be to place the school plant at the disposal of the Education Department of Rhodesia. Officials have indicated that the government may use the facilities for an agricultural college, or a technical school.”⁹⁷ From this statement, which was unequivocally augmented, in recent interviews, by Chris Chetsanga, Philemon Gezi, Elias Kutadzaushe, Pindukai Makunde,

⁹⁴ Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 133.

⁹⁵ The details, with their advantage and disadvantages, are given by Penoukou, “Missionary Priests and the Future of the African Churches,” 53-68.

⁹⁶ Meikle, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

⁹⁷ Palmer, *Nhowe Mission Newsletter*, June-July 1977.

Washington Mhlanga and others, it can be safely concluded that the superintendent and the overseas-based eldership had proposed parcelling the entire infrastructure to the Rhodesian Government. Since this issue has remained controversial, a caveat is appropriate at this juncture.

The reasons why that decision was reached will unfold in the following pages. It should be emphasised, at this point, that the superintendent had the interest of the Africans at heart. This is the major reason why he did spend close to twenty years in Rhodesia. Preachers like Ishmael Matangira, Samson Mhlanga, Alex Ndlukula, and those who were students during his tenure the likes of Elias Kutadzaushe, Pindukai Makunde, and those who were assisted, financially, to enter university like Augustine Nyamatore emphatically rejected the notion that he was a racist. They still highly respect him. Makunde summarised it well by saying, “We did not see the zeal in missionaries to educate blacks at higher levels. The only exception was Palmer. That one was a *fundi* [scholar].... Others [missionaries] it was preaching, preaching, and that’s all.”⁹⁸ It will become apparent, therefore, that the proposal to parcel NM to the Rhodesian government should not be taken in isolation of the other great enduring works that were done by missionaries in Rhodesia.

Having said this, the two reasons that impelled the superintendent to propose selling the mission to the Rhodesian government should be analysed. First, the loss of foreign funding and second the dearth of capable African human resources that could effectively and efficiently manage the mission in the absence of missionaries.

Financially, as at the end August 1977, Nhowe Mission’s balance sheet reflected a fixed asset base worth R\$125,000.⁹⁹ Buildings, including primary and secondary school classrooms,

⁹⁸ Kutadzaushe and Makunde, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

⁹⁹ All monetary figures in this section have been rounded to the next thousand and the complete Nhowe Mission August 1977 financial statements are found in appendix A.

boarding dormitories for boys and girls, teachers' houses, and church building were worth R\$125,000. The balance consisted of vehicles, printing machine, farm, and office equipment. Current assets were worth R\$24,000 comprising cattle, school uniforms, books, groceries, and cash on hand, and in the bank. The total asset base for NM as at the end of August 1977 was close to R\$150,000.¹⁰⁰ Its income and expenditure account, for that month, reflected a total expenditure of R\$62,000 against an income of R\$61,000. Fifty-one percent of this income came from school fees charged to primary and secondary students; donations from churches in the USA made twenty-seven percent of income, with farm income, and a government grant consisting of nine and six percent respectively. On the expenditure side, fifty percent went to the feeding of boarding students. The government paid teachers in both the primary and secondary school. With this bird's eye view of the financial position of NM, it can be asked whether it was prudent for the responsible authorities to advocate closing the mission because foreign-based Churches of Christ were dropping funding.

This financial picture, however, is murky since I managed only to analyse the August 1977 financial statements.¹⁰¹ An informed judgement based upon financial statements can only be done after comparing at least five consecutive annual audited financial statements. Such records, unfortunately, are not available at NM. It will be naive, if not preposterous, to conclude that NM was financially solvent and could be managed without foreign funding, which made up twenty-seven percent of the income, after analysing only the August 1977 financial statements. It is risky and imprudent to make such a crucial decision basing on one month's financial statements. An ideal situation would require the comparison of NM's financial statements with

¹⁰⁰ I failed to locate the Nhowe Mission 1977 end of year financial statements that could give a clear financial picture of the mission.

¹⁰¹ I managed to secure financial records for three months June, July, and August 1977 which I received from Dave Meikle. The mission does not have these financial records.

those of a similar institution like St. Paul's Musami Mission, which was located thirty miles from NM. At any rate, even if the mission was financial sound, Dr. Palmer did not have confidence in the competence of the African human resources.

Since he was the only missionary left at NM, although now based in Harare since February 1977, Dr. Palmer was pleading for additional personnel from the rear. With the clouds of war hanging over Rhodesia, no American was willing to sacrifice his or her life in Rhodesia during those years. Missionaries had been massacred at St. Paul's Musami and other mission centres; therefore, nobody would blame the missionaries for vacating NM or lack of interest in coming to Rhodesia. It was an issue of life and death for the North Americans. Interestingly, at NM, in the absence of resident missionaries, agricultural, educational, healing, and spiritual activities went unabated. Who, therefore, was doing what at NM in 1977?

Activities at NM were divided into the above mentioned four major categories. The farm, under the management of Isaac Mupondi, a qualified agricultural demonstrator and teacher, provided all the maize, milk, vegetables, beef, and pork requirements for boarding students. Students taking vocational courses like bricklaying and carpentry were fed from the central dining-hall together with primary and secondary school students. Zebedee Tandi and Samson Mhlanga taught the vocational students. Farm produce reduced the cost of education at NM.

The provision of quality primary and secondary education, based on Christian principles, was the centre of all activities at NM. Andrew Bamu headed the primary school.¹⁰² He resigned in 1978 when he went to the University College of Rhodesia to read for a B.A. General that he completed in 1980. Dickson Mutadzakupa, who occupied the primary school headmaster's office

¹⁰² Bamu (d. 1993) graduated from Nhowe Bible College in 1963 and proceeded to Umtali Teachers' College where he trained as a primary school teacher. He went back to NM where he taught from 1966 to 1970. In 1970, Dr. Palmer appointed him the primary school head.

for two years, 1978 to 1979, replaced Bamu. Mutadzakupa handed the baton to Rishon Fadzi, when he left for further studies at Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas.¹⁰³ Fadzi was in office from 1979 to 1991 and his wife, a qualified nurse, worked with Ellah Gezi in the clinic.¹⁰⁴ Jeremiah Masaraure, who had been inducted by Graham Whaley, the first headmaster of NM Secondary School, was the first black headmaster.¹⁰⁵ In addition to an academically qualified head, there were also a number of university graduates teaching in the secondary school. Augustine Nyamatore had double honours: History and Linguistics. In 1977, he was already studying for his M.Phil. In 1978-1979, he was teaching at NM and assisting with church work.

The church provided the spiritual services to both students and staff, while missionaries did most of the teaching and preaching. Dr. Palmer missed this aspect of his work when he was forced to operate from Salisbury. He could not preach during the morning chapel sessions and Sunday worship service. During his absence, Palmer reported that “the African brethren who are doing the Bible teaching [at NM] are well trained.”¹⁰⁶ The church, as already noted, had appointed elders and deacons. It can be concluded, therefore, that in 1977 when the superintendent was contemplating closing or selling NM, the four departments at NM were being headed by academically qualified Africans. Admittedly, they were on the periphery of decision

¹⁰³ Dickson Mutamburirwa Mutadzakupa was born in 1942 and did his primary school at NM and secondary at Mavhuradonha. He trained as a teacher at Morgenster Mission and got his B.A. English and Education from ACU in 1983. He taught at Magunje and NM. Mutadzakupa was baptized in 1957 and was one of the first deacons ordained at NM by Dr. Palmer. He left NM in 1990 to head Igava Secondary School. During the 2000-2008 chaotic land reform programme in Zimbabwe, Igava Farm was designated, but the school was handed over to the Churches of Christ through negotiations between Mutadzakupa and the former white commercial farmer. Mutadzakupa should be credited for facilitating this great move. Igava became the fourth mission affiliated to the Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe. The other three centres are MSOP, NM, and Chivero Mission in Norton.

¹⁰⁴ In passing we should note the following former headmasters: Mr. Kuture, Musa Shamuyarira (1961), Alex Ndhlukula 1962-1963, and Ben Kanyangarara 1966-1970.

¹⁰⁵ Masaraure had graduated from the University College of Rhodesia in 1969 with a B.A. in English, in addition to the Graduate Certificate of Education. He took over from Whaley in 1971. Although when he joined the teaching staff at NM, he was not a member of the Church of Christ, but in 1977, he was now a strong member, just like all the other heads of departments.

¹⁰⁶ Palmer, *Nhowe Mission Newsletter*, 28 February 1977.

making circles; hence, they did not have administrative and managerial skills to manage an institution like NM. Despite their deficiencies, the church eldership wrote a letter to the Swartz Creek Congregation pleading for a chance to operate the mission.

NM Eldership's Letter to the Swartz Creek Congregation

The eldership at NM, after meeting formerly with Dr. Palmer, decided to write the overseas-based eldership that was responsible for NM. At that time, the mission was being shepherded by the Swartz Creek Church of Christ, Detroit, Michigan. The letter was written on 21 August 1977 and signed by all the four elders of NM Church of Christ that is, Philemon Gezi, Elias Feremenga, Sampson Mhlana, and Zebedee Tandi. This was an unprecedented bold move in the Churches of Christ in Rhodesia—disputing with a white missionary during the colonial era. The letter was divided into four sections: the introduction, proposed plan of managing the mission without American financial support, retrenchment, and management. The following section is an analysis of this letter since it was crucial in changing the overseas-based eldership's decision which was being backed by the superintendent.

The four level-headed mature men had foresight and wisdom. They were grateful to all the missionaries who had worked in Rhodesia “especially Bro. and Sister Palmer for the magnificent work, dedication and self sacrifice [sic] which has been shown over the years.”¹⁰⁷ They acknowledged the tense political atmosphere, which compelled the eldership, after visiting with Dr. Palmer, to propose that NM should be closed at the end of December 1977. The elders at NM, however, pleaded with their counterparts for permission to manage the school without American financial support through a proposed plan of action.

Since NM was facing serious financial constraints, as the overseas-based benefactors

¹⁰⁷ P. Gezi et. al., Letter to The Elders Swartzcreek [sic] Church of Christ, 21 August 1977.

were withdrawing, the NM congregation eldership suggested eleven sources of internal funding that would sustain the mission. The main source of funding would be fees which accounted for fifty-one percent of recurrent income as at the end of August 1977.¹⁰⁸ For that reason, the elders pointed out that, “There are a number of schools in this country which are running just on fees and nothing else and we feel we could manage to pay many of our bills with the fees.”¹⁰⁹ Income will also be derived from the following minor sources: government grants, rentals, tuck-shop, garden, grinding mill, timber, the farm, orchards, piggery, dairy cattle, and contributions from local congregations and individual Christians. The African leadership was committed to the success of “their” mission and proposed that, “The Brethren [sic] here at Nhowe will pledge to give part of their salaries to the programme [mission] every month.”¹¹⁰ This was an unprecedented financial commitment considering that most of the teachers were earning less than R\$100 per month.¹¹¹ It should be noted that these teachers were also clandestinely financing the welfare of the guerrillas operating in the Mukarakate area. With this plan of action on paper, they strategized trimming some non-core programmes.

Retrenchment was offered as a way of meeting their budget. Some essential, but now deemed expensive, projects were trimmed amongst them “the learner-carpenter, learner-builder and learner-mechanic programme.”¹¹² They also planned to cease the construction of buildings, cut down on labour force and students would purchase their uniforms. The letter concludes by outlining how they planned managing the mission.

The eldership proposed that it would manage the school through a committee whose

¹⁰⁸ See Nhowe Mission Income and Expenditure Account Appendix A.

¹⁰⁹ Gezi, et. al., Letter to Swartzcreek [sic], 21 August 1977.

¹¹⁰ Gezi, et. al., Letter to Swartzcreek [sic], 21 August 1977.

¹¹¹ Masaraure, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹¹² Gezi, et. al., Letter to Swartzcreek [sic], 21 August 1977.

members were P. Gezi, Z. Tandi, E. Feremenga, J. Masaraure, and A. Bamu. This committee would work with a reconstituted Board of Directors made up of Christians in Rhodesia. The elders wrote, “Brethren [sic], we sincerely ask you to give us a chance, a chance to carry on the good work that the Lord has, through you, prospered here in Rhodesia.”¹¹³ There is no extant copy of a reply from the eldership at Swartz Creek, although it must have replied since the decision was reversed. There were also some minor factors which compelled the administrators to either close or retain the operations at the mission.

Other factors for or against closing NM

If NM was to survive, a person with administrative and managerial skills was required to head the mission. Before discussing that critical position, however, other external forces that could influence the closure or continuation of operations at NM need to be considered.

Staff safety was a major concern. Clerics, as already pointed out, lost their lives. According to Janice McLaughlin, a Roman Catholic church historian, by the end of 1978, “a bishop, 23 expatriate missionaries and one local priest had been killed. By March 1979, 65 Catholic mission stations, schools and hospitals had been closed.”¹¹⁴ The intensity of the guerrilla war forced the closure of some mission centres and schools. This was done by the Rhodesian government, guerrillas or the responsible authority for the safety of staff and students. At NM, despite the tense situation, the Africans insisted that they wanted it to remain open since they had friendly relationships with the guerrillas operating in the area.

The African staff members, without the knowledge of Dr. Palmer, were financially and morally supporting guerrillas operating in the Mukarakate area. Every month they gave the freedom fighters R\$200 and Gezi’s wife gave them pharmaceutical drugs and bandages.

¹¹³ Gezi, et. al., Letter to Swartzcreek [sic], 21 August 1977.

¹¹⁴ McLaughlin, *On the Frontline*, 4.

Philemon Gezi, in a recent interview noted, “We [African mission staff] supported the freedom fighters to the hilt, this is what saved Nhowe Mission.”¹¹⁵ This was not unique to NM; it was a common practise because the majority of Africans were supportive of the war.¹¹⁶ With the exception of a few “sell-outs,” that is, those Africans who supported the Rhodesian government, the war was the People’s War. At ELCZ mission centres in Mberengwa, just like at NM, “The clergy, the lay workers, and ordinary [C]hristians came out readily in support both morally and materially of the guerrillas, with the full conviction that the struggle was justified and that it was their war.”¹¹⁷ At NM, the guerrillas used to privately visit with leaders like Zebedee Tandi, Philemon Gezi, Isaac Mupondi, Elias Feremenga, and others. These meetings gave the Africans zeal, zest, and desire of running the mission even without missionaries. Moreover, they also received moral support from Chris Chetsanga.

Zebedee Tandi, with the knowledge of the other Africans at NM, wrote to his former student, now a professor, Chris Chetsanga, who was teaching biochemistry at Michigan State University about NM’s pending fate. Chetsanga met with the elders at Swartz Creek Church of Christ, in Michigan, Roy Palmer’s main financial supporters and NM’s overseeing congregation.¹¹⁸ Swartz Creek congregation, according to Mhlanga, was “a critical congregation

¹¹⁵ Gezi, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹¹⁶ The war was given different titles like the War of Liberation, the War of Independence or in Shona simply as *Hondo YeChimurenga*—war of liberation.

¹¹⁷ Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 194. Mr. Shumba, former headmaster of Masase, in an interview with Bhebe described their monetary support: “We paid quite a lot for the war effort in money terms. This was an on-going thing. We would divide the financial requests equally among the teachers. Well, since they need so much and we are so many, let each one of us pay so much. If we had no cash, then I would go into the Church or school fund to make loan advances. At the end of the month I would then collect the money from the teachers and other workers concerned. Some very few people did not honour their obligations. Altogether, when we considered to be incriminating evidence to the Smith forces, it came to \$6,500. I had kept a proper record of our payment to the guerrillas in the log register which I kept in the school safe. And those cash payments were made in a space of less than two years. Besides this was on top of what many members of staff were required to pay whenever they visited their homes.” Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 197.

