YEARS
1875-1950
SWISS MISSION
IN
SOUTH AFRICA
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SWISS MISSION IN SOUTH AFRICA
FOREWORD

The history of South Africa, and especially the history of the development towards civilization of its African peoples is in a great measure the history of Missions. In every part of the Union missionaries from the continent of Europe and the United States of America have played their part alongside their British and South African colleagues. A famous American missionary, for example, was the accredited minister of the Voortrekkers and it was he who received the future President Kruger into Church membership. In the Transvaal, German missionaries served as pioneers of missionary work, and the Swiss missionaries followed them shortly after.

It is seventy-five years ago, on the 9th July 1875, since two young missionaries, Paul Creux and Ernest Berthoud, founded the Mission Station of Valdezia in the Northern Transvaal. Since that time the activities of the Mission have spread out to other parts of the Northern Transvaal and to Portuguese East Africa, and the mission has constantly developed, not only geographically but in the nature of its work and the variety of its undertakings. Its hospitals are famous for the efficiency of their work and the practical help which they render to European and Non-European alike. Its schools and its Normal College have done outstanding work. From the scientific standpoint, writers such as H. A. Junod, H. P. Junod, A. A. Jaques, and others, have contributed much to Bantu studies in all its branches, especially in Linguistics and Social Anthropology. Of still greater importance is the Christian love and friendship and self-sacrifice of the ordinary mission work, the preaching of the Gospel, the help given to individuals. It is the love of our Lord which has inspired the missionaries. It is His love which they have shown to the Africans; and it is worthwhile for its own sake, for the help given to the individual himself, without any
social or political benefit. And yet it is of great value to South Africa, for the intimate and friendly contact between European and Non-European, which is not always very easy in the practical conditions of South Africa, has done much to create better race relations, and to encourage a good understanding of the other race.

The messages which follow from leaders of Church and State in South Africa, show our country’s appreciation of the Swiss missionaries’ work, and the description of the Mission’s activities as they exist at the present day speaks for itself. The African Church is coming of age: as in many other missions the missionary must learn—and he is willing to learn—to work with the indigenous Christians as a colleague in the spirit of the Gospel: “I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.”

We pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon the Mission, and that the work of the seventy-five years now completed may go forward into the unknown future.

Edgar H. Brookes.
MESSAGE TO THE SWISS MISSION IN SOUTH AFRICA.

It is with a sincere feeling of gratitude and admiration that I am sending you this message of congratulation on the occasion of your Jubilee.

I do so in the first place as a friend of all Christian Missionary effort, realising as I do that every attempt to civilize the heathen must ultimately fail unless it rests on the firm foundation of the Christian faith and morality. I also do so because in my official capacity as a former Minister of Health I had the opportunity of acquainting myself with the great work done by the Swiss Mission in Northern Transvaal, especially through its hospitals and in general its care of the sick.

Besides the above, as I need hardly add, there naturally exists a feeling of affinity and friendship between the mission of the Reformed Church of Switzerland and that large section of the South African people confessing the same religious faith. They all will join with me in wishing the Swiss Mission God's blessing and all prosperity in the future.

CAPE TOWN.
A MESSAGE

FROM PROF. DR. G. B. H. GERDENER, ON BEHALF OF
THE MISSIONARY COUNCIL OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH,
TO THE SWISS MISSION IN SOUTH AFRICA,
ON ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

This next July, it will be 75 years since the two young Swiss Missionaries, Ernest Creux and Paul Berthoud arrived in the country of the Spelonken, east of Louis Trichardt, with their 5 oxwagons, coming from Basutoland, where they stayed for three years. After 75 years, we remember this event and in doing so, we send our very best wishes to the workers and supporters of the Swiss Mission in South Africa.

There are many ties which bind us to the Swiss. Their freedom-loving people and mountainous country, but above all the reformed character of the form of worship of the greatest part of their countryfolk make us think of them. Who can ever forget that Geneva is the town of Calvin? Who can ever forget that Paul Krüger passed his last earthly days on the shores of this same lake of Geneva.