¹¹⁸ Chris Chetsanga and Washington Mhlanga were worshipping at Strathmore Church of Christ. Mhlanga was a graduate student at Wayne State University. They had planned to meet the elders together, but Mhlanga was writing

at that time.”¹¹⁹ In that meeting, Chetsanga told the elders that he had received a letter to the effect that the superintendent wanted to close NM, a fact which was confirmed by the elders. He told the meeting that the Africans do not want the mission closed and “whatsoever happens the Lord will see to it rather than closing it.”¹²⁰ With this conviction, Chetsanga started speaking on behalf of NM. In one of his letters addressed to the Board of Directors, Chetsanga noted that:

I have taken a more active interest in the operation of Nhowe starting in 1977 when I convinced the elders at Swartz Creek congregation here in Michigan not to allow [the superintendent] to close Nhowe as he had intended to do. I have kept in constant touch with Brothers Feremenga and Tandi, giving them advice when I felt it was necessary to do so.¹²¹

For the Africans, they could not even contemplate seeing NM closed, worse sold, as summarised below by Chetsanga and Mhlanga. First, the Africans owned NM. Chetsanga emphasised that “this is their mission, their only Church of Christ mission.”¹²² Second, not only did the Africans co-own NM, Mhlanga furthermore explained that “all these black families considered NM their home and where would they go if it is closed. They were prepared to stick it up [sic].”¹²³ Third, the Africans knew that,

With our administrative set up in the Church of Christ where there is this autonomy ... if the mission station had been abandoned and vandalised, then to try and find finances [it was going to be] difficult, very difficult. It would be a mammoth task. Hence, they would rather risk their lives.¹²⁴

examinations, therefore, he could not attend the meeting. Chris Chetsanga and Washington Mhlanga, interview by Paul Chimhungwe. Chetsanga and Mhlanga could not recall the date of the meeting, therefore, I cannot conclude which came first, Chetsanga’s meeting with the Swartz Creek leadership or the letter from NM to Swartz Creek.

¹¹⁹ Chetsanga and Mhlanga, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹²⁰ Chetsanga and Mhlanga, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹²¹ Chetsanga, Letter to Nhowe Board of Governors, 31 August 1981. In a recent interview with Chetsanga, he also pointed out that during those war years, he wrote his uncle, Headman Chetsanga, who was a strong ZAPU member and avid supporter of the guerrillas, “something like please do not allow the war to spillover to Nhowe or please spare Nhowe from the war. Of course this was me writing from America, I did not know what was exactly happening home.” Chetsanga and Mhlanga, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹²² Chetsanga and Mhlanga, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹²³ Chetsanga and Mhlanga, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹²⁴ Chetsanga and Mhlanga, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

Finally, traditional leaders starting with Chief Mangwende, his sub-chief Mukarakate, and Headman Chetsanga, who were associated with NM, were totally against the closure of a mission in their area. NM was both an ecclesiastical and community heritage whose closure or disposal would have had grave repercussions. Even some former missionaries were concerned about the fate of NM.

Lloyd Gifford, a former superintendent of NM, was perturbed about the fate of 700 children in both the primary and secondary schools who received basic education, in addition to the Word of God, if the mission closed its doors. Gifford, while in the United States, wrote in 1977:

The African brethren are trying to see what they can do to keep the place open on their own, on a self-supporting basis. ... If it closes, there will be no place for Christian Education for the African people in the entire country of Rhodesia. We feel very sad about closing the doors of this fine institution that has served the African brethren for a period of 38 years. I feel confident that the Lord's eyes must be wet with tears over this loss.¹²⁵

It was, accordingly, not only the Africans, in and outside the Churches of Christ, who were gravely disturbed about the future of the mission, even former missionaries and the surrounding community. For that reason, the African community on the ground pressed against the proposed plans and a solution had to be found.

Role of Dave Meikle

With pressure coming from within Rhodesia, both Christians and non-Christians, and from the USA where Chetsanga “was the spokesperson,” Dr. Palmer was finally persuaded to accept the will of the people.¹²⁶ However, he agreed to handover the mission to the Africans on one condition. According to Dave Meikle “Roy Palmer said ‘I am prepared to let the mission run

¹²⁵ Gifford, *The Grapevine*, 22 September 1977.

¹²⁶ Gezi, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

so long I can hand it over to somebody whom I can trust. He said to me, 'Are you prepared?' I told him that I am just a farmer."¹²⁷ In another way, Dr. Palmer only trusted a white man. After this discussion with Meikle, Dr. Palmer told the African "leadership" at NM that he is comfortable with Dave Meikle heading the mission. When crises arise, some people assume leadership—especially the elderly in the Shona culture. Zebedee Tandi, who had been teaching carpentry at NM since 1950, became the outstanding leader during this period. He drove seven men from NM to En Avant Farm, Old Mutare, where Dave Meikle was farming. The group was made up of Andrew Bamu, Philemon Gezi, Elias Feremenga, Jeremiah Masaraure, Samson Mhlanga, Isaac Mupondi, and Zebedee Tandi himself.

On arrival at En Avant Farm, Meikle would recall thirty-three years later that "that group's spirituality touched me. They literally turned the meeting into an unforgettable prayer meeting. Those men were spiritual."¹²⁸ After singing and praying, the African leadership persuaded Meikle to become the superintendent-cum-principal and manager of NM. Meikle, who identifies himself as an indigenous Zimbabwean farmer, was born and bred in Mutare.¹²⁹ He trained as a soldier with the Rhodesian Army, a legal requirement for all white male citizens

¹²⁷ Meikle, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹²⁸ Meikle, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹²⁹ Dave Meikle was born at Umtali in 1941 and got a diploma from Gwebi Agricultural College. He worked in the Lowveld Sugar Industry for years before settling at En Avant Farm which he purchased on 17 September 1966. He was raised as a Marmon before converting to the Church of Christ after being taught by Clayton Waller and Loy Mitchell in 1973. He was married that same year to Irene. Dave Meikle's En Avant Farm was compulsory acquired by the Zimbabwe government in 2006 and he was evicted from the property on 17 September 2006 when Panganai "Chopuchopu" Muniya took it over. Muniya was born and bred in Honde Valley, Headman Muparutsa's area. He joined the war of liberation in 1976 and operated in the Marange area. At independence he was attested into the army where he retired in 1993. The Meikles family is the only white family associated with the Churches of Christ, A Cappella Branch, that lost a farm, a house, and a business venture during the 2000-2008 chaotic land reform programme in Zimbabwe. After losing his farm, Meikle settled in the Christmas Pass, a suburb in Mutare, since the land reform programme did not affect any houses or businesses in cities and towns. Most white families that lost their farms either rented or bought houses and businesses in towns because it was safe. The land reform programme, although chaotic, did not affect any business ventures operated by whites or blacks in cities and towns. Neither did white families lose their houses in towns. The chaotic land reform programme should be separated from the brutal and inhumane Operation Murambatsvina (2005) which affected mainly poor black families that were squatting or had constructed unauthorized structures in urban areas. See Meikle, interview by Paul Chimhungwe. See also Bourne, *Catastrophe: what went wrong in Zimbabwe?*

during the colonial settler years, although he operated part-time during the war of independence.

After seriously weighting the issue, Dave Meikle, the farmer, reluctantly accepted the position of, as he would phrase it, “figure-head-principal of Nhowe Mission.”¹³⁰ He openly told the seven men that they should know that he is a mere farmer and not an academic or administrator. Since both the Rhodesian government and American missionaries had confidence in the white skin, he was personally willing to be a figurehead principal and leave most of the administration in the hands of the African group. In turn, Meikle would coordinate all the activities and become the linchpin between NM and the Department of Education–Division of African Education. He would make sure that the Church of Christ remain the responsible authority while the government pays all teachers. Moreover, he was going to liaise with NM Advisory Board that was being chaired by Alex Ndlukula.¹³¹ The Nhowe group went back to Palmer and told him the good news. With this arrangement, which Dr. Palmer felt comfortable with, he finally handed the mission to Dave Meikle who was going to work with a group of unprepared Africans. For students at NM, the appointment of Dave Meikle was what they wanted, since he would, supposedly, uphold Palmer’s administrative standards. According to Elias Kutadzaushe, “it was fashionable to have a white man as a principal.”¹³² It is alleged, however, that before finally handing over the mission, the superintendent disposed of some

¹³⁰ Meikle, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹³¹ Alex Ray Ndlukula was born at WuyuWuyu Mission, Murewa, when John Sherriff was the mission manager. His father worked for John Sherriff who brought him from Bulawayo. Ndlukula did his primary school at Forest Vale Mission, Bulawayo, and Dadaya Mission, a Christian Church (New Zealand) affiliated mission. After Standard Six at Luveve Primary he went to Zambia where he did four years at Mnali Secondary School. He trained as a primary school teacher at Namwianga Mission, Zambia. In 1950 he was persuaded by Boyd Reese to accompany him to NM. Reese had been appointed mission manager and Ndlukula taught in the primary school. In 1969 Ndlukula was appointed Acting Headmaster of the Nhowe Primary School in addition to supervising four primary (village) schools operated by NM namely Magunje, Morris, Rukunguhwe, and Wuyu Wuyu. He left NM in 1970 for Harare where he joined The National Family Planning Association as director. Ndlukula joined South West Wales Electrical Company as Personnel Manager in 1975 where he remained until 1980 when he joined BAT Zimbabwe where he retired as the Human Resources Director in 1998. Alex Ray Ndlukula, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹³² Kutadzaushe and Makunde, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

valuable assets.

The mission had bought a new Ford lorry and two new Peugeot trucks between 1976 and 1977, but when Meikle was appointed principal, he said, "I appointed Feremenga to be the man on the ground and to facilitate transportation, we bought him a vehicle."¹³³ What had happened to the other vehicles? There is a general, unsubstantiated, understanding amongst the blacks, who were working or associated with NM, that those assets were sold. Pindukai Makunde, whose mother was residing at NM said, "A Ford lorry was sold, two Peugeot [trucks] were sold. There was a printing machine, but that one we do not know."¹³⁴ The only probably reliable evidence relating to this issue is a letter from Chetsanga in which he was informing the board of directors of his fundraising endeavours towards the construction of classrooms at NM. He wrote, "I understand they [administrators at NM] also need a larger truck to replace the one that [the superintendent] sold, as well as needing a tractor."¹³⁵ Chetsanga is credited by Gezi as the man who saved NM from being sold because "he had to fight it; he was the individual we depended upon."¹³⁶ The same sentiments were echoed by Makunde and Ishmael Matangira. Makunde emphasised that "it was Chetsanga who instilled confidence in the blacks to run the mission. If it was not him, we would have lost NM."¹³⁷ Since there is no extant written record about the disposal of these assets, or their ownership, during the transitional period, that question will remain unanswered.

It should, however, be appreciated that the superintendent was supportive of the Rhodesian government arguing that the U.S. and Britain were not fair in their treatment of the

¹³³ Meikle, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹³⁴ Kutadzaushe and Makunde, interview by Paul Chimhungwe. Although Makunde was no longer teaching at NM, he frequented the mission to visit his mother, relatives, and friends. Therefore, he knew exactly what was happening at NM.

¹³⁵ Chetsanga, Letter to Board of Governors, 31 August 1981.

¹³⁶ Gezi, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹³⁷ Kutadzaushe and Makunde, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

settler government since they were supporting terrorist leaders who believed in Marxist ideology and were backed by the Soviet Union. He concluded, “These terrorist leaders, Nkomo, Mugabee [sic], and Sithole insist that they will accept nothing but a complete capitulation and immediate hand-over of power to “them”... This is a recipe for disaster.”¹³⁸

The superintendent’s fears, just like some missionaries from the denominational world, were genuinely grounded in the pathetic political situation in the newly independent Mozambique, whose government was based on Marxist-Leninist tenets. Robert Mugabe, an avowed Marxist, whose ZANLA forces were operating around NM had their rare bases in Mozambique. The conclusion was that mission centres like NM would be nationalised like what was happening in Mozambique. Western missionaries, at that time, unfortunately failed to realise that the Mozambican situation was diametrically opposite to the Zimbabwean. Bhebe has analysed the two political scenarios in detail but for this thesis only a few comments are in order.¹³⁹

In Mozambique, Portugal, the coloniser and the Roman Catholic Church, had a working Memorandum of Understanding that Protestants could not operate in that country. All priests who worked in Mozambique were supposed to be from Portugal. Bhebe rightfully thinks that,

These agreements had helped to consummate the relationship of the church with the fascist government of Portugal so that the two collaborated most effectively and intimately in exploiting the Mozambicans Since the record of the church in education, health and other social services for the people of Mozambique was almost nil; the government officials could only observe that the *raison d’etre* of the Roman Catholic Church in the country had been simply to be in the forefront of the Portuguese cultural imperialism. Because of all these and many other negative aspects of the church the independent government of Mozambique had nationalised education and health and had

¹³⁸ Palmer, *Nhowe Mission*, 4 April 1977. With the current, 2007-2011, economic, political, and social quagmire in Zimbabwe, Dr. Palmer is maybe shouting from his grave, “See what I told you thirty-three years ago. Where has the Marxist Mugabe led the country to? Was I not prophetic?”

¹³⁹ See Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 75-110.

found no reason whatsoever to make special concessions to the Church.¹⁴⁰

This is what most missionaries, Christians, and leadership in other faith-based organisations failed to understand when Mugabe and Nkomo envisaged an independent Zimbabwe government based on Marxist-Leninist principles. In Rhodesia, quality education and health delivery system, especially in the rural areas where most indigenous people dwelt, was in the hands of different ecclesiastical groups. The church, therefore, had a good record in many areas; although one African medical doctor once said, “the missionary came here first and let in Rhodes, and the Chartered Company.”¹⁴¹

It should, however, be pointed out that it was the provision of education and health to the surrounding communities that saved many mission infrastructures from vandalism during the war. At NM, the entire infrastructure remained intact. Echoing the same point, Bhebe writes, “To start with, all the E.L.C.Z. central missions combined evangelism, formal education and medical healing. The last aspect entrenched and endeared the mission in the hearts of the local community in that it was rendered to everybody, irrespective of their religious affiliation.”¹⁴² At NM, the clinic was central and the acting superintendent, Budd Farmer, reported in 1975 that Gezi was

a nurse to the 600 students and several hundred others who make up the labor force and their families on the mission. In addition to her patients on the mission, sister Gezi treats dozens of cases each month from villages in the tribal trust land. I suppose she has delivered as many babies as any good obstetrician in America.¹⁴³

In this way, a mission centre, like NM, become the fulcrum of the community. Makunde, for that reason believed that “[some missionaries] panicked at the war situation with [Steve]

¹⁴⁰ Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 86.

¹⁴¹ Gelfand, *African Crucible*, 69.

¹⁴² Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 86.

¹⁴³ Farmer, *Nhowe Mission August Report*, 1975.

Rorabacher, one of the missionaries, a Vietnam War veteran, moving around with his FN rifle.

We did not expect that from a missionary but we saw it.”¹⁴⁴

On the contrary, the majority of mission centres that concentrated solely on education alone or were imposed on communities ended up being vandalized during the war. A typical example is Chegato Mission in Mberengwa which was levelled to the ground.¹⁴⁵ Location, therefore, is another salient feature that should not be neglected in analysing who would manage NM if Dr. Palmer left the country.

NM was situated in a commercial farming area bordering with the following farms: Stephen on the east, Platern on the west, and Waterloo on the south. On the north and northeast, the mission's neighbours were indigenous villagers under Headman Chetsanga who reported to sub-chief Mukarakate. All these were subjects of Chief Mangwende. Nyamatore is convinced that one of the major reasons why Dr. Palmer was not willing to surrender NM to Africans was the pressure probably from the white commercial farmers who were not comfortable in having Africans controlling close to 2,000 acres of farmland in their midst with the guerrilla war advancing.¹⁴⁶ A white person had to be in charge at NM during those difficult years otherwise a mission that was constructed from tithes and offerings would be turned into a haven of terrorist activities. If the authorities at NM failed to find a white person to manage it, it must be closed or sold to the government and the terrorists will lose. A precedent had been set at St. Albert's

¹⁴⁴ Kutadzaushe and Makunde, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹⁴⁵ Bhebe describes the destruction at Chegato where, “The destruction and looting of the mission by the local people was thorough ... Chegato took years to build. But it was leveled to the ground in a matter of couple months [because the mission] appeared like an alien institution which served very little purpose to the Mapiravana and Maposi communities, and the teachers' attitudes and behaviour in the war only helped to underline that feature in the minds of the people, who took the first opportunity to destroy. Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 210. On a separate page, Bhebe notes that “the destruction and looting of the mission by the local people was thorough Chegato took years to build. But it was leveled to the ground in a matter of couple months.” Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 211.

¹⁴⁶ Nyamatore, telephone interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

Mission, as detailed by Ian Linden, where, “After a second series of guerrilla attacks on farms in the Centenary region, one hundred farmers and residents called for the closure of the neighbouring St. Albert’s Mission run by thirteen German Jesuits.”¹⁴⁷ Ironically, it was a directive from the freedom fighters that finally closed NM at the height of the war in 1979.

Temporary Closure of NM

In 1978, the cunning Ian Smith’s regime signed an Internal Settlement Agreement with three moderate African politicians: Bishop Abel Muzorewa, Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole, and Chief Jeremiah Sikireta Chirau. These politicians, particularly Muzorewa and Sithole, had promised to end the guerrilla war. The war of liberation, however, instead of abating, intensified into every part of the country resulting in the closure of most rural based mission schools in 1979. The majority relocated to urban areas that were considered safe. For example, Elim Secondary School, Manjanja, Inyanga District, which was affiliated to the Elim Pentecostal Church, had relocated to Penhalonga in 1977. Unfortunately, the decision to move to Penhalonga, ten kilometres north of Mutare, was not safe for the Elimites. McLaughlin wrote, “It was a fatal decision as nine teachers and one infant [all whites] were murdered at the new site in Vumba on 23 June 1978, less than a year after their arrival.”¹⁴⁸ NM, through its good relationship with the guerrillas remained operating until September 1979, when it finally closed its doors.

Nyamatore recalls that heavily armed freedom fighters–guerrillas–arrived at the mission at around 1:00 am one Friday morning and called all teachers, staff members, and students for a meeting that was held in the soccer field. The guerrillas told the gathering that it was no longer safe for the mission to remain operating. According to Meikle, “The freedom fighters came and said to Feremenga and students; you have forty-eight hours to move from here otherwise there

¹⁴⁷ Linden, *The Catholic Church*, 73.

¹⁴⁸ McLaughlin, *On the Frontline*, 125.

will be trouble.”¹⁴⁹ Meikle, the figure-head-superintendent, was serving in the army at that time and he could not be contacted. Feremenga, who had been appointed principal by Meikle, because he had the ability and credibility, with the assistance of the other leaders at NM, marshalled resources and transported secondary school teachers and students to Harare and Mutare.¹⁵⁰

Dave Meikle applauded this “initiative taken by black leadership.”¹⁵¹ The leaders negotiated with their counterparts at USOP who accommodated Forms II and IV students who were writing the Rhodesia Junior Certificate and the Cambridge General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level) in November and December of that year. Forms I and III students were accommodated at Mufakose Church of Christ, Harare, where Edmund Gwazaza was the preacher. With the departure of staff and students, NM was temporarily closed and the premises were virtually empty with only three families remaining, that is, Feremenga, Mupondi, and Tandi. Eventually the military took-over and this will be described in the next section. In addition to these families, most farm workers who resided at Cherima neighbourhood also remained at the mission. All these families continued privately feeding the guerrillas and protecting the infrastructure.

After winning in closing NM, Gezi said “the boys [freedom fighters i.e. guerrillas] went through the villages in and around Mukarakate and said to the people, ‘We do not want anybody to go and harm Nhowe Mission. Should we hear that person *pasinaye* [down with that person, literally we will kill him or her].’”¹⁵²

The Rhodesian Army was not amused by the closure of NM. The military officials called

¹⁴⁹ Meikle, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹⁵⁰ Dave Meikle highly respected Feremenga who was in charge at the mission. The success of NM during those turbulent years depended on him. “It was Feremenga, what a first class fellow, he was very dependable, very honest, handled all the money. He was the man, I was the figurehead.” Meikle, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹⁵¹ Meikle, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹⁵² Gezi, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

Meikle to Marondera and told him that the empty buildings were a massive security threat. Moreover, there were tonnes of maize in the storerooms that could be used to feed the terrorists. As the army, they could not use NM grounds since it considered them consecrated a sacred place. Meikle recalls, “I told them that it is not consecrated ground and they requested if it could be used as a training ground. I said I did not mind, if you want to use it, use it, but we want it back in good condition.”¹⁵³ The military took over and Meikle thinks they used the premises to train Muzorewa’s soldiers who were known as *Pfumo ReVanhu* (translated The Spear of the People or Auxiliary Forces).¹⁵⁴

Leadership after Independence

When NM was closing in September 1979, the Rhodesian Government was feeling the effects of the protracted war of independence. The supposedly invincible Ian Smith and his Internal Settlement cohorts Chirau, Muzorewa, and Sithole finally agreed to meet with the guerrilla leaders Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo at Lancaster House in October 1979. It was at the Lancaster House Conference where all the warring parties finally agreed to a ceasefire under the oversight of the colonial ruler Britain. The UN provided peacekeeping forces leading to free and fair elections in February 1980. As expected, Robert Mugabe won and became the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe. There was euphoria from indigenous Zimbabweans inside and outside the country.

The majority of those in diaspora started making plans of going back to Zimbabwe. Some of the young men and women who had been sent overseas by different denominations started trickling back. Others, like Augustine Nyamatore, although he was not sent by the church,

¹⁵³ Meikle, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹⁵⁴ In order to combat terrorism, the Rhodesian Army occupied empty mission stations using them as military training camps or as Rhodesian military bases. See Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 178.

terminated their studies in order to contribute to the success of the country. Most of them were eminently qualified, academically, with enviable administrative and managerial skills helping to solve the chronic shortage of qualified human resources. In the teaching field, people with the Rhodesia Junior Certificate (Form II) filled most teaching positions in rural primary schools. In some secondary schools, especially in the rural areas and missions, most teachers had Form IV (Ordinary Levels) qualifications. Science and maths teachers were scarce. It was during this period that NM reopened its doors.

In 1980, the Rhodesian Army, according to Meikle, handed over the mission to the church and school started operating.¹⁵⁵ Meikle, who remained as the figure-head-superintendent, appointed Elias Feremenga as the superintendent/principal and mission manager. Working under him were J. T. Mudonhi, secondary school headmaster, and Rishon Fadzi, primary school headmaster. Isaac Mupondi was heading the farm, with Mrs. Fadzi, Rishon Fadzi's wife, a qualified nurse, heading the clinic.¹⁵⁶ The church did not have a fulltime preacher; hence, men took turns in preaching. During this period, Washington and Alice Mhlanga started teaching at NM.

For the Mhlangas, NM was home. Washington Mhlanga's parents were at NM and for the family teaching at NM would be fulfilling Dr. Palmer's academic plans for NM. Moreover, the serious shortage of Christian teachers at NM had been brought to the attention of Chris Chetsanga. In August 1981, Chetsanga wrote:

During the last two years, Brothers Feremenga and Tandi expressed concern about the need for more Christian teachers at the mission. I shared their concern and felt that I must try to help alleviate this trend. It was to this end that I persuaded Dr. Washington

¹⁵⁵ It should be remembered that Feremenga, Mupondi, and Tandi, had remained on the mission during its brief closure.

¹⁵⁶ Mrs. Gezi worked at NM for few months before leaving for Harare when the husband got a job as travelling scout commissioner with the Rhodesia Boy Scouts at the end of 1980.

[Mhlanga] and his wife Alice to go and work at Nhowe.¹⁵⁷

First to arrive at NM was Alice and their one-year old baby, Melissa, in January 1981. She had a B.Sc. and M.Sc. in chemistry from the University of Michigan and taught science at NM. In May, Washington arrived at NM two days after successfully defending his Ph.D. dissertation at Wayne State University. Through his communication with Chris Chetsanga and the impression those at NM had given him, in addition to analyzing the academic needs at the mission and its leadership, Mhlanga was given an understanding that probably he was going to land himself a leadership position. As a young educated Christian man, he had zeal, zest, and energy to open new vistas for NM's four programmes: agriculture, education, health, and spirituality. Naturally, this was supposed to be the course of action; but the couple found itself in a cul-de-sac. The road to leadership at NM was heavily littered with 'anti-personnel landmines' and hurdles, which unfortunately left scars on their lives. Both husband and wife were confined to the classrooms without any administrative roles. Alice taught science and Washington history. The Advisory Board, as the responsible authority, surprisingly, had not delineated Mhlanga's position vis-à-vis the incumbent secondary school headmaster and mission superintendent. For Mhlanga, the reception was less enthusiastic forcing the young family to pack its bags at the end of August 1981 for Harare with hopes for the better.¹⁵⁸

As the couple was packing its bags, Chetsanga wrote a letter to the Board of Directors not knowing that Mhlanga had already left.¹⁵⁹ In the end, NM lost the opportunity of utilising a

¹⁵⁷ Chris Chetsanga, Letter to Board of Governors. 31 August 1981.

¹⁵⁸ The sources for the last two paragraphs requested anonymity.

¹⁵⁹ Part of the letter reads, "I have been disheartened by the letters I have received from Brother Mhlanga in which he told me about what he thought was a less than enthusiastic reception he has received since his arrival at Nhowe. From the sound of it, he seems to me he is considering leaving Nhowe. This would be a very tragic development. Their leaving Nhowe would generate a need that would be hard to fill. Alice is a highly trained scientist, being a holder of the Master's degree from the prestigious University of Michigan. Washington with all the training he received at Michigan Christian College, Abilene Christian University and Wayne State University can easily find a

young qualified family. Since his departure, NM has not had anybody with an earned doctorate teaching or working there. What a tragedy.

After their departure, students went on a rampage to protest Mhlanga's departure. They destroyed school property, with the headmaster's house being extensively damaged. It is alleged Mudonhi, the headmaster, pointed fingers at Mhlanga as the source of problems, although Mhlanga had already left NM. In the end, Mudonhi was forced to resign, although, he too did not have anything to do with the strike. Andrew Bamu who finally landed the principal's position for the whole mission when the superintendent's post was abolished after the departure of Elias Feremenga at the end of 1982 replaced him. In that same year, Chetsanga wrote to the board proposing that NM should be owned by the Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe, which in turn would select its own members to form the Board of Governors that would manage NM. Chetsanga's advice was followed in toto.

The Advisory Board called for a general meeting, which was held at Dombotombo Church of Christ, Marondera, in 1983 to discuss the suggestion. The meeting approved the recommendation and all the previous board members who had been handpicked by the missionaries were relieved of their positions including Alex Ndlukula, the chairperson, and Dave Meikle, who had saved the mission during the war. Meikle is convinced that "in 1980 [sic] the board was politicised and we were thrown out of the board, Ndlukula and myself... that was the end of my involvement in the mission."¹⁶⁰ He was one member whom most of those in attendance did not want because of his skin colour, forgetting his immense contribution during the war, while Ndlukula was considered, by some of the participants, as a "sell-out" because he

responsible position elsewhere in Zimbabwe. I am sure that with all this training he needs more challenging responsibilities than he presently has." Chetsanga, Letter to Board of Governors, 31 August 1981.

¹⁶⁰ Meikle, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

worked closely with Dr. Palmer.¹⁶¹ This was an unfortunate development since most Africans highly respected Dr. Palmer. Ishmael Matangira and Campion Mugweni were also relieved of their positions. The new members of the first post missionary board of governors included Ben Kanyangarara as chairperson with Washington Mhlanga as secretary. Other members were Fanuel Manhanga, Jeremiah Masaraure, and Augustine Nyamatore. This board spearheaded phenomenal developmental projects at NM within a few years after independence.

With the attainment of independence, Zimbabwe received financial support from many quarters with ecclesiastical organisations and faith-based institutions involved in agriculture, education, and health delivery systems becoming attractive to donors. NM benefited from such benefactors as Christian Care, Beit Foundation, and the Ministry of Education. Through these financial sources, the mission constructed classrooms, science laboratories, teachers' houses, bought furniture and textbooks, in addition to the construction of a church building. The greatest academic stride was achieved in 1986 when NM introduced Advanced Level (Forms V and VI) classes. This was a milestone in NM's history, since it was accomplished without financial support from Churches of Christ in the USA. Although NM did not cut ties with these churches, it did not receive substantial funding from the US between 1980 and 1990. When Lloyd Gifford, who was superintendent at NM from 1962-1969, and Roy Palmer separately visited NM, according to Makunde "the former missionaries were shocked at the progress at NM in the absence of missionaries."¹⁶²

Conclusion

Nhowe Mission, the crown of Church of Christ–Stone-Campbell Movement A Cappella

¹⁶¹ Ndlukula, in a recent interview, expressed the idea that some of the Christians, after the war, labeled him a "sell-out" since he was the chairperson of the Nhowe Mission Advisory Board and worked closely with Palmer who was highly respected in the church. Hence the label was very unfortunate. Ndlukula, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹⁶² Kutadzaushe and Makunde, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

Branch—western missionary endeavours in Rhodesia was founded in 1939. For thirty-eight years, the white missionaries led it while the blacks—the beneficiaries—were on the periphery of power. The communist aligned war of liberation that ravaged the country, between 1971 and 1979, changed the status quo. Western missionaries at NM were forced to leave the country. However, they were not comfortable to hand over power to the unprepared indigene. Moreover, western funding had dried since most missionaries thought such Christian centres would be eventually nationalised by a black majority government. On the contrary, the African Christians were prepared to manage NM despite their managerial and leadership deficiencies that were compounded by a poor financial base. It was the deep sense of ownership that spurred them to request for an opportunity to lead NM.

For them, NM was “their” institution; therefore, they pleaded with the missionaries to let them lead it for the sake of their children in the faith and the future of the Church of Christ in a majority ruled Zimbabwe. The Africans knew, since they worked closely with the guerrillas, that Christian mission schools would not be nationalised in a free Zimbabwe. Furthermore, Chief Mangwende, sub-chief Mukarakate, and headman Chetsanga, as traditional leaders around NM, did not want to see the mission closed or disposed of as per the superintendent’s proposal. The mission was pivotal to these communities since it provided education and biomedical services. As a Christian institution, it also moulded and prepared the youths for future leadership positions. Its closure would have had devastating repercussions for their communities.

After a hard struggle, the superintendent finally accepted the Africans’ request although he handed power to Dave Meikle. Meikle was a white commercial farmer who remote controlled the mission for two years from Umtali, 165 kilometres east of NM. It was the Africans at NM who managed “their” mission.

The ownership concept, deeply ingrained in the Africans, compelled the Africans at NM to navigate in uncharted oceans after taking over the leadership mantle. Efoe Julien Penoukou believes that “the taking over of positions of responsibility by young churches [unprepared leaders] is a reaffirmation of their determination to assert their own identity.”¹⁶³ It also acknowledges the sacrifices of both missionaries and the indigenous in their quest to evangelise the local people through faith-based works at mission centres like NM. When missionaries founded NM, they did not envisage closing or selling the infrastructure in future. It was the bloody war of liberation and the ambiance around NM that nearly forced the superintendent to propose disposing off the mission; since he had not prepared the Africans for eventual takeover. During such tumultuous times, as Mhlanga expressed it, “Rational people ... make irrational decisions.”¹⁶⁴ For the majority of Zimbabweans affiliated to the Churches of Christ, they will always be grateful to the western missionaries for NM. As human beings, these missionaries had their weaknesses, as we–Africans–also have our own. This concurs with Bosela Eale’s assessment that, “There is not work in this world that is devoid of imperfection, and missionary work in Africa is not an exception to this principle.”¹⁶⁵

At NM, the Africans, after taking over, managed to improve the infrastructure since the political environment was now conducive for them to lead such institutions. The government of Zimbabwe and overseas-based charitable organisations funded most of the construction projects at NM. These capital projects aided NM to become financially sustainable in the absence of financial support from the North American Churches of Christ.

¹⁶³ Penoukou, “Missionary Priests and the Future of the African Churches,” 53-59.

¹⁶⁴ Chetsanga and Mhlanga, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹⁶⁵ Eale, *Mission in Africa*, 260-270.

After the leadership transition, NM, as a Christian institution continued to lead Africans to the Cross of Christ through Bhebe's three pronged approach: education, health, and preaching. This chapter dealt with education and health while preaching is the subject of the next chapter. For the Churches of Christ, as Chetsanga fittingly expressed it, "the centre of the gospel [preaching] was Nhowe Mission when I left [for the USA] in the early 60s, now it is Mutare [School of Preaching]." ¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ Chetsanga and Mhlana, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

CHAPTER THREE

UMTALI SCHOOL OF PREACHING

The history of Umtali School of Preaching (USOP) is interwoven with that of Nhowe Mission (NM); even what transpired during its transitional period (1976-1977) is similar to that of NM. These two institutions, though located separately and under the oversight of two different congregations in the USA, were nearly closed by the authorities during the turbulent times of horrific war of liberation. This chapter chronicles the history of USOP, its origin, goals, objectives, and source of funding. The main body of the chapter deals with the leadership structure, particularly during the transitional period. Just like any other church affiliated-educational institution that was established and operated during the colonial period, its history revolves around individual western missionary families. For USOP, four outstanding missionary families and one indigenous family were in leadership positions during the period under discussion. These families were Roy Virgil Palmer, Loy Stanley Mitchell, James Alan Petty, John Hanson, and Xavier Francis Goredema. Other families played crucial roles in the background.