In this country of ours there are many ties between the Swiss missionaries and our Afrikaans-speaking people. When three quarters of a century ago these Swiss pioneers came to the Northern Transvaal, they only found the Berlin missionaries and our own Stefanus Hofmeyr. There was sound and happy collaboration between these men. Through all these years was Elim Hospital a fount of relief for body and soul for many of our suffering people.

The contributions by the Swiss Mission in the realms of anthropology and linguistics have been manyfold; let us mention only one of them: H. A. Junod, and his world famous work: The Life of a South African Tribe.

The Swiss Mission was many a time a hard hit and tested society. The field of action was and still is in the unhealthy Lowveld, on the Transvaal side as well as beyond the Portuguese East African border.
Time and again have the numerous afflictions contributed to a deepening of the missionaries' calling and the seeds had to die, so as to bring forth a richer harvest to our Lord's Glory. Let us thank God for it.

May the future bring to our brothers and sisters of John Calvin's land richer and overflowing benediction, in their hearts, in their field of action and in our common beloved fatherland.

Stellenbosch. 

G. B. A. Gerdener.
Among the Missions affiliated with the Christian Council of South Africa the Swiss Mission in South Africa holds an honoured place. Throughout the seventy-five years of its history its work has revealed a quality and effectiveness which have earned for it the esteem of missionary colleagues of many churches and societies. Among those leaders who have shaped its policy and inspired its activities is a group of men and women whose names are household words in informed missionary circles and in a far wider sphere. They have built on sure foundations an edifice which has stood firmly through years of stress and strain. Some have been eminent in scholarship and research. All have borne a witness which has been evangelical in the best sense of the word. At the same time the Mission's work for the Bantu has been inspired by a deep sense of justice and a Christ-like concern for the welfare of the under-privileged in such matters as health and education. Among the tribes of Portuguese East Africa, as well as in the Northern Transvaal, in Pretoria and on the Witwatersrand, thousands of African people, through the agency of the Swiss Mission, have been built into the fabric of a Church whose standards are unusually high and which is destined to continue to thrive in this country.

The catholicity of spirit which has always characterized the Swiss Mission has strengthened with the years. Its relations with other missionary societies have been most cordial and brotherly. It has found happiness in the fellowship of others and in its turn is regarded by them with sincere affection and regard.

It is therefore a privilege, in the name of the Christian Council of South Africa and its many affiliated Churches and Missions, to salute our comrades as they celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of their work in South Africa. That work belongs not only to the African people, but to us all, and in its achievements we all rejoice. May it receive ever more richly the blessing of Almighty God!

Edward W. Grant.
OUR NATIVE CHURCH

The first and most important aim of the Mission is to preach the Gospel to the heathen, to show him that he too, can partake of the Salvation Christ offers to anyone who “believeth in Him” who gives to his or her life a new orientation, who, with the help of the Holy Spirit “turns a new leaf, and a clean one”.

The first heathen-converts accepted the “Good News”; many of them were baptized and started to follow Christ in their own lives; some of them brought the good tidings to their fellowmen. As splendid as such results sound, this very important aim of any missionary enterprise, shall not be the final goal of missionary work.

Christianity is based on the Community of those who have accepted Christ as their Lord and Saviour, who know only too well that without keeping within this Community, their faith is bound to wither and to disappear. Christ knew this, and before He terminated His Mission on earth, he had created and instituted the “ekklesia”, this Community of all those who believe in Him, he had started the “Holy, Universal (Catholic = universal, worldwide) Church.”

Any sound missionary enterprise has therefore to keep this final and ultimate goal in view: TO BUILD AND DEVELOP THE NATIVE CHURCH. It is, therefore, quite obvious that the first question shall be: “What form of Church shall we develop, what shall be its dogmatic build-up, what sort of organization to give to this Native Church.” Here in South Africa we see two main currents in the ecclesiological structure of Churches.