Brief History–Goals and Objectives

Roy V. Palmer, as a professor at ACU in 1956, started advancing the idea of starting a preachers' training school at NM where he was planning to work.¹ Palmer had experienced the pivotal role of a preachers' training school in evangelizing a nation when he was in Germany. He had accompanied Ottis Gatewood to Germany in 1946 immediately after the end of the Second World War where, amongst other activities, they set up a preachers' training school. During the

¹ The biographical background of Roy V. Palmer and Jaxie, his wife, is outlined in chapter two of this thesis.

planning phase of his prospective missionary work in Rhodesia, Palmer read about the evangelistic endeavours of the indigenous people like Jack Muzirwa, Muwirimi Makunde, Sampson Mhlanga, but reminiscent of Zululand this “work of evangelism had been started by a band of untrained, untutored, but dedicated African men.”² Therefore, he felt the need for a formal school of preaching that would equip and enhance the natives’ quest to spread the gospel. With that conviction, Palmer toiled to raise funds for the establishment of Nhowe Bible College. The idea was accepted by a number of congregations in the USA, including the University Church of Christ, Austin, Texas, NM’s main benefactor at that time. In addition to fundraising, Palmer started recruiting teachers for the proposed school.

One of the pioneer teachers in the preachers’ training school was Loy Stanley Mitchell, who toiled with others during the infancy of this school. Mitchell, a native of Lawrence, Kansas, was born in 1932 and graduated from Oklahoma Christian University. He married Donna Ross Taylor in 1954.³ As students at ACU, the Mitchells were planning missionary work in India or Nigeria when they heard about Palmer’s plans for Rhodesia. Palmer met with Mitchell in 1957 and the two became close friends and colleagues from that day. The Palmers, accompanied by the Dick Clark family, arrived at NM in 1957, with the Mitchells joining them in 1958. These three families: Clarks, Mitchells, and Palmers became the pioneer teachers at Nhowe Bible College (NBC) when it opened its doors in 1958. Palmer doubled as the principal and superintendent of the entire mission. Mitchell also taught Standard Six in the Nhowe Primary

² Gqubule, “Theological education in the Church of the Province of South Africa,” 211-221.

³ She also attended Oklahoma Christian University and ACU. As a committed missionary’s wife, she did not graduate in all these schools as her time was shared between her family and mission work. She finally graduated from University of Texas Permian Basin with a B.A. in Elementary Education and Literature in 1982 when the family was in the USA (1977-1986) assisting their children to go through university.

School.⁴ They had thirteen first year students of which four finally graduated in 1960.⁵ One notable graduate was Court Chidowe who successfully completed the three-year programme.⁶

NBC was structured to produce preachers who were to minister in the Churches of Christ. The curriculum had fifty-four subjects that were covered in three calendar years.⁷ From its inception, both members and non-members of the Churches of Christ were accepted as students with the latter ending up being members of this church. One notable example was Xavier Goredema, who later on became the first black principal of the school. Goredema was a member of the Apostolic Faith Mission preparing, in 1966, for further theological training in South Africa when he met a member of the Church of Christ who encouraged him to consider training in their church. Goredema went to Nhowe where he changed affiliation during his training.⁸ On top of the academic load, the school had practical training programmes that enriched the curriculum.

In order to produce an all round preacher, each year all students went on a ten-week preaching practice under the guidance of their teachers. During that training period, students either established a Church of Christ congregation or revived an ailing one. Students used to accompany missionaries during weekend preaching tours assisting them in interpreting the

⁴ One of his outstanding students in the primary school was David Karimanzira, Godi's son. Karimanzira later went into politics and at independence he worked for the City of Salisbury before joining government as a deputy minister. He later on occupied different ministerial posts before landing the governorship of Harare. He died in 2010.

⁵ One record shows the first graduation as being held in 1960 while another shows 1961. Loy Mitchell in a recent interview thinks that the first graduation was in 1960. Mitchell, telephone interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

⁶ Court Chidowe preached in the Harare area, where he became the full-time preacher for the Kambuzuma congregation. He went to Bear Valley School of Preaching, Colorado, USA, in the mid-seventies and came back to Kambuzuma. In the mid-70s he lost his faith but came back in 2001 when he was accepted by the 7th and Jubilee Church of Christ in Mutare. He occasionally met with this congregation. During his hey days (1960-1974) he was ranked as one of Rhodesia's outstanding black preachers in the Churches of Christ. He assisted Jeremiah and Molly Masaraure to accept the Lordship of Christ. Masaraure, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

⁷ A list of the subjects is attached in Appendix B.

⁸ The acceptance of non-members was discontinued in 1969 resulting in a reduction of the number of graduates. In 1971, they had eleven graduates, and in 1972, twelve graduates. When the new programme came into effect, they had three graduates in 1973, and four in the next two years. The school resorted to the acceptance of non-members in 1977.

message. Commencement was held during the first week of December and this would be followed by a four days Refresher Course for both students and full-time preachers. All these activities were supervised by the principal, an appointee of the overseeing congregation, which, in 1962, became the Hillcrest Church of Christ, Abilene, Texas.

The University Church of Christ in 1962 passed the baton to the eldership at Hillcrest in Abilene, Texas, who has remained the overseeing church ever since. Palmer remained the principal up to 1962 when Lloyd Gifford replaced him. Gifford doubled as principal and mission superintendent at NM. He relinquished the preachers' training school headship in 1964 when Mark Legg became the principal for the next six years. During this period, the school attracted three quality teachers, all graduates of ACU, namely Alexander Claassen, Rhinard Troup, and Clayton Waller. In 1962, Loy Mitchell left for ACU to read for his Masters in Bible where he did all the classes but did not write the thesis. He came back to Rhodesia in 1964 and settled briefly at Nhowe before relocating to Umtali, following Campion and Joyce Mugweni who pioneered the work in Dangamvura and Sakubva. It was, however, during Legg's tenure that the Hillcrest congregation decided to shift the preachers' training school from NM to a different location.

When the school was located at NM, the majority of teachers and students in the primary and secondary school held preacher students in contempt. This was stemming from most of the preacher students' inferior academic qualifications and poor command of the English language that made them a mockery at the mission. Preacher students used to weed cornfields, stump trees, gather firewood, and perform other menial jobs at the mission to defray the cost of their education. For that reason, they were nicknamed "Bible stuppets" by those who were climbing the echelons of education in the secondary school. It should be remembered that, a Standard Six graduate, those days, qualified to enter a teachers' training college and a teacher was a highly

respected member of the community. When compared to a NBC graduate who struggled financially after graduating, the preaching field was not attractive. The authorities decided to separate divine education from the secular. Moreover, as summarised below, there were some leadership squabbles at NM.

Leadership Structure 1971-1974

Some of the western missionaries were not submissive to the leadership at NM emanating from the organizational structure of the Churches of Christ. As already pointed out in the previous chapter, each congregation enjoyed autonomy under the oversight of elders. A missionary's work was under the oversight of a particular congregation to which he or she was answerable. This created ambivalence since in the mission field, like at NM, a missionary was supposed to work under the mission superintendent who did not control the missionary's funding. Such a structure was open to abuse and insubordination leading to acrimony at mission centres where missionaries were paragons of holiness. At one time Mitchell acted as the superintendent of NM while based in Umtali after serious leadership struggles erupted at NM. For these and other reasons, the eldership at Hillcrest decided to shift NBC to Umtali.

Umtali was chosen because of Loy Mitchell's character. Mitchell had proved to be a man of integrity during his teaching tenure at NM.⁹ He had a strong marriage, was transparent with finances, respected those in authority, and above all, was committed to his preaching job. Some of these qualities were missing in his counterparts. For that reason, the elders at Hillcrest, particularly J. C. McCurdy, who was the linchpin between NBC and overseas funding congregations, highly respected Mitchell. Initially they wanted the school to be located in

⁹ In addition to starting the Church of Christ, amongst the Europeans—whites—he shifted to Umtali for the sake of his children's education since the settler regime segregated education. As will become clear in this thesis, he worked with both the whites and blacks during his stay in Umtali. See Donna Mitchell, *Among the People of the Sun*.

Salisbury, the capital city, but Mitchell was not willing to leave the nascent preaching work in Umtali.¹⁰ The school, consequently, followed Mitchell to Umtali.

After he had consulted his supporting congregation—Snyder Church of Christ, Snyder, Texas—Mitchell started scouting for a suitable place in Umtali. He wanted the school to be situated next to Umtali Teachers' College, but the City of Umtali was not willing to give him that piece of land. He was asked to choose a sight in Dangamvura where he settled for 20 acres, on the summit of Dangamvura Mountain. Hillcrest eldership, through McCurdy, started fundraising for this project. In 1970, McCurdy had managed to raise US\$90,000 equivalent to R\$65,000 although construction had already started in 1969 and was completed in three years.

The Mayor of Umtali officially opened the school in July 1971 where Hillcrest was represented by two of its elders J. C. McCurdy and Earl Fine. Mitchell, in an interview with Mark Legg, told him that the buildings comprised “14 unites of 3 rooms for married students, a dormitory for 42 men, a kitchen and dining hall, a boarding masters [sic] house, a classroom block, containing 4 class rooms, 6 offices ... assembly hall, and a library.”¹¹ He was officially appointed the principal and brought much needed change in the leadership structure.

It became mandatory that all teachers, white and black, report to the headmaster who was

¹⁰ NBC later on named USOP was the only preachers' training school associated with the Non-instrumental branch of the Stone-Campbell Movement. Leadership and fragmentation of work has been a major problem in a church operating from a congregational autonomy's point of view. For example, in 1972, N. J. B. Mutuma and William Van Winkle operated what they called Salisbury School of Preaching in Salisbury. Its location remains a mystery. I interviewed a number of preachers who were based in Salisbury those years, but wanted to remain anonymous for this section. They were not aware of such a school in Salisbury. In their November 1972 Mutuma and Van Winkle reported that, “Our Preacher Training School is operating without enough funds.... The Lord's work in Rhodesia can only be accomplished in any degree of permanency [sic] by young men such as are being trained at the Salisbury School of Preaching. They know the customs, culture, and language of their own people. To be perfectly honest about it, very little can be accomplished by continuing to send American missionaries – without a doubt, Rhodesia already has too many American missionaries. With just a fraction of the expense of keeping the present [sic] number of missionaries in Rhodesia, we could evangelize all of Rhodesia. You will surely agree that we are suggesting a new approach.” Mutuma and Van Winkle, “The African Work in Rhodesia November 1972”.

¹¹ Mark Legg, “Interview with Loy Mitchell, Head Umtali [of] School of Preaching,” *Searching to Recover New Testament Christianity*, September 1971.

responsible for their salaries. This brought the much needed discipline, a problem that had rocked the school while at NM. The teachers who formed the new team at USOP were John and Rita Hanson, who also doubled as the boarding master and facilities manager. He resided on campus.¹² James Alan Petty and his wife Kay transferred with the school from NM.¹³ Clayton Waller, a senior bachelor, also transferred with the school to Umtali.¹⁴ The Dick Boyd family taught at USOP for two years and resigned in 1973. The only black teacher was Xavier Francis Goredema, with Campion Mugweni—the preacher at the Sakubva congregation—teaching the women’s classes together with Noah Gonzo, the director of Bible correspondence courses. For four years, there was not much change in the staff complement until April 1974 when James Petty took over from Mitchell. The latter’s supporting congregation wanted him to concentrate on preaching. It was during Petty’s tenure that the country was engulfed in the war of liberation that caught most western missionaries unaware.

James Alan Petty–April 1974–March 1977

As the war was ravaging the country, the eldership at Hillcrest became extremely concerned about the safety of the three white missionaries at the USOP. One of the elders wrote to Loy and Donna [Mitchell] in March 1976 and part of the letter reads, “We have asked that the Pettys, Hansons, and Clayton [Waller] give us [elders] specific details as to their contingent

¹² The Hansons migrated to Rhodesia in 1956 from Britain and worked for a hydro-utility company since John was an electrical engineer. After his conversion to Christ, while working in Harare, he became interested in full-time missionary work. Palmer appointed him the facilities manager for NM and when the Bible school relocated to Umtali, Hanson supervised the construction of the school. John Hanson Jr., interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹³ James Petty graduated from ACC with a B.A. in Bible and minor in Industrial Education. He later on earned an MSc in Religious Education in 1978. James Petty married Lindsay Kay McCarley on 20 February 1964. Kay did two years of college education at ACC. The couple left for Rhodesia in 1969 together with Jerry and Kay Hayes. They settled at NM first before leaving for Umtali in 1971.

¹⁴ Waller came to NM in 1964 when he joined the teaching staff of the Bible school. He moved with the school to Umtali. He graduated from A.C.C. with a B. A. in Bible.

plans and have suggested that they start making provision for a departure to South Africa.”¹⁵ The letter was copied to Jim [James] Petty, the Hansons, and the Doyle Gillams [sic]. Along the same vein, the elders wrote explicitly to Jim and Kay [James and Kay Petty] on the same date which they wrote the Mitchells, after talking to Petty on the phone, that they “deplore the Communist agitation but cannot afford to back a ‘white supremacist’[sic] government.”¹⁶ The same letter was copied to the Hansons, and Clayton Waller. In that letter, the elders outlined in detail what they summarized to the Mitchells. The Hillcrest eldership, which was pastoring the work at USOP, had deliberated and concluded that the white missionaries should leave Umtali because of the war. They politely requested the missionaries to dispose of their personal properties, ship what they would to the USA, and make concrete arrangements to leave for South Africa which was then a safe country.¹⁷ The safety of missionaries was a high priority for the elders. Interestingly, in the available letters, up to that point, they did not mention anything about the infrastructure at USOP until John Hanson wrote something to that effect.

John Hanson opened the Pandora’s Box when he mentioned a contingent plan for the facilities in a letter dated 8 April 1976. Maybe he had received a copy of the 15 March 1976 correspondence from the eldership at Hillcrest, since at one time Petty wrote the elders that “your letters take about two weeks to get here now.”¹⁸ Even if he had not received it, John Hanson, as the boarding master and facilities manager at USOP, wrote to John Little, the Mission Committee Chairperson, with a proposal of changing from the “four-walled-school-programme” to an extension programme. He clearly pointed out that what he was writing should be

¹⁵ [Elders] Unsigned letter to Mr. and Mrs. Loy Mitchell, 15 March 1976.

¹⁶ [Elders] Unsigned letter to Jim and Kay [Petty], 15 March 1976.

¹⁷ About contingent financial plans, the elders wrote “We have sent \$3,000 US to Al Horne in Benoni to be held in reserve for you in the event that it is needed.” Elders] Unsigned copy to Jim and Kay [Petty], 15 March 1976.

¹⁸ Petty, Letter to John [Little], 9 April 1976.

considered on a “maybe” basis; it was not concrete and he was only suggesting. In the letter, the boarding master wrote, “I question as to how much success we will have in the future with our present methods and whether we will be justified in spending further monies to maintain the school.”¹⁹ Hanson was questioning the pedagogical methodology in which students spend three years in classrooms away from their people. After graduating, they were discouraged since they failed to secure financial support.

Hanson was deeply concerned about the financial costs and to fortify his argument, he listed seven reasons why the responsible authorities, Hillcrest, should consider revising the four-walled methodology. The reasons he proffered were:

- A. The Spirel [sic] increase in costs.
- B. The political and nationalistic outlook of the Urban African.
- C. The age group of most of our students
- D. The possible future openings for Africans in industry and commers.[sic]
- E. The inability of the more mature married student being unable to give up the three years time necessary to train them.
- F. The forming of a clergy class in spite of our efforts to do otherwise.
- G. The expectations of support on completion of training and the consequent disappointment when it fails to materialise.²⁰

He elaborated his points in the letter arguing strongly that the school has been training students who did not go back to their rural areas. In response to these problems, he suggested setting up a training by extension programme. The proposed programme would consist of a missionary, an African teacher, and between five and six students camping in a populated village where a congregation would be established. He pointed out that, “The students [would be] living in the village being closely supervised by the missionary and teacher [African].”²¹ In a way, he was proposing taking the school to the villages in 1976 when the clouds of war were thickening

¹⁹ Hanson, Letter to John [Little], 8 April 1976.

²⁰ Hanson, Letter to John [Little], 8 April 1976.

²¹ Hanson, Letter to John [Little], 8 April 1976.

everywhere in Rhodesia.

It is difficult, therefore, to visualise the villages where churches would be established when the guerrillas were concentrated in the villages as pointed out in the previous chapter. Moreover, the three missionaries at USOP were being directed to leave Rhodesia. As noble as the plan appeared on paper, this thesis argues that it was dead from its inception. Hanson, however, was convinced that such a programme would reduce expenses; above all, it would dispense with the buildings that had been constructed between 1969 and 1971 at a cost of US\$90,000.

On building, the boarding master wrote:

The question that probably looms large in your mind is ...WHAT ABOUT THE SCHOOL BUILDINGS,? [sic] As you have often said the physical plant is subject to being written off if necessary but, there is a very strong possibility of being able to recoup the initial outlay.”²²

To recover the initial “investment,” Hanson, in the same letter, suggested approaching the Department of Education, which was looking for facilities to start an F2 Secondary School in Dangamvura. He was privy to that discussion and, therefore, willing to be involved in selling the school. He had discussed this with the principal—James Petty. After posting his letter, Hanson started negotiating with staff at the Department of Education and the City of Umtali. The prospective buyers were interested in the school, but this was dampened by the response which came from Hillcrest after receiving John Hanson’s letter.