1. Some Churches or Missions have simply translated into Bantu languages the constitution, rules and policy of their “Home-Church”, thus incorporating the new Bantu-converts into the framework of an organization which has proved its worth in a far-off country among people of another race.
2. We have no intention of condemning the above policy, but we feel that another point of view might as well be considered. The Swiss Mission in South Africa, is the child of the Swiss Reformed Churches. Our approach to any dogmatic, theological, even sociological problem goes through the Word of God our Reformers have re-discovered to humanity. If our missionaries are called (besides their academic qualifications) V.D.M., i.e. Verbi Divini Minister, Servants of the Word of God, our Native Church as well has to be built and shaped into a community of believers where the Word of God, with all its implications reigns and rules as an absolute master. The criterium in any Church policy has therefore to be the Word of God and all its implications in practical life.

We are grateful to our first missionary pioneers, that they did not wait many years to build up a very sound but loose and elastic framework which was called the Church of the Tsonga and Rhonga people. The Constitution, more a circular letter to European Missionaries, took two foolscap pages, and was written
in French. The Natives knew that they were members of a Church, of their Church and they followed an unwritten Constitution, examining all problems under the light of the Word of God, under the guidance of their “Tatana”, the “fathers”, i.e. the European Missionaries.

Some more impetuous dogmaticians might resent this lack of flawless constitutional structure, they might deplore the absence of an “airtight” policy and rule, they might also feel that a Church, worthy of such a name, should have at its very beginning a Constitution, a compulsory Catechism, a Confession of Faith, and an efficient Church-Organization. A few years ago, in Switzerland, a committee of specialists had to draw a Constitution of a new Church which was going to be founded by amalgamating two Reformed Churches, a Free-Church and a State-Church. In the very elaborate discussions about the Constitution in general and the Confession of Faith in particular, some voices deplored that there was no provision for the compulsory introduction of the Apostolic Creed. Some of the younger theologians consulted the great Karl Barth, who gave them about this answer: “In a young Church we cannot impose rules and regulations of an old Church in the dogmatic domain. I am in favour of the introduction of the Apostolic Creed, but such an introduction has to come “from within” and has not to be imposed “from without”.

Before this great and famous theologian, Karl Barth, was born, our first missionaries acted in the same direction and we feel that if within the last 75 years, the Native Church of the Swiss Mission, nor the Mission itself have not suffered of any separatist movement, it is mainly due to the elastic structure our forbears gave to the Church and to the possibilities of constant and continuous readaptation in the face of everchanging circumstances. This flexibility does not mean anarchy, far from it. Our Native Church Leaders, and there are outstanding figures among them, understood it very well and the more and more efficient workings of our different Church authorities are a proof thereof.
To back this policy of "elastic adaptation" may we just mention that seven years after the arrival of the first missionaries, the Native Church took leave in 1882 of its own first Native Missionary, Yosefa, who was sent to the Delagoa Bay to bring the Gospel "where the Tsonga came from".

... Yes, so help me God

The two foolscap pages, written in French were soon replaced by a Constitution in Tsonga (Shangaan) and for many years, the little booklet of this very humble Constitution was quoted as the last authority in many a discussion. The "book hath spoken" and they accepted the "book" because they knew that it is inspired by the Spirit of the "Book".

Actually, after seventy-five years, our "Bantu Swiss Mission Church" has its modern and well adapted Constitution, but provision is made for further alterations if necessary.