On 6 May 1976, John Little and Joe Hodges wrote to James Petty acknowledging “having received [sic] letters from both you [James Petty] and John [Hanson] relative to closing down the school and subsequently directing our mission efforts in other ways.”²³ According to

²² Hanson, Letter to Little, 8 April 1976.

²³ Little and Hodges, Letter to James Petty, 6 May 1976. James Petty’s letter could not be found during my research.

these two, this issue was discussed by the missions committee and finally handed over to the elders who wanted the teachers at USOP to be specific with the suggested programme. They emphasised in that letter that, “The main message that the elders wish to communicate is that they will be open to your suggestions if all of you collectively and unanimously have modifications or changes to suggest.”²⁴ This point is central to the discussion, particularly over the future of the facilities, since the African staff pointed it out in its letter to the elders. After receiving this letter, Hanson went to the Department of Education and told them that the elders wanted to keep the school and Petty emphasised that, “The general opinion was not to sell the school.”²⁵ In that same letter, John Little wrote that he would be out of Abilene for few months and therefore, Joe Hodges was going to be the contact person. Meanwhile, in Rhodesia, Petty, as the principal, reported the school’s activities on an audiocassette which was mailed to Hillcrest.

In the audiocassette recording addressed to John Little, and later on to Joe Hodges, dated 17 May 1976, Petty examined the issue of selling or keeping the school in light of the recent terrorist incursions from Mozambique. These incursions, according to Petty, had forced the American government to give a directive forbidding its citizens from going to Rhodesia. Those already in that country had been told to prepare their departure because it was no longer safe. The guerrillas had attacked the night train at Inyazura, a small town between Umtali and Rusape, and these actions proved that the freedom fighters were now extremely audacious. Petty, though, had confidence in the Rhodesian Army which he said was conscripting the whites, hence, “They hope to hit the terrorists good and hard in the next few weeks so that to[inaudible] really set them back and we hope things will settle down if they do that.”²⁶ With this in mind, Petty felt the

²⁴ Little and Hodges, Letter to Petty, 6 May 1976.

²⁵ Petty, Audiocassette to Hodges, 27 July 1976.

²⁶ Petty, Audiocassette to Little and Hodges, 17 May 1976.

country was still safe although the future was not certain; hence, the viability of USOP facility was unpredictable.

After summarising the political situation, Petty delved into the controversial subject: keeping or selling USOP as initiated by the boarding master. Hanson, as the link between USOP and the prospective buyers City of Umtali and Department of Education, had twice guided the Mayor of Umtali and the African Affairs Minister throughout the campus and even shown them the architectural plans and how they would convert it into a secondary school. Petty said, “They [prospective buyers] are very interested and we are all waiting to hear from you.”²⁷ As a good administrator, Petty guided the elders by pointing the advantages and disadvantages of keeping it. Petty was convinced that,

If the present [Ian Smith’s] government continues, yes, keep it; but we do not know how long this government will continue. If this government falls and is given over to black majority rule [Mugabe, Muzorewa, Nkomo, and Sithole], I honestly believe that if we still have the school that it would be probably taken away. The reason I say this is that the people who will come into power, Muzorewa and some of these men, they are directly backed by the Russians the same people that back Machel in Mozambique.... The first thing that they [Mozambique Government under Machel] took over all schools, all missions and turned them into hospitals and clinics.²⁸

This was the common understanding within the white missionary community as illustrated in the previous chapter. In that chapter, it was shown that the colonial conditions in Mozambique were drastically different from those in Rhodesia. The church that operated in colonial Mozambique was the opposite of the one in Rhodesia where all the nationalist leaders had assured the people—black and white—that Christianity, and its related institutions, would have a pivotal role critical to the survival of the new country. The fear, accordingly, within the western missionary community that faith-based academic institutions like USOP and NM would be nationalised were farfetched.

²⁷ Petty, Audiocassette to Little and Hodges, 17 May 1976.

²⁸ Petty, Audiocassette to Little and Hodges, 17 May 1976.

Of course, very few westerners believed these leaders since they were backed by Russia, America's archenemy. As expected, Americans would not be excited to see these resources taken over by Russia. The missionaries, unfortunately, were caught in between. Petty, responded wisely after evaluating the political situation and concluded:

If we keep the school and the black majority government takes over we will lose it. If we sell the school and this government continues ... well we have lost what we have built up all this time. It's a hard decision to make.... Even if we sell the school we could not take all the money out of the country.... I really do not know the answer.... No one knows about this suggestion [selling the school] only teachers [missionaries] and Loy [Mitchell] know about the suggestion which John [Hanson] made"²⁹

The topic became controversial; that is the reason why the missionaries wanted it kept private and confidential. In guiding the eldership, Petty, as a good custodian, was concerned about Hillcrest's financial investment in the facilities, which he did not want the church to lose in case black majority came into power.

As the elders were about to meet to discuss the future of USOP vis-a-vis the political atmosphere in Rhodesia, they received Petty's audiocassette. After listening and praying over its contents, Joe Hodges was requested to write Petty about the outcome of their meeting. Part of the letter reads:

The elders also decided last night to give you the go ahead on selling the campus. Continue working with the officials to get what you can for it. As developments arise and things get more difficult, we will need more information about details, the campus, the future plans of mission work.... Assuming all this takes place, as soon as you receive the money over there, we will stop sending support and you will use that money for support since we cannot take it out of the country.³⁰ (emphasis added)

After receiving this letter from the Hillcrest eldership instructing the administrators to sell the school, John Hanson went to the Department of Education and told the staff about the good news

²⁹ Petty, Audiocassette to Little and Hodges, 17 May 1976.

³⁰ Hodges, Letter to Petty, 27 May 1976. The Rhodesian Government had stringent control over the transfer of its currency to any country as pointed in the audio report by Petty. Petty, Audiocassette to Little and Hodges, 17 May 1976.

which the department had been waiting for. Unfortunately or fortunately, the educational authorities had planned other alternatives since he, John Hanson, had told them previously that the elders were not willing to sell the school. According to Petty, in the audio report:

The Education Department said we have already gone ahead with these other plans... finally the decision appeared in the *Umtali Post* last week. I have included the clip ... R\$400,000 School for Danganvura. So, they have told us that they are not buying the school. So, we are not selling the school. We are continuing as usual and we are quite happy to do this. We just thought well we can give you the opportunity to sell the school and go ahead with this other type of programme.³¹

At this point, the proposed sale of USOP had become a thorny issue amongst the black Christians, particularly the preachers who were in Umtali. The majority strongly felt that the western missionaries wanted to dispose the school in order to deprive them the opportunity of continuing to train the indigenous preachers. They were uprooting a life-sustaining organ for the church's survival. Ishmael Matangira said, "At that time I used to wonder and we even asked the elders if they constructed USOP as an investment which they now want to get their outlay from?"³² This research tries to answer that question. Nevertheless, it should also be asked, "If they kept the facilities, and the missionaries were forced to leave the country, who was going to lead the school?"

At this point, there is need to analyse the composition of the African staff at USOP as at the beginning of January 1976, and their responsibilities. Xavier Goredema, a 1969 graduate of the school, deputised for Petty, in addition to teaching. His main responsibilities, according to Petty, were "correspondence with Africans and the recruitment of students.... I will show him little by little how to enter things into the books. I told him I would continue handling the

³¹ Petty, Audiocassette to Hodges, 27 July 1976.

³² Ishmael Matangira, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

books.”³³ Goredema was married to Pegina nee Chizanga. Working closely with Goredema was his classmate Ishmael Matangira, who had been appointed boarding master, in addition to teaching. He was being supervised by John Hanson who remained the facilities manager and sourced all school supplies. Matangira and his wife Tabitha, nee Chambwera, shifted into the boarding master’s house in March 1976 when the Hanson family vacated it after buying a house in the Fern Valley suburb. The other African teaching staff member was Timothy Matangira, no relationship with Ishmael Matangira, who was married to Margaret nee Takundwa. In addition to the teaching staff, the school employed Cleopas Bamu, married to Ida, who was the school secretary. In the library was Solomon Ndambi Magomora, while Noah Matambudziko Gonzo married to Margaret nee Muusha, worked in the Bible Correspondence office, which had been established by Rhinard and Betty Troup. Gonzo was under the supervision of the director of USOP.³⁴

Accordingly, all these Africans worked directly under the supervision of the white missionaries although, with the exception of Xavier Goredema and Ishmael Matangira, they did not have any executive powers. Even these two senior African employees did not have substantial power since they were confined to the supervision of students or correspondence with other Africans. The micro- and macro-management of USOP was in the missionaries’ hands. The Africans did not have the full picture of the school’s future vis-à-vis the guerrilla war that was ravaging the country. The war was slowly encroaching into Umtali, situated only six miles

³³ Petty, Audiocassette to J. C. McCurdy, 10 February 1976.

³⁴ All the African teachers were married and had passed their Standard Six with some having higher qualifications. Ishmael Matangira had completed his Form II at Highfield Secondary School. He was converted to Christ by Court Chidowe. Timothy Matangira had completed Form II at Bernard Mzeki College and was converted to Christ by Sampson Mhlanga. Noah Gonzo completed his Standard Six and was the son of Gonzo, Jack Muzirwa’s colleague at WuyuWuyu. Timothy Matangira graduated in 1974, Solomon Magomora in 1971, and Noah Gonzo in 1969. The Troups left NM for Umtali when Loy Mitchell requested that they assist him in the European work. The couple were in Umtali from 1969 to 1971 when Betty’s health issues forced them to leave for the USA, leaving the correspondence work in the hands of Noah Gonzo.

from the border with Mozambique whose communist government was hostile to the supremacist white rebel Ian Douglas Smith who led the regime. Some information at USOP, for administratively justifiable reasons, was kept private.

The correspondence between Hillcrest elders, the actual owners of USOP, and missionaries, who were the administrators, as expected, was private and confidential. The African teachers and workers were not privy to such sensitive correspondence. Noah Gonzo, Ishmael Matangira, and Timothy Matangira, in recent interviews pointed out that Ebner Kawadza was the first person who told them that the school might be sold to the Ministry of Education.³⁵ Kawadza worked in the education department and he was part of the group that toured the USOP facility in lieu of purchasing it. As the only African in that group, he was interested in the future of his fellow Africans; therefore, after the tour, he asked them what was going to be their fate since the premises were going to be sold? After hearing this, the African staff decided to write the overseeing elders about their concerns.

Their letter, which was signed by the entire African staff, however, alludes to a staff meeting held on 21 May 1976 where the subject was discussed. In that meeting, the Africans wrote, “We discussed John’s [Hanson] suggestions but we disagreed on the idea of selling the school.”³⁶ Therefore, it seems as if they wrote the eldership after Petty had given them a letter from the elders and part of that letter, which was signed by Joe Hodges reads, “The elders also decided last night to give you the go ahead on selling the campus.”³⁷ Definitely, the Africans got the light from a discussion with Ebner Kawadza but they wrote Joe Hodges after the staff meeting. The contradictions might have to do with memory issues since the Africans did not

³⁵ As will be pointed in the next section, this is slightly different to what they wrote in their letter to the elders at Hillcrest.

³⁶ T. Matangira, et. al., Letter to Hodges, 16 June, 1976.

³⁷ Hodges, Letter to James Petty, 27 May 1976.

retain a copy of their letter.

At any rate, after being informed about the possibility of introducing an extension programme that would make the facilities obsolete, the atmosphere on campus turned gloomy, reminiscent of what happened at NM in 1977. The spiritual climate was made worse when the Africans held an impromptu meeting and resolved that they should write the eldership at Hillcrest about their feelings. Goredema, as the deputy headmaster, had also written the eldership on 15 June 1976 and the group endorsed its contents.³⁸ The letter, addressed to Hodges, was signed by T. Matangira, C.T.G. Bamu, N. M. Gonzo, I. J. Matangira, X. Goredema, and S. Magomore. It was written on 16 June 1976, and part of it reads:

We read your letter dated 27th May, 1976, concerning the decision of the eldership on John's [Hanson] suggestions to sell the school....On May 21st this year we had a staff meeting in which we discussed John's [Hanson] suggestion but we disagreed on the idea of selling the school. We did not come out with any suitable programme to replace the school. In your first letter in reply to John's [Hanson] suggestions you made it clear that the elders were satisfied with the present programme, however, they would consider the idea if we (all staff) unanimously agreed on a new programme. As far as we know we have not designed any programme. In your second letter was the decision of the elders to sell the school. Could we know if the elders have an alternative. ^ programme [word handwritten] We are not against the decision of the elders but we feel the present programme is the best in this country.³⁹

After posting this letter, Gonzo said, "We waited for two days, making sure that the letter was outside of Rhodesia because we were afraid that the whites might retrieve it from the post office. We then had a very difficult staff meeting with all the three missionaries which we called for."⁴⁰ The meeting turned emotional where, according to Gonzo, I. Matangira, and T. Matangira, racial slurs were traded between the African staff and white missionaries, particularly the Briton, who as the "representative" of the colonizer, was disliked by the Africans. Ishmael Matangira added,

³⁸ At the time of research, the letter from Xavier Goredema could not be found.

³⁹ T. Matangira et. al., Letter to Hodges, 16 June, 1976. The letter by Goredema which is being referred to in this letter could not be found.

⁴⁰ Gonzo, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

“I do not think the American missionaries, particularly [Clayton] Waller, wanted to sell the school ... [The Briton] was influencing the young Americans to sell it so that we as Africans would suffer after their departure.”⁴¹ British citizens in Rhodesia at that time were not happy since their empire was ending; hence, they did not fully support any structures that would benefit the Africans after their departure. Some Americans, who did not have vested political interests, did not see the logic of parcelling facilities like USOP because of the war, a temporary phenomenon. The Africans, on the other hand, were attached to the school, especially the facilities. At this point, what transpired during the first half of 1976, since it was a defining period for the school, needs to be identified.

In January, the elders proposed staff developing Xavier Goredema and Ishmael Matangira in response to the unstable political environment in Rhodesia, which the elders felt might force the expatriates out of that country. Hillcrest, in principle, did not want to abandon USOP. Xavier Goredema was appointed assistant director with two major responsibilities: correspondence with Africans and the recruitment of students. Ishmael Matangira became the assistant boarding master and he was responsible for the boarding department, the dining hall, students labour, and sickness issues.⁴² These two senior African staff members did not have executive responsibilities, particularly the financial side; at least they were in the corridors of power.

After their appointment, on 15 March 1976, the Hillcrest eldership wrote to all missionaries at USOP requesting them to concretise their exit plans since the war was closing in

⁴¹ Ishmael Matangira, Interview by Paul Chimhungwe. The same views were expressed by Noah Gonzo and Campion Mugweni who worked closely with the school. Timothy Matangira said, “One of the missionaries Brother ... used to say, we want to sell this place, because you cannot run it as blacks. Moreover, if we leave, that will be the end of the American financial support.” Timothy Matangira, Interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

⁴² James Petty did send an audiocassette to John Little on February 10, 1976, which I did not have access to; but there was an accompanying sheet that summarised the audiocassette’s contents. Goredema and Matangira’s responsibilities are outlined on that sheet. [James Petty] Items covered on tape to John Little, 10 February 1976.

on Umtali. In Rhodesia, on 8 April 1976, John Hanson wrote to John Little, Missions Committee Chairperson, suggesting changing the training programme from residential to an extension programme. In that letter, Hanson suggested that if the extension programme was approved, then the entire USOP facility would be sold. Hanson emphasised that it was only James Petty and Clayton Waller who were privy to this information. The African staff was not aware of this arrangement.⁴³

After penning this letter, John Hanson started negotiating with the City of Umtali and Ministry of Native Affairs' Department of Education since he knew that they were looking for facilities in Dangamvura to establish a secondary school. Within a few days, the Mayor of Umtali, the Minister of African Affairs and their staff, amongst them Ebner Kawadza, toured the facilities. They viewed the architectural plans and concluded that they wanted to buy the facility if the overseas based eldership accepted their proposal. After the firm offer, Ebner Kawadza informed the African staff at USOP about these negotiations. The Hillcrest eldership, through John Little and Joe Hodges, wrote James Petty, on 6 May 1976, that the elders were happy with the Bible School. If there was going to be a change in the programme, there should be a unanimous agreement from all staff members. John Hanson informed the Umtali City Council and Department of Education officials, who started scouting for an alternative.

Although the eldership, at this stage, tactfully disapproved of the proposed sale of the facilities, on 21 May, a staff meeting was held to discuss the proposed extension programme as suggested by John Hanson and the response from the elders. From that meeting two

⁴³ In his audiocassette report, James Petty said, "No one knows about this suggestion only the teachers [maybe missionaries only since the African staff has consistently said they were in the dark] and Loy [Mitchell] that know about this suggestion which John [Hanson] made. So we continue as usual ... but the Bible School is a good method." Petty, Audiocassette to Little, 17 May 1976. Although Petty mentions Mitchell's name, in a recent telephone interview, Mitchell said he was not aware that in 1976 there was a proposal to sell the school. Mitchell, Telephone interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

contradicting views emerged. The African staff, according to their letter, was not willing to see the school sold. Missionaries, on the other hand, according to Petty in his audio report, said that the Africans were very happy with the extension programme and even willing to sell the school. The audiocassette was received on 26 May 1976. In it, Petty outlined the advantages and disadvantages of selling the school. He, however, left the final decision in the elders' hands.

The eldership, after listening to Petty's message, wrote on 27 May 1976 instructing him and the administrators to sell the school. After receiving these instructions, John Hanson went to the City of Umtali and Department of Education to inform them about the good news that they could now buy the school. The officials, however, were no longer interested in purchasing USOP; they had other options.

Meanwhile, on 15 June 1976, Goredema wrote the eldership arguing against selling the school.⁴⁴ The following day, the entire African staff wrote to Joe Hodges supporting Goredema's view. Two days after writing that letter, James Petty was handed a copy of the Africans' correspondence to Joe Hodges resulting in him calling a staff meeting. Petty reported part of the proceedings of that meeting in an audiocassette dated 17 July 1976 where he sounded happy that the school has not been sold. In part, he said:

We are quite happy to continue with the programme [school of preaching as opposed to extension programme]...[laughing] You probably received a letter from the African staff that they would rather continue with the Bible School.... I told them I think it was only fair that John [Hanson] and Clayton [Waller] knew how they felt. So we had a meeting and they said O! we misunderstood as we mean we did not mean we did not like the other programme and did not mean we did not go along with the selling of the school we just wanted to give our preference.... So we just dropped it because we could see that they probably mis-worded the letter. But anyway the school has not been sold. So we are going to carry on.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ I did not find this letter, but the Africans endorsed its contents in their letter. See T. Matangira, et. al., Letter to Hodges, 16 June, 1976.

⁴⁵ Petty, Audiocassette to Hodges, 27 July 1976.

This summary clearly points out that Umtali School of Preaching, the sole preachers' training school for the Churches of Christ in Rhodesia, was nearly sold in 1976. It was by mere chance that it survived since the prospective buyers found other alternatives. The missionaries were concerned about the war and the calibre of its communist aligned leaders. This was similar to what transpired at NM where Palmer did not want to see the facility taken over by a communist government. Petty was convinced, for justifiable reasons, that the Church of Christ would lose it if the black majority came into power. The African Christians, however, did not perceive along those lines.

It was not only the African staff at USOP, but also the alumni, which enjoyed a rich fellowship, and some of the outstanding African Christians who had a strong bond to USOP. Although they had not contributed to its construction, like at NM, they felt it was "their" school that should not be sold. Nevertheless, before holding responsible or vindicating the missionaries, especially John Hanson, for proposing to sell USOP, there needs to be an evaluation of the working relationship between the Africans and missionaries at USOP.

Of significance is John Hanson's letter in which he proposed selling the school; he did not mention anything negative about the Africans. On the contrary, he was deeply concerned about the current staff's welfare and the long-term financing of evangelistic activities by Hillcrest Church of Christ in Rhodesia. About the African staff, considering the war situation in Rhodesia, Hanson wrote, "Should the worse happen the envisaged programme could certainly be carried on by the African staff. This method could lend itself to expansion or withdrawal as conditions dictated."⁴⁶ This was a programme that Africans could manage in the absence of the western missionaries.

⁴⁶ Hanson, Letter to Little, 8 April 1976.

Just like Palmer at NM, however, Hanson, after evaluating the African staff's poor academic qualifications and administrative skills, was not convinced that they could manage USOP. Therefore, there was a need to change from "the four-walled-school" to theological education by extension (TEE). Hanson did not quote any authority or scholarly work to support his proposal which he was convinced would open new vistas for the church. To finance this new programme, Hanson suggested utilising the proceeds from the sale of the buildings since the Rhodesian government had stringent foreign exchange regulations. For Hanson,

If anything comes of all this [the disposal of USOP] any monies could not be taken out of the country but I would suggest the amount involved could probably take care of Hillcrest's future mission work in this country for quite a considerable time.⁴⁷

It seems that, Hanson was certain that by selling USOP he would be fulfilling Hillcrest's aims while at the same time alleviating the current problems of running the facility.⁴⁸ Although TEE was novel to Churches of Christ in Rhodesia, it was in vogue within seminaries and even the academia.⁴⁹

In one of his audiocassette reports addressed to John Little, James Petty referred to a letter from the latter in which he was asking him to explore the possibility of training preachers by an extension programme.⁵⁰ John Little is quoted by Petty in that audiocassette saying, "Doing things [preachers' training] by extension is recognized as a superior method around Abilene these days."⁵¹ In Abilene, TEE became popular when a book entitled *Training Church Leaders*

⁴⁷ Hanson, Letter to Little, 8 April 1976.

⁴⁸ Hanson had cordial working relations with Africans. His family employed three Africans families. After the guerrilla war had forced his family to leave Rhodesia, he gave his plot to one of his former African workers, a rare gesture.

⁴⁹ Hanson, just like anyone in the Churches of Christ those days, did not use the term "theological" education. It was not acceptable. The favourable term would be Biblical. The same applies to "seminary" the acceptable term would be Bible School or Preachers' School although these terms, interestingly, are not found in the Bible as well.

⁵⁰ Petty, Audiocassette to John Little, 27 November 1976.

⁵¹ Petty, Audiocassette to John Little, 27 November 1976.

in Extension Classes was published.⁵² According to Petty, the author quoted heavily from *Theological Education by Extension* edited by Ralph Winter.⁵³ Petty found the book in the USOP library and he read it but in the audiocassette he referred mainly to *Training Church Leaders in Extension Classes*.

Petty was modest in his response to this new mission method. The method being advocated “did not seem very deep....This is not applicable to a virgin territory where you go in to start new churches but as he [the author of the book] suggests they go in where there are already church leaders ... to me this is the work of the local congregation.”⁵⁴ Neither was Petty impressed with the curriculum when compared to what they were doing at USOP. It would take six and half years to finish the curriculum, if they adopted the new programme, since only three courses are taught per year. That same material would be covered in one year at USOP. For that reason, Petty concluded by saying, “I now appreciate what we are doing at the School of Preaching since we are getting teaching hours for the money.”⁵⁵ In a nutshell, Petty was not in favour of the extension programme because it was not applicable to Church of Christ missiological plans in Rhodesia. The programme, according to Petty, centred on training church leaders which is the thrust of Winter’s book.

Winter, and others, after a thorough examination of the cultures in Central America and the church’s failure to attract quality students into seminaries, decided to take the seminary to the villages in order “to provide adequate leadership for all parts of the church.”⁵⁶ These programmes omitted no serious student of the Bible even those who did not academically qualify

⁵² At this point Petty’s voice is inaudible; hence I could not get the author’s name.

⁵³ Winter (ed.), *Theological Education by Extension*.

⁵⁴ Petty, Audiocassette to Little, 27 November 1976.

⁵⁵ Petty, Audiocassette to John Little, 27 November 1976.

⁵⁶ Winter, “Early Reflections,” 9-21.

to enter the traditional four-walled seminary. Most important though, they were cost-effective and the formation of elite pastors, which concurs with Hanson's argument, although he does not mention the source of his envisaged programme of "forming ... a clergy class."⁵⁷ In Bolivia, C. Peter Wagner, pointed out that by taking the seminary to the people we can "realise the priesthood of all believers and modify the clericalism in our pastor-centered churches where the pastor is the boss, the hub, the indispensable man in the congregations."⁵⁸ The new programme would not require university graduates as teachers; hence, it would attract a large body of students who in turn will fill essential positions in the church.⁵⁹ The TEE program was, therefore, deemed relatively successful in Latin America, and consequently it was imported to Rhodesia in the early 70s.

Twenty African Independent Churches met from 28-30 July 1972 in Bikita, with the assistance of Prof. M. L. Daneel, to discuss the training of pastors in their different denominations.⁶⁰ At the end of the meeting, twelve denominations formed the *Fambidzano Yamakereke Avatema* (The African Independent Churches Conference). Its major task, amongst others, was to survey the possibility of establishing their own seminary or theological training college. Logistics derailed the project and, according to Peter Makamba, they opted for "theological training by extension with a team of lecturers developing theological courses adapted to the needs of the Independent Churches and teaching Independent Church students in their surroundings."⁶¹ These churches, through the formation of an extension programme, addressed the chronic shortage of pastors and church leaders through an affordable programme

⁵⁷ Hanson, Letter to Little, 8 April 1976.

⁵⁸ Wagner, "The New Base in Bolivia," 191-202.

⁵⁹ Alexander, "The Use of Teachers in an Extension Program," 326-339.

⁶⁰ Makamba, "African Independent Churches and TEE," 204-212.

⁶¹ Makamba, "African Independent Churches and TEE," 204-212. These churches are known by various names including African Initiated Churches see Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, 17-18.

that would be theological training by extension (TEE).

Fambidzano struggled during its infancy with the war of liberation derailing the scale of its activities; but its popularity increased in the next few years. Just as the TEE programme advocated for in Ralph Winter's book worked with students in their communities, these two programmes were akin to Hanson's suggestion. TEE had the advantage of taking theological courses to the student in the village setting; he or she was not uprooted from his or her culture, language, and people. At the end, the prospective pastor was not "Europeanised" or "Americanised." Boarding facilities like those at USOP and other seminaries were not required. Administrative issues were handled from one central area. In the case of Fambidzano "they converted an old store-room in Fort Victoria [Masvingo] into an administrative centre for the programme."⁶² For USOP, Hanson had proposed that, "An office should be maintained in Umtali, preferable [sic] in the African part of town... (There is such a place which could be rented very cheaply)."⁶³ Overall, TEE, when compared to a residential seminary, was affordable but were the programme and its products acceptable?

Amongst the AICs in Rhodesia, TEE was an acceptable, inexpensive form of pastoral training. In 1975, they had close to sixty students although the programme was affected by the war of liberation despite having acquired landmine-proof-vehicles. In 1981, one year after independence, Fambidzano had sixteen TEE centres and two hundred and fifty students in Zimbabwe. Makamba concludes by pointing that,

Quite a number of students have experienced spiritual growth as a result of participation in the TTE programme. They [students] specifically mention regular Bible study and an intensified prayer life as signs of spiritual progress.⁶⁴

⁶² Makamba, "African Independent Churches and TEE," 204-212.

⁶³ Hanson, Letter to Little, 8 April 1976.

⁶⁴ Makamba, "African Independent Churches and TEE," 204-212.

The programme produced pastors, teachers, and leaders in the African church that did not have qualified human resources at the dawn of independence.

TEE in Africa was not confined to Rhodesia; it was a pan-African project which, according to Ogbu Kalu, was “proffered as an alternative, or as an aspect of the indigenization project or the decolonization of African churches.”⁶⁵ When most countries in Africa got their independence, there was an acute shortage of trained human resources in nearly every discipline; theology was not spared. Churches with limited financial resources could not afford sending prospective pastors overseas; hence, TEE became an affordable avenue. In most cases, it involved different denominations collaborating in this effort. In Botswana, it was called The Botswana Theological Training Programme where the main goal was the training of pastors with two subsidiary goals in which, “The students experience solidarity, which leads to mutual concern and team work; [while] the age-long dream of ecumenical cooperation is realized wherever a study group is composed of persons from different denominations.”⁶⁶

Just like in Rhodesia, this programme had limited success in an ecumenical environment where it was dogged with pedagogical methodology, administration, and the quality of its products. TEE aimed at decolonizing the African church but its curriculum and study material were prepared by missionaries or former missionaries with little input from the Africans. The “Europeanization” could not be avoided. Printing costs became phenomenal.⁶⁷ Theology definitely was brought to the village but it proved difficult to supervise students leading to the production of mediocre products. Ironically, some of these graduates, with expensive certificates, in the case of Fambidzano, became assistant teachers. In Africa, certificates, especially foreign

⁶⁵ Kalu, “Elijah’s Mantle,” 263-277.

⁶⁶ Sales and Liphoko, “Emerging Grassroots Theology in Botswana,” 161-171.

⁶⁷ If USOP had gone that route, the only printing press affordable and accessible would have been the one at NM, which disappeared during the transitional period. Kutadzaushe and Makunde, Interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

issued, were highly respected by some church leaders and they became a passport for employment, although at times some of the holders failed to produce.⁶⁸

With the advent of Christian universities in Africa, TEE is gradually fading. The TEE that was being proposed by Hanson to replace the walled USOP programme would have failed in light of what transpired after the departure of missionaries in May 1977. The missionaries, accordingly, should not have contemplated parcelling out the buildings. Since the Africans wanted to manage the school, missionaries should have handed USOP to them because it finally became the reality.

Xavier Goredema–April 1977-December 1986

After a number of telephone conversations between Petty and the eldership at Hillcrest, it was finally resolved in January 1977 that all Europeans teachers—James Petty, John Hanson, and Clayton Waller—should hand over their responsibilities to the Africans. A letter, officially cementing that decision, was written on 26 January 1977 on behalf of the elders by J. C.

McCurdy. Part of the letter reads:

We have set up the following timetables:

March 1: Xavier Goredema, now assistant director, is to become Director of the Umtali Bible School. [USOP]

April 7: First school term ends. No 'Europeans' are to be used in future terms.

May 1: European families leave Umtali.⁶⁹

After receiving this letter, missionaries started making preparations to leave Umtali by the end of

⁶⁸ Kalu gives examples of some Americans who "travel through the Third World ordaining bishops and granting degrees in as a way of building a 'worldwide network.' In bizarre cases, the operators arrive in an African country, hire a hall in an academic institution, pay in foreign currency, and organize a graduation ceremony with gowns, mortarboards, and pomp [In such cases] A degree grants status; a pastor's doctorate degree becomes a marker of the quality of a church." Kalu, "Multicultural Theological Education," 234-237.

⁶⁹ McCurdy, Letter to Petty, 26 January 1977. This letter was sent to all congregations supporting Jim Petty and Clayton Waller (with appropriate names changed).

March 1977. Petty and his family left for ACU where he read for a M.Sc. in Bible.⁷⁰ Clayton Waller, the former senior bachelor, stayed in Bulawayo for a few months where he wed and then left for the USA. John Hanson visited the USA before settling in Britain his home country.⁷¹ The handover from the missionaries to the indigenous was smooth, on paper, but in reality, it was a stormy period for the Africans.

Goredema and I. Matangira had deputised for the missionaries for a few months but their responsibilities, as pointed out in the previous pages, were limited in scope and depth. Rhodesia was a white minority ruled country and blacks were not expected to hold responsible jobs. Administration became a nightmare for the blacks. I. Matangira and Gonzo, in recent interviews, pointed out that they struggled to open accounts with wholesalers since they were not known. The school did not have its own vehicle and no black teacher had a car. Worse, they did not have driver's licences. It was only Noah Gonzo who could drive. He owned a small Ford that the school used for a couple of months until Goredema got a driver's licence and then bought his own vehicle. If the school had adopted TEE, with the departure of missionaries and their cars, the programme would have run aground within months. The Africans were academically deficient and poorly paid to run TEE programme.

All the missionaries had university degrees while their African counterparts were only USOP graduates; hence, they were remunerated accordingly. I. Matangira stated that, as individuals, although they had a desire to upgrade themselves academically, they were poorly remunerated. It was only Goredema and I. Matangira, in 1977, who received close to a sixth of what missionaries were paid. The other teachers were in a worse position. One can argue that

⁷⁰ This was in preparation for his teaching position at Southern Africa Bible College, Benoni, South Africa, where he later taught for a few years.

⁷¹ After settling in Britain, Hillcrest terminated its financial support since its commitment was for the work in Rhodesia.

they could have used the windfall from the sale of the facility to buy the necessary logistical equipment for TEE. Even with rich coffers, the country was at war. Fambidzano, after five years was nearly brought to its knees by the war. Nevertheless, other churches were not disposing of their assets during these torrid times. Perhaps missionaries from the Church of Christ should have conferred with their counterparts in other denominations over the future of mission assets. Western missionaries in other churches were not contemplating parcelling their mission centres.