Our Church has actually thirty ministers, ten of them being Europeans. According to political boundaries, the churches of
Portuguese East Africa and of the Union of South Africa are set up and organized separately. In both churches ministering to the same racial group of the Ma-Shangaan (Va-Tsonga and Ba-Rhonga) the highest authority is the Synod where delegates from all churches meet to discuss problems of general policy. Usually the Chairman of the Synod is a Non-European pastor. The executive authority of the Synod is the Synodal Commission which meets twice a year. This Commission is actually the ruling executive and the members, delegates from all the different circuits, take very well their share of responsibilities. Among the many commissions the Synodal Commission has at its disposal for special tasks, may I mention the Commission of finance. Since this Commission is solely composed by Africans, we have had no cause of any complaint about the management of the finances of the Church. There is, however, much to complain about the Church contributions our Commission of finance has to handle and if the Central Treasurer does not pay the African pastors and evangelists in time, it is because he has not received from the various churches the contributions. I take the liberty, even within the framework of this unpersonal paper on our Native Church, to appeal to every reader of our Jubilee brochure to do his or her share in helping us, in giving very generously, either by a direct and recurrent contribution, or in making provision for a substantial help in their will. Most of the great Missions are “backed” by a European Church in South Africa, this is not the case for the Swiss Mission. The Churches of Switzerland have done and still do more than their share in assisting even beyond their possibilities Missions of any description working in devastated Europe and over the whole world. Our Native Church members do their bit; in urban areas, the Church is self-supporting, as far as the salaries of the Non-European workers are concerned, in rural sectors, when drought and famine knock at the doors of many, contributions must lag far behind the set quota.
The Pastoral Fraternity (Ntsombano) of our Church deals with matters of spiritual nature, questions of Non-European personnel, it tries also to give to its members all the spiritual and intellectual assistance possible.

A subdivision of the Synodal Commission is the Presbytery, formed by a few nearby circuits. In their meetings, the agenda for the next Synodal Commissions' meeting is discussed, motions are dealt with, financial statements and reports, budgets and proposals are prepared.

The real local authority of the Church circuit is the Consistory or Church Council and as a rule the Church elders meet once a month for the meeting of the Consistory. Questions of Church discipline or policy are discussed, financial problems are examined, plans of action are set up and the lay-preachers get also there some instruction in their so important task.

At the small, but dear to us, Church of Masana we have had the privilege to serve for about twelve years, we maintained a nice and touching custom: every year, a new candle-holder was hung in the Church as a sign of gratitude to God who allowed the Church to be for one more year a light in a dark country. We followed faithfully this custom, because we know that in spite of all imperfections, our humble Church is the Church of Christ and therefore the "gates of hell cannot prevail against it".

(Rev.) M. Buchler,
Chairman, Synodal Commission.
Native education is one of the most discussed subjects at present. It is good that we are compelled to think over the problem again and to ask ourselves: what education do we want to give to our African youth? Many Africans and Europeans are inclined to take education and Christianity as synonymous. They take it for granted that to be educated means necessarily also to be a Christian. They write education with a capital "E" and reduce Christianity to a minimum of moral standards and good behaviour. In Europe we have seen where this type of education leads us: the ruin and the breakdown of cultural life are a consequence of it.

The Christian message alone gives to education the right direction. It is therefore our duty to maintain Christian education, i.e. education whose foundation is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. One may of course ask: Why education at all? Why does the Mission not limit itself to the preaching of the Gospel and perhaps to medical work? Why has it spent sums in the past on building schools in all the districts where it works and a big Training College at Lemana, leading up to Matriculation and to the Higher Teacher's Certificate and giving education to about 400 students? Why is all this effort and money spent on education? If somebody asks me these questions, I ask him back: If we did not do any school work at all, and if all the mission societies and churches took up the same attitude, who would give the right foundation to education? Who would prevent education from leading the young people to all sorts of ideologies? It fills us with gratitude that our first missionaries felt it their duty to build our schools in which to-day thousands of African children are taught and influenced.

There is yet another aspect of the problem which must not be forgotten: the young Africans of to-day are very keen on
receiving education. Many of our students coming from primitive villages of the Lowveld make tremendous sacrifices in order to come to Lemana. If we do not give them a chance of receiving their education in mission schools they may easily turn away from the Church and its message and think that it has nothing to do with them.

How do we realize Christian education in our schools, especially at our Training centre? There are the Bible-lessons which give to our pupils and students a deeper knowledge of the Bible. It is our aim at Lemana to help the students to see how the message of the Bible applies to every section of human life. Every Saturday evening they are given a chance of asking questions concerning the Bible or any problem of life which may occupy their minds. Every Friday afternoon there are Bible studies. The students assemble in groups of about fifteen,
each group having its own leader. The leaders have received a preparation by the chaplain of the College and now they explain a certain passage and the members of the group help each other to understand it. The Catechism classes which are open to members of other Churches than our own, serve the same purpose. Many students are year after year prepared to become full members of their Churches and surrender their lives to Christ. In the meetings of the Student’s Christian Association and the Temperance Association various speakers, European and African, address the students on different aspects of Christian life and help them to find answers.

Somebody may ask: but is this not merely theory? There is always the danger of talking about Christianity and neglecting to do Christ’s will. But on the other hand we must ask ourselves: How can one act in a Christian way without knowing which is this way? We try to apply in the life of the school what we teach and learn from the Bible. It is therefore our endeavour to employ Christian teachers, creating a Christian atmosphere in our schools. We first of all lay stress on having Christian teachers at Lemana, because our future primary school teachers are trained here. During school hours as well as during industrial and manual work, during sports and other activities we try to apply practically the Christian message. It is especially our desire to show the students that manual work is not inferior to intellectual work (a very wide-spread error among our students!), but has the same value since God has given us body and mind to glorify Him. Teachers and students work in teams, side by side, and thus an atmosphere of mutual help is formed. Some students fit in easily, others have difficulties.

The topic of this article is: “Youth through Youth for Christ”. We turn now to the first three words: “Youth through Youth”. We have stated above that the Mission serves the school by giving it through the Gospel of Christ the right foundation for education. Young Africans are not only educated in our schools,
but we try to win them for Christ. Once they are won, they become our helpers and the Church is thus greatly helped by the school. Recently a young teacher at one of our schools passed away. He had left Lemana a little more than a year before his death. But already his good influence on his school as well as his help in church activities, e.g. Sunday School, was strongly felt so that his death meant a real loss for our Church. Young people are called to bring the Gospel to the children. Despite many disappointments we acknowledge with gratitude how many teachers are pillars of the Church, taking many responsibilities upon them and at the same time leading their schools in a true Christian spirit. Through their word and their attitude they influence the children. It is a fact that a large number of our converts have been to our schools and have come to Christ through the influence of their teachers.

Not only the teachers, but already the students share in this work of bringing the little ones to Christ. Over fifty Lemana students are engaged in Sunday School work; they attend regularly the preparation classes and some of them walk on Sundays over ten miles to bring the Gospel to children outside. Others go out evangelizing in the villages, and pathfinders and wayfarers become helpers of children: they play and sing with them and teach them useful things.

Mission and School stand thus in a vital connection. One of our African teachers has put it like this: "the school is the child of the Mission. The child has grown up and has become an important helper of the mother. Yet the mother remains the one who helps the child with good advice and leads it." It is our deep desire to maintain this relationship, and we are hoping that more and more young people will come forth from our schools who are won for Christ and go out to win other young people for their Lord.

Lemana.

(Rev.) M. L. Martin.
HOW TO BRIDGE THE GAP

AMONGST the 300,000 Natives employed in mine compounds along the Reef, about a third come from Portuguese East Africa, a very precious reservoir for the gold mines. So constant is the flow from the Lourenco Marques and Inhambane Districts that, in those regions, a Native is hardly considered as a man if he has not spent a period of contract in the gold mines.

It is difficult to imagine the contrast which must upset those simple minds, between the still primitive and simple life in the bush, and the industrial surroundings of a gold field. Parked in thousands inside the walls of mine compounds, these Africans, although well treated and looked after by their employers, must feel somewhat bewildered in such a strange country where so many aspects of life are totally different from those one is accustomed to find at home.