The Dutch Reformed Church during this period operated Murray Theological College at Morgenster Mission in Masvingo similar to USOP. It was staffed by western white missionaries with David P. Mandebvu, a University of South Africa graduate, as the only indigenous teacher. Chengetai Zvobgo gives us a snapshot of what happened at this institution in 1977:

During Zimbabwe's liberation war when all white missionaries left Morgenster, he became the first African Principal of Murray Theological College. In the absence of all white missionaries, he had to attend to the educational, medical, farming and church work at Morgenster in addition to teaching at the Murray Theological College.⁷²

Mandebvu became a jack of all, at a critical time, in order to save a Dutch Reformed Church Mission. He had earned most of his education through correspondence resulting in his filling in for the western missionaries during the war. To complete such studies, one had to be financially sound, which the African staff at USOP were not. They were, consequently, poorly prepared academically and administratively, resulting in financial indiscipline in the school because of lack of supervision.

When the missionaries finally left Umtali, Goredema became the principal, Ishmael Matangira the boarding master; Timothy Matangira was already teaching; Noah Gonzo was

⁷² Zvobgo, *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe*, 142. Mandebvu did most of his education through private studies. He trained as a teacher at Morgenster and then as a pastor at Murray where he was appointed the first black teacher in 1961. In 1976 he earned the Bachelor of Theology Degree from the University of South Africa through correspondence. Zvobgo, *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe*, 144-142.

promoted from the correspondence office to become a teacher. Hailey Velaphi Mlangeni, who had graduated from USOP in 1971, at the recommendation of Goredema, I. Matangira, and T. Matangira was hired as a teacher.⁷³ Solomon Magomore was the librarian in addition to teaching women's classes.⁷⁴ Finally, Cleopas Bamu was the secretary. Their wives, Margaret Gonzo, Peggy Goredema, Stella Mlangeni, Ishmael's wife Tabitha Matangira, and Timothy's wife Margaret Matangira, taught the women's classes without any remuneration. It was these men and their wives, at USOP, who worked under extremely difficult conditions politically, economically, and socially from 1977 up to 1980 when Zimbabwe attained its independence. Unfortunately, the chain of command at the school was not properly outlined and adhered to by those in authority.

During the missionary era, all school records, particularly financial, were filed and approved at Hillcrest Church of Christ as the shepherding congregation, although one person received, paid for, and reported all financial activities. When the indigenous took over, this trend continued for the next three years. After Zimbabwe got its independence, the reporting trend was gradually reduced and unlike the ELCZ, there was no written Memorandum of Understanding between the benefactor and beneficiary, as explained in the previous chapter. No external auditors, therefore, verified the financial operations of the school. All operations were based on

⁷³ Petty in a letter to J. C. McCurdy part of which reads, "I told Xavier [Goredema], Ishmael [Matangira] and Timothy [Matangira] about your first phone call and about your concern for us.... They seemed to feel they could handle the situation until things calmed down. Noah Gonzo could teach some classes and they recommended Velaphi Mlangeni to also teach." Petty, Letter to McCurdy, 14 January 1977.

⁷⁴ When the school relocated from NM to Umtali, the library, which was supervised by the boarding master, had a high staff turnover. Between 1971 and 1974, four graduates of the school were relieved of their positions one after the other. These were Amos Dhlakama (Mlambo), Isaac Magama, Kennedy Kondo, and Cephas Badze. All these were asked to resign but they went on to become faithful preachers and outstanding leaders in the church. Dhlakama became a successful businessperson and worshipped with the church in Zengeza. Isaac Magama worked in Marondera and was for years the youth leader at Dombotombo Church of Christ in Marondera. Kennedy Kondo worked for ZESA and worshipped with the Dangamvura Congregation located at USOP and finally Cephas Badze worked for Southampton Insurance which he retired from. Badze was a leader at the following congregations: Bindura, Highfields, Nhowe, and Chivero. Solomon Magomore worked for five years under Goredema's leadership before resigning to join the Ministry of Education as a bursar in 1982. He lost his faith.

faith since one man received, disbursed, and reported on all financial records. When Hillcrest representatives visited USOP, they would meet with the principal and his staff but it was difficult to tell them the financial problems at the school. With this set-up, it would have been a disaster if the proposed TEE had been implemented, considering that the Church of Christ does not fellowship with any other church. Ecumenism is anathema.

As already pointed out in the introduction to NM, the Church of Christ believes in congregational autonomy. No congregation has a right to interfere in another congregation's work. In addition to this, Churches of Christ do not fellowship with any other Christian Church or Christian denominational group. The proposed TEE, therefore, was going to be operated by this church for training its own preachers. Consequently, if Fambidzano, an ecumenical extension training programme, had modest success, it would most likely have been a dismal failure for the Churches of Christ from its inception particularly after Zimbabwe attained its independence.

After Zimbabwe attained its independence in April 1980, most of the oppressive laws and policies that discriminated blacks were abolished. The new government in Zimbabwe repealed all racially biased laws like different wages for whites and blacks. Wages and salaries were increased and these changes affected USOP's staffing. Goredema remained the headmaster and there was no sign of missionaries coming back to the new country. The Petty family was accompanied by the Jerry Hayes family to Empangeni, South Africa, where they planted a congregation. Hanson was in UK and Waller in the USA. At USOP, teachers expected their salaries to increase in line with the new government's affirmative action while Hillcrest, as the supporting congregation, continued its financial support. It had a full picture of the political landscape in Zimbabwe since Robert Mugabe, as the Prime Minister, had accommodated religion

and the right to own private property making USOP secure. Hillcrest's coffers, however, could not allow it to pay the teachers the expected higher salaries resulting in some of them quitting.

From 1981 to 1983 there was a change in staff composition with Cleopas Bamu resigning in September 1981 when he left for industry and commerce. Timothy Matangira and Hailey Velaphi Mlangeni followed him the next year. Matangira joined the government, which he retired from after attaining the position of Town Secretary in Macheke. Mlangeni joined the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Cooperation that he resigned from after attaining the African languages news anchor's position. Bamu retired as the branch manager of Mitchells Bakery. Solomon Magomore resigned in 1982 when he joined the Ministry of Education as a bursar. This depleted the school's experienced staff that was replaced by new graduates. Golden Chiziwe, class of 1981, became the secretary and taught some classes and Martin Amwari, class of 1983, was appointed librarian. This, as expected, reduced the academic standing of the school that received its first visitors, after the war, from Hillcrest in 1982.

J. C. McCurdy, an elder, and John Little, a deacon at that time, visited Mutare in 1982.⁷⁵ They met with church leaders in July during the annual lectureship, where for the first time they suggested forming a partnership between Hillcrest and local congregations. The benefactors were excited with Goredema's leadership under which the school "has done very well ... and now a good time for local churches to begin supporting this good work. Together we can form a 'partnership' that will strengthen the churches in Zimbabwe."⁷⁶ They appealed to local congregations to start financially supporting the school, a new concept to these churches. The local churches, through Nyari "Sekuru" Muganhi, one of the senior Christians, appealed to Hillcrest to continue supporting this work since it was the backbone of the gospel in Zimbabwe,

⁷⁵ In 1981 most towns' changed names. Umtali became Mutare.

⁷⁶ McCurdy, Letter to Wuyu Wuyu Church of Christ, 28 July 1982.

although the locals did not know the school's operating procedures. Hillcrest responded by writing Mutare Bible School's operating procedures in 1983.

After meeting with church leaders, the Hillcrest leadership felt the need of writing down the operating procedures for the school of preaching which had changed its name to Mutare Bible School. Part of the procedures read:

The Director [principal or headmaster] of the School (Xavier Goredema) is selected to provide supervision of the School on a day-to-day basis and is accountable through the Missions Ministry to the Elders. The Director shall be responsible for all phases of the school's operation. He shall employ faculty, staff and others subject to approval of Hillcrest. He may delegate assignments and responsibilities as are appropriate, under the guidance of the Mission Ministry.⁷⁷

This blueprint, based on faith, gave the principal unchecked powers and responsibilities that probably led to financial indiscipline that surfaced at the end of 1986; a period that is outside the scope of this thesis. McCurdy and Little came back in 1984 with a direct message for the churches in Zimbabwe: Hillcrest will be phasing out of USOP in ten years.

From the 2–17 August 1985, Goredema, Little, and McCurdy met with twenty-five different congregations in eighteen meetings.⁷⁸ Little and McCurdy prepared a report after the trip in which they wrote, "Congregations in Zimbabwe were informed that it was the decision of the Hillcrest Elders to withdraw their support for the Mutare Bible School gradually over a 10-year period, starting with a 5% cut in funding for 1986 (about Z\$3,500)."⁷⁹ According to the report, the Christians in Zimbabwe agreed that it was high time they should shoulder the financial responsibility of the school, but they were not willing to commit themselves since they were recovering from the war. The local Christians made a number of suggestions.

⁷⁷ Hillcrest Church of Christ, Mutare Bible School Operating Procedures 1983.

⁷⁸ The congregations which they met with are listed in their report. McCurdy and Little, Report of Trip to Zimbabwe, August 2-17, 1985.

⁷⁹ McCurdy and Little, Report of Trip to Zimbabwe, August 2-17, 1985.

Some proposed the need for specific forms of communication with the school, particularly congregations in the Bulawayo area. Since the school was requesting financial assistance from churches, congregations felt that they should be represented. This topic was debated at length in some churches with school administrators resisting being supervised by their fellow Africans. The most significant request that was repeated at every meeting was that “Hillcrest [should] not be arbitrary and irrevocably committed to a withdrawal in 10 years; more time might be needed.”⁸⁰ Ishmael Matangira noted that, “Churches in Zimbabwe responded positively to the Hillcrest’s request although the country was going through a three-year drought.”⁸¹ Unfortunately, no financial records exist that support this statement. Again, this is outside the scope of this thesis.

Conclusion

This chapter chronicled the history of USOP from its inception at NM in 1958 before it relocated to Umtali in 1971 when Loy Mitchell became the principal. Mitchell was replaced by Petty during the first half of 1974 and it was during his tenure that the school went through turbulent times in response to the war of liberation when it was nearly sold after the boarding master had proposed the TEE programme.

Fortunately, the African staff persuaded the western missionaries and the overseas-based shepherding congregation to reconsider their decision of disposing of the facilities. On the other hand, the school failed to secure a buyer. It was finally handed over in March 1977 to the indigenous who managed it during those difficult years. These men and women were not academically or administratively qualified when compared to the missionaries. Xavier Goredema became the first black principal and it was during his period that Hillcrest, the

⁸⁰ McCurdy and Little, Report of Trip to Zimbabwe, August 2-17, 1985.

⁸¹ Ishmael Matangira, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

overseeing congregation, introduced the partnership concept in financing the school. The local congregations readily accepted the idea although they did not deliver as promised, a question which requires further studying. The next chapter will conclude this thesis by critically analyzing the events that transpired at NM and USOP during the transitional period.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

The previous two chapters chronicled the leadership transfer at NM and USOP from western white missionaries to the unprepared indigenous people as the former were forced by the volatile political landscape to leave Rhodesia in 1977. This closing chapter will summarize what transpired at these two institutions before and after the departure of the missionaries. However, before summarizing the contents of this thesis, the valuable work that was done by these missionaries in Rhodesia needs to be acknowledged.

Missionaries from the Churches of Christ–Stone-Campbell Movement, A Cappella Branch—just like their counterparts in the denominational world, worked under extremely difficult climatic, economic, and political environments for the sake of Christ. As they were involved in healing, preaching, and teaching, some contracted diseases, others lost their families, while some paid the ultimate price with their lives. Bosela Eale’s assessment of the western white missionaries’ contributions in Africa is sympathetic to their plight and activity: “Even though there were some behavioural problems here and there, it would be unfair not to appreciate the efforts made by missionaries in general during the colonial period.”¹ These men and women, as earthen vessels, laid the foundation upon which the nationals are building the work in Africa. If it were not for these missionaries, many today would not know Jesus Christ. An entire generation benefited from those who were taught by the missionaries, and they left an enduring infrastructure in the form of hospitals, schools, and church buildings. During the colonial era, missionaries were not prepared to leave the country; hence, they, unfortunately, did not prepare

¹ Eale, “Mission in Africa: An African Disciples Perspective,” 260-272.

the nationals for eventual takeover. The Africans who took over from the western missionaries succeeded in managing these schools despite their managerial inadequacy.

In the introduction and chapter one, a brief summary of the history of Rhodesia is given from 13 September 1890 when the Union Jack was hoisted at Kopje, Salisbury, to its lowering on 17 April 1980 when Prince Charles handed power to Robert Mugabe. During the last five years of colonial rule, 1975-1979, Rhodesia endured a protracted and bloody war that desecrated the national capital infrastructure including church affiliated educational and health delivery centres located in rural areas, the centre of most battles. Samora Machel, an avowed Marxist-Leninist, was the president of Mozambique that housed the rare bases for the guerrillas. Marxism was not an acceptable political ideology to the western missionaries who were convinced that a black-led government in Zimbabwe would nationalise mission centres. When the political setting became unsympathetic to the white western missionaries they were compelled to leave Rhodesia. That forced imminent departure was unfathomed. Consequently, some argue that missionaries “panicked”² and made “irrational decisions”³ since they had not prepared the nationals for eventual takeover.

At NM, the four programmes, agriculture, education, health delivery system, and preaching, served the indigenous people although they were managed by the benefactors with the beneficiaries on the periphery. This management style was in line with the colonial government where to an extent “missions served the colonial state”⁴ by “mediating the spread of Western culture, and morally by helping to legitimize colonial rule.”⁵ Missionaries as loving and caring people found themselves in an ambivalent situation since the colonial authorities oppressed and

² Kutadzaushe and Makunde, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

³ Chetsanga and Mhlanga, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

⁴ Alexander, “*The Unsettled Land: State-making & the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe*,” 41.

⁵ Fields as quoted by Alexander, “*The Unsettled Land: State-making & the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe*,” 41.

exploited the original inhabitants. For the Churches of Christ, the colonial working environment did not facilitate the grooming of a native leadership for the eventual takeover of these missions. The United Methodist Church, ELCZ, and other denominations, however, were exceptions to this philosophy. For the white missionary there was an aura of hauteur towards the indigenous. This state characterized missionaries from the Stone-Campbell Movement.

This thesis has pointed out that missionaries called to Rhodesia were committed to the Cross of Christ and eager to establish enduring works. A minority, however, were on a brief tour of duty. Their work was marked, for example, through constructing church buildings out of pole and dagga (clay) that collapsed during the rainy season or after being eaten by termites. At NM, permanent structures were constructed but when the devastating guerrilla war reached the mission, the unthinkable nearly happened. 1977 was Nhowe Mission's *annus horribilis*. The superintendent probably survived death by a whisker when guerrillas visited the mission two days after his departure for Salisbury where he remotely controlled the mission for close to a year. The intensity of the war forced him, with the support of the overseas-based overseeing eldership, to conclude that it was wise to sell the mission to the Rhodesian government. If that proposal had been executed, in retrospect, it would have been a colossal demise of the Church of Christ missionary enterprise in Rhodesia. For the authorities, however, it was a pragmatic option since they were confronted with two strategic operational problems: funding and human resources.

NM received twenty-seven percent of its funding from the Churches of Christ in the USA that were not willing to continue funding a mission centre in a war-torn country. The prospects of a brighter future were remote since Marxist aligned forces might have won and ended the mission. Without external funding, according to the authorities, the mission would not survive.

Even if external funding was available, the mission did not have qualified indigenous human resources to manage it. The superintendent was the only white western missionary affiliated to the Churches of Christ in Rhodesia and no American was willing, for good reasons, to come to this country at that time. After critically analyzing these points, the authorities decided to either close or sell the plant to the Ministry of Education. In turn, the ministry would have converted the mission infrastructure into an agricultural training college. Western missionaries were more comfortable with this option than with nationalization. Machel, in Mozambique, had nationalized all faith-based-organizations immediately after coming into power in 1975, and they concluded this could happen in Zimbabwe. Missionaries' fears of nationalization, as already pointed out, were not farfetched. In Nigeria, church operated primary and secondary schools were confiscated after the end of the Biafra War.⁶ These fears, however, would have been dismissed if missionaries had involved the nationals in decision-making. The nationals worked hand-in-glove with the guerrillas who knew that Christian mission centres were pivotal in a free Zimbabwe. Partially, that is what motivated the nationals to ask for a chance to manage NM.

The African leadership at NM, therefore, wrote the overseas-based shepherding congregation requesting a chance to manage NM instead of parcelling it out to the Ministry of Education. In their letter, they detailed the proposed management structure and source of funding with fees being the major recurrent income. It was heart-rending that they were also prepared to sacrifice part of their little salaries as contributions to the mission. That gesture should be applauded; unfortunately, with the euphoria of independence, these supposedly "uneducated" old people have not been recognized for the pivotal role they played in serving the mission. Such mission centres like NM are "legitimate symbols of stability and permanence."⁷ Without them,

⁶ Huffard, "Christian Education in Africa," 215-227.