Whereas in their sandy home country they had grown up in little villages composed of a few thatched huts hidden amongst dense bush in a damp malarial climate, now they breathe the fresh air of the dry high veld; they live in brick dormitories, sometimes sleep on cement bunks, tread on hard soil and stumble on sharp pieces of rock when working underground.

But fortunately, in those mine compounds, there is something which makes them feel at home in spite of so many strange feelings. All of them live in dormitories, but all dormitories are not alike in appearance. Entering into one of them at random, you may hesitate to go ahead; a smell of kaffir beer holds you back; strange objects ranging from a bicycle to various kitchen utensils obstruct your way, hanging on the beams which sustain the roof. You wonder where to sit and feel rather embarrassed. But, coming out and looking a few yards further, you find a group of Natives decently clad chatting in front of their dormitory. They seem to be waiting for somebody. Inside, some benches have been prepared, as though a meeting would
take place. On the sides, clean blankets, even some white sheets cover the bunks. Everything is neat. Behind the central fireplace, at the back of the dormitory, a table and a chair have been prepared. A prayer meeting is going to be held. After a busy day the Christians of this dormitory will gather together, most of the time between themselves, sometimes with their European missionary, to worship God. Darkness falls on the large yard surrounded by rows of dormitories. In the Swiss Mission room— as well as in several other rooms— one hears male voices singing well-known melodies. Then, very simply, the missionary or one of the elders in charge explains in Shangaan a Scripture lesson. A number of listeners are not Christians yet; but they find here a new home, a place of safety, a real family life which warms their hearts. Although you see only men in those large compounds, the Christian atmosphere makes up for the lack of proper family life. Young men, attracted by the cordiality of the
Christian congregation, are preserved from many insidious temptations. Little by little they feel inclined to make the definite step: they decide to join the Native Church.

Thus, through the years, missionaries have followed those who left their homes in Portuguese East Africa in order to work on the Reef; organizing little centres in practically all the mine compounds on the Rand, the Mission has filled the gap: our industrial civilization breaks up family life amongst the Natives; men live for months, even years, far from their homes. But the Church tries to heal the wounds, to make life acceptable by creating afresh for the mine workers a sympathetic and attractive community centre where one feels at home. After twelve or eighteen months, when the men return to their far country, the Church again waits for them, ready to welcome them into the fellowship of the local congregation. Unfortunately the power of paganism is still very strong and backsliders are numerous. But those who have really felt the blessing of a personal Christian life integrated in the community of believers want to continue at home the wonderful experience made on the Reef.

THE LOCATIONS

Native life in town locations is certainly different from what it is in mine compounds. The population is of a more permanent type; on the mines you deal with men; in the locations you meet men, women and children. Does it mean that families live in favourable conditions? Space does not allow us to expose the situation in detail. Many of our readers are aware of some of the problems which face the social worker, especially around Johannesburg. There you come across more "sophisticated" Natives, who are in constant touch with our modern way of life. Tribal laws become things of the past; seventy per cent of the children, in urban areas, do not find accommodation in Native schools and are ready to become delinquents and even
criminals in the near future. A growing feeling of frustration manifests itself more and more. Europeans hesitate to visit those areas except under protection.

Is the Church powerless in such circumstances? - Certainly not, but its influence seems to be slower than amongst "raw" Natives. Infinite tact has to be used on the part of European missionaries who supervise Church and school activities in the locations. Amongst our Shangaan families, many parents still remember country life and do not forget the Christian message brought to them in Northern and Eastern Transvaal thirty or forty years ago. But most of their children were born in town and know practically nothing else than city surroundings. In the absence of tribal sanctions, the Church, once more, tries to fill the gap, upholding Christian principles without which people are driven away into sheer licence and immorality. Wherever you find even only one strong moral personality among our Native leaders, the Church stands firmly and exercises a real influence. If a Native teacher is faithful to Christian principles in his private and public life, just think of the influence he can exercise on hundreds of children.