⁷ Cox, "Finishing Well: Phase-Out or Partnership?" 291-319.

mission work became “flight-by-night.”⁸ What transpired at NM in 1977, although under different management, also occurred at USOP in 1976.

Chapter three chronicles the brief history of USOP from its inception in 1958 to 1986. NM, although established through the partnership of Zimbabwean nationals and the American Churches of Christ, could survive without external funding since its students paid tuition. This was the opposite at USOP where the shepherding overseas-based congregation paid faculty and staff, in addition to footing the preacher students’ room and board. Of course, the students worked to defray school expenses but this could not sustain the school. USOP, therefore, could not exist without external funding. Financial issues, however, were not the major factor in deciding to dispose of the school. It had to do with the change of programme from the four-walled-school to theological education by extension (TEE). Just like at NM this was an idea that was being pushed by, if not one, several individuals, in positions of authority. If TEE had been accepted, the few individuals wanted to dispose of the facilities in 1976. 1976 was, therefore, USOP’s *annus horribilis*. If that decision had been implemented, one wonders what the state of the church would be because few missionaries have answered the Zimbabwean call since independence. Christians in Zimbabwe are thankful that the African staff at USOP wrote the shepherding congregation in the USA pleading that the facilities should not be sold. These men literally challenged the authorities, putting their jobs, families, and future in a precarious situation. At the end, their proposal saw the light of the day, as detailed in the thesis, that the prospective buyer had found an alternative when a firm offer was tabled. Otherwise, USOP would be part of the Stone-Campbell Movement like Wuyu Wuyu Mission. Of course, this could

⁸ Cox, “Finishing Well: Phase-Out or Partnership?” 291-319.

have been averted if missionaries had incorporated fully the nationals in their work, particularly in critical decision-making phases.

This was lacking at NM and USOP. Although the nationals felt a sense of “ownership” towards the institutions, they were shocked to hear that “their” missions might be sold without their input. The majority of Africans, who were members of the Church of Christ, planned to educate their children at NM. Those who lived at NM were accommodated in houses without running water or electricity, a common feature those days; yet they endured for the sake of their children’s education. These families could not fathom their future without Nhowe Mission. It was “their” mission and they were prepared to suffer for its survival. For that reason, the participation of the indigenous in managing these missions was critical. This agrees with Monte Cox’s argument that:

A church [mission centre] can be both “owned” by nationals and partnered with internationals. A key ingredient in such a partnership is “participation,” which inspires ownership. Missionaries must involve nationals in decision-making early in their work ...There must be regular forums in which the missionaries explain their policies and solicit the input of the nationals.”⁹

If there had been participation by the nationals in managing NM and USOP, the chaotic power transfer would have been minimized. The input from the nationals would, maybe, have deterred individuals from pushing for the disposing of these mission centres.

In closing, if the indigenous people had been involved in management they would have suggested that missionaries spearhead an indigenous-human-resources training programme. The stability of any missionary endeavour pivots around the quality of its human resources. In Rhodesia, during the period under discussion, Church of Christ missionaries were not enthusiastic about assisting Africans to attain university education. It was only Dr. Palmer who

⁹ Cox, “Finishing Well: Phase-Out or Partnership?” 291-319.

tried to do so in this area.¹⁰ At USOP, although all missionaries had attained university education, there was not even one African with a degree. That trend continued up to the end of the period under study. The church, therefore, is still lagging in its leadership training programmes; yet, as Kalu, points out, “The quality of Christianity in Africa depends on how churches train their leadership.”¹¹ This thesis, amongst other points, has pointed to the need for quality leadership training in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. Africa has a leadership crisis and “the problem of the continent is lack of leadership with a strong ethical orientation.”¹² Although this generalization might be true, this thesis has argued that the leadership transition at Nhowe Mission and Umtali School of Preaching, two Church of Christ affiliated institutions, was a success due to the following three reasons.

First, the men and women who took over from the western missionaries, just like their fellow Christians, were imbued with a deep sense of ownership. At NM Christians and members of the surrounding villages had contributed labour during its construction. For members of the Stone-Campbell Movement, NM was “their headquarters” and the “centre of the gospel.”¹³ Even at Umtali School of Preaching, where the indigenous Christians had not contributed to its construction, the African staff felt they would have lost an important ecclesiastical asset if the facilities were sold. Hence, they were prepared to manage the facilities despite lacking administrative skills. They were convinced that in future their children in the faith would take these schools to a higher level.

Second, after only two years of taking over from the missionaries, Zimbabwe gained its independence from Britain. Economic sanctions that had been imposed on the Ian Smith led

¹⁰ Kutadzaushe and Makunde, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

¹¹ Kalu, “Multicultural Theological Education,” 235-241.

¹² Kalu, Multicultural Theological Education, 235-241.

¹³ Chetsanga and Mhlana, interview by Paul Chimhungwe.

regime were lifted and Zimbabwe was no longer isolated, economically. Educational centres and faith-based institutions like NM received financial assistance for both capital and recurrent expenses. In addition to this, human resources development was pivotal in these centres resulting in the improvement of leadership. Hence, the political platform became conducive for the indigene to manage former white controlled institutions.

Finally, the Africans, through their active participation in the war of liberation, knew that Christian mission centres would play a central role in a free Zimbabwe. The freedom fighters and their leaders assured the people in Zimbabwe that Christian schools would not be nationalised like what happened in Mozambique where Christianity was not accommodated by the Marxist government. Therefore, mission centres would remain in the hands of the church. This is what spurred Africans at NM and USOP to plead with their fellow Christians—western missionaries—for a chance to manage these two institutions. After taking over, these men and women struggled, since they did not have the managerial skills, but it was the overarching sense of ownership that motivated them to succeed. This research, nevertheless, is not the final answer on the success of the transitional period at NM and USOP. It is the beginning of serious research for the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, from an indigenous point of view.

As a chronicle of leadership transition, this thesis, therefore, is a small contribution to the history of the Church in Zimbabwe written from a native Christian's point of view. This instalment is a footnote to major historical works like those by Bhebe and Zvobgo which were quoted extensively in this work. For the Churches of Christ, however, this thesis raises questions over missiological methods. Should these be evaluated? The events that transpired at NM and USOP during the transitional period should, maybe, be compared and contrasted with other

mission centres operated by the Church of Christ. Namwianga Mission in Zambia is similar to NM while USOP can be compared with Southern Africa Bible College in Benoni South Africa.

APPENDIX A

Nhowe Financial Statements--August 1977

NHOWE MISSION FINANCIAL REPORT August 1977

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash on Hand	615.51	
Cash at Bank	4 477.74	
Accounts Receivable-Missionaries	1 973.38	
Accounts Receivable-Others	5 300.83	
Inventory – Bookroom [sic]	770.13	
Inventory – Diesel	237.29	
Inventory – Store	3 564.40	
Inventory – Uniform	4 266.59	
Inventory – Cattle	<u>2 440.32</u>	
Total Current Assets		23 646.19

FIXED ASSETS

Buildings	117 500.00	
Transport	2 000.00	
Farm Equipment	3 000.00	
Office Equipment	1 124.38	
Store Equipment	262.00	
Truck Account	<u>310.02</u>	
Total at carried value		<u>124 196.40</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>147 842.59</u>

LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Account Payable	4 688.71	
Kitchen	<u>7 159.48</u>	11 848.19

PRINCIPAL

Principal	136 586.63	
Less excess of Expenditure		
Over income	<u>592.23</u>	<u>135 994.40</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>147 842.59</u>

NHOWE MISSION FUND
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT WITH BUDGET
August 1977

<u>ACC. No.</u>		Dr.	Cr.	BUDGET
90	Donations U.S.		17 161.19	24 000.00
91	Preachers' Support		1 025.65	
92	Donations – Other		1 463.00	
92T	Donations – Transport	1 977.00		
94	Secondary School Fees		19 928.79	26 000.00
94G	Government Grant		4 146.60	
95	C.P.S Fees		14 126.47	14 000.00
96	Farm Income		6 199.62	6 000.00
97	Clinic Income		27.00	160.00
98	Miss. Income			188.00
99	Adjustment a/c	<u>618.66</u>		
		<u>2 615.66</u>	<u>64 078.32</u>	<u>70 348.00</u>
	Balance		61 462.66	
Total Expenditure			62 054.89	
Expenditure			62 054.89	
Income			<u>61 462.66</u>	
Excess of Expenditure over Income			<u>592.23</u>	

EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

<u>C.P.S 200</u>	Dr.	Cr.	BUDGET
200 Teachers' Salaries	2 216.49		
200A Teachers' Salaries 5%	414.85		600.00
201 Labour	320.60		500.00
202 Books	1 550.21		1 000.00
203 Transport	70.73		60.00
204 Classroom Supplies	1 134.60		1 000.00
205 Boarding Supplies	214.15		500.00
206 Food	9 776.00		9 792.00
207 Uniform			2 000.00
210 Building Repairs	85.53		400.00
221 Domestic Science	284.35		350.00
222 Industrial			400.00
223 Sports	116.91		350.00
230 Clinic Operations	408.00		612.00
231 Utilities	800.00		1 200.00
232 Mission Transport	600.00		900.00
233 Mission Overhead	2 000.00		3 000.00
250 Expansion	<u>1 990.53</u>		<u>3 000.00</u>
	<u>21 982.95</u>		<u>25 664.00</u>

SECONDARY SCHOOL 300

300 Teachers' Salaries		229.84	
301 Labour	1 508.00		800.00
302 Books	2 424.56		2 000.00
303 Transport			100.00
304 Classroom Supplies	1 608.18		2 000.00
305 Boarding Supplies	275.89		500.00
306 Food	10 835.00		11 340.00
307 Uniform			2 000.00
310 Building Repairs	109.36		300.00
311 Equipment Repair	6.35		100.00
321 Domestic Science	92.88		500.00
322 Industrial	177.00		400.00
323 Sports	223.32		400.00
330 Clinic Operations	560.00		840.00
331 Utilities	880.00		1 320.00
332 Transport	600.00		900.00
333 Mission Operation	2 000.00		3 000.00
350 Expansion	<u>1 223.64</u>		<u>3 000.00</u>
	<u>22 524.18</u>	<u>229.84</u>	<u>29 500.00</u>
Balance	22 294.34		

EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

<u>CLINIC 400</u>	Dr.	Cr.	BUDGET
401 Labour	400.00		600.00
403 Transport			50.00
404 Supplies	263.93		700.00
410 Building Repair			30.00
431 Utilities	80.00		120.00
433 Mission Operation	160.00		240.00
450 Expansion			200.00
460 Absorbed by other Depts.		<u>968.00</u>	<u>(1 452.00)</u>
	<u>903.63</u>	<u>968.00</u>	<u>488.00</u>
Balance		64.07	
<u>FARM 500</u>			
501 Labour	2 388.65		2 000.00
504 Supplies	2 053.89		1 000.00
511 Repairs	488.34		500.00
613 Seed and Fertilizers	615.74		2 000.00
514 Fuel	373.50		300.00
522 Transport	320.00		480.00
533 Mission Overhead	160.00		240.00
541 Garden		90.83	
550 Expansion	<u>53.82</u>		
	<u>6 453.94</u>	<u>90.83</u>	<u>6 520.00</u>
Balance	6 363.11		
<u>UTILITIES 600</u>			
604 Supplies	5.05		200.00
611 Repairs			100.00
614 Fuel	3 051.41		2 500.00
650 Expansion	2 572.05		1 200.00
660 Absorbed by other Depts.		<u>2 469.20</u>	<u>(3 864.00)</u>
	<u>5 628.51</u>	<u>2 469.20</u>	<u>136.00</u>
Balance	3 159.31		

EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

<u>MISSION OVERHEAD 700</u>		Dr.	Cr.	BUDGET
700	Grinding		26.71	
701	Labour	4 444.38		3 500.00
702	Books	90.02		4 000.00
704	Supplies	814.13		100.00
710	Building Repair	58.93		
711	Repairs	76.95		
714	Fuel	405.82		
722	Industrial	745.70		
745	L [sic]		312.39	
750	Expansion	1 573.89		1 000.00
760	Absorbed by other Depts.		5 432.84	(6 480.00)
		<u>8 209.82</u>	<u>5 771.94</u>	<u>2 120.00</u>
	Balance	2 437.88		
<u>TRANSPORT 800</u>				
801	Labour	292.00		1 000.00
804	Supplies	461.97		1 000.00
811	Repairs	1 055.52		1 500.00
814	Fuel	944.79		1 000.00
845	Learners		26.50	
850	Expansion	2 082.60		
860	Absorbed by other Depts.		1 938.00	(2 880.00)
		<u>4 836.88</u>	<u>1 964.50</u>	<u>1 620.00</u>
<u>EVANGELISM 900</u>				
901	Labour			1 000.00
902	Books		230.00	100.00
903	Transport	428.50		1 000.00
941	Lectureship			200.00
944	Evangelism	2 810.49		
		<u>23 238.99</u>	<u>230.00</u>	<u>4 300.00</u>

APPENDIX B

Umtali School of Preaching--List of Subjects

First Year

Acts of the Apostles A and B
 English Language A, B, and C
 Life of Christ A and B
 Speech A, B, and C
 History of the English Bible

OT Survey A and B
 NT Church
 Church Music
 Evangelism A and B

Second Year

Teacher Training A and B
 Hebrews
 Research Project
 Church History A and B
 OT Poetry

OT History A and B
 Minor Prophets A and B
 Preacher's Life and Work A and B
 Christian Home
 Homiletics A

Third Year

Church Leadership
 Romans and Galatians
 Denominational Doctrines
 Great Bible Doctrines A and B
 Christian Evidences
 James
 Comprehensive


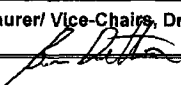
Evangelism Techniques A and B
 Homiletics B
 Major Prophets A and B
 Daniel and Zachariah
 General Epistles
 Revelation

Note: Some of the students study Greek and Hebrew

APPENDIX C

MREB Approval Certificate

Page 1 of 1

		McMaster University Research Ethics Board (MREB) c/o Office of Research Services, MREB Secretariat, GH-305, e-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca	
CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS CLEARANCE TO INVOLVE HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH			
Application Status: New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Addendum <input type="checkbox"/> Project Number: 2011 117			
TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: A Descriptive Chronicle of Transition from Mission to Indigenous Leadership in Two Church of Christ Institutions (Zimbabwe 1976-1986)			
Faculty Investigator (s)/ Supervisor(s)	Dept./Address	Phone	E-Mail
G. Heath	Divinity		gheath@mcmaster.ca
Student Investigator(s)	Dept./Address	Phone	E-Mail
P. Chimhungwe	Divinity	905-515-5998	paulshupikai@yahoo.com
The application in support of the above research project has been reviewed by the MREB to ensure compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the McMaster University Policies and Guidelines for Research Involving Human Participants. The following ethics certification is provided by the MREB: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The application protocol is approved as presented without questions or requests for modification. <input type="checkbox"/> The application protocol is approved as revised without questions or requests for modification. <input type="checkbox"/> The application protocol is approved subject to clarification and/or modification as appended or identified below			
COMMENTS AND CONDITIONS: Ongoing approval is contingent on completing the annual completed/status report. A "Change Request" or amendment must be made and approved before any alterations are made to the research.			
Reporting Frequency:		Annual:	Other:
Date: Chair, Dr. D. Maurer/ Vice-Chairs, Dr. Tina Moffat & Dr. Bruce Milliken:  (BRIAN DETZNER)			

APPENDIX D

A Descriptive Chronicle of Transition from Mission to Indigenous Leadership in Two Church of Christ Institutions (Zimbabwe 1976-1986)

Questions

Investigator: Paul Shupikai Chimhungwe

Date of Interview

1. Brief biography of the interviewee.
2. Period when he/she was in Zimbabwe or involved with work in Zimbabwe.
3. His/her capacity or the role he/she played in church work in Zimbabwe.
4. Where he/she was located in Zimbabwe including dates.
5. Reason why he/she went to Zimbabwe.
6. What were the sources of funding including addresses and contact persons.
7. Accommodation in Zimbabwe—who provided.
8. Major activities in Zimbabwe—including dates.
9. When he/she left Zimbabwe and reasons for leaving.
10. Who took over his/her work in Zimbabwe after departure. Was the person who took over trained for the position?
11. Have you been in contact with your work in Zimbabwe since leaving?
12. Have you financially, physically supported your former work in Zimbabwe
13. Do you have copies or any documents which might assist the researcher answer the research question.

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