With an ever growing population, missionary societies can hardly keep pace. Funds are scarce; new church buildings and schools should be erected, but where is the money? School subsidies are getting scarce; more teachers' salaries cannot be expected from the Government. This means too often regression, even defeat. In this time of Jubilee, let us remember, however, with thankfulness that the Swiss Mission has shown its real desire to follow those who left their homes temporarily or definitely. The Church has succeeded to a great extent in its effort to guide and protect those who otherwise might have sunk miserably into immorality and delinquency. The future, especially in urban areas, is not bright, but we remember the heartening word of the prophet: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit."

(Rev.) B. Terrisse.
EYES WHICH SEE.

This article should have been written by our missionary-doctor and eye-specialist, Mrs. O. Rosset of Elim Hospital, but owing to pressure of work, Dr. Rosset had to give a negative answer to our request. The Tsonga Messenger of April-June 1950 gives an account of the medical branch of missionary enterprise, and this article, written by a non-medical missionary tries to tell you of some experiences made in the medical field, near the Kruger National Park, in a then very backward area.

Eyes which see means in our Bantu minds also ears which hear and hearts which understand.

As a young missionary, I was given the task of putting a finishing touch to our newly built hospital, down in the Lowveld. How proud we were of our new Hospital. The “old” one was rather inadequate, consisting of two rooms, five by six feet in size and the strange contraption our nurse called bed, did wonderful work when we gave it a regular dose of nails and petrol box planks every two or three weeks. Two petrol boxes made a cot, five of them made the instrument cupboard where medicine bottles neighboured happily with instruments, salt, candles, matches and dressings.

Our new hospital was of a more respectful size. It is quite interesting to see what you can do in a little hut (our new hospital) of eight by eight feet. Bats in the thatchroof took control of flies and mosquitoes, a wire across the hut separated the “ward” from the consulting room (we called it sometimes “operating theatre”) the partition was a discarded motorcar sail. Many times the sister must have been a winged angel, because it was not possible to set one’s feet on the ground, when all the in-patients were in.

The district-surgeon came once a month to do the “big things” (and he did them very well) between his visits, as there was no telephone, the nurse had to try her best in between.
The missionary was called the Superintendent of the Hospital and his high office included the job of ambulance driver, builder, burial officer, accountant and orderly, when necessary.

"Sister, do you remember that night, we came back with an operated patient from the Mine Hospital (forty miles away),

and we stuck in the mud of that track which is called to-day the main-road? The Superintendent of the Hospital laying in knee deep mud, to fix once more the chains to the tires, and the Sister and Matron in chief holding a candle with which the wind played dirty tricks?

"Sister, do you remember that night, when we had to go down to get that police-boy, bitten by a baboon? We managed to cross the first river with dear 'Seraphine' (that is the little van of the Mission) but the second and the third one were too much for her. Do you remember when we tried to cross these rivers, when you wondered why the boys always beat the water with
their sticks? You seemed to believe that it was just one of their unknown customs, and not to scare the crocodiles. You just wondered why the baboons had a voice like an angry leopard, you believed it, because you did not see the sleek figure, half-hidden by a branch, holding between its jaws the body of a young and too inquisitive baboon.

"Sister, do you remember that memorable night we prayed and asked God for guidance about a hopeless case, and how wonderfully things went, just before sunrise."

Our district-surgeon seemed to take a certain dislike to our hospital-hut, when he hit a roof-pole with his head, and we then decided to start building. Friends had already contributed the necessary funds towards the new building, and since then, i.e. 1936, there has always been something going on with bricks, cement, and builders. After a time, we had water laid on; and one must have been in the bushveld to know the real value of a watertap (and water); then came water-borne sewerage, and this is a boon to any hospital; finally a small second-hand engine gave from time to time some dim light when we needed it, and the water supply was quite sufficient, provided the ambulance took the washing-girls every day down to the river, where the water had not to be pumped, and where there were no taps to be left open.

At present a good European and Non-European staff share the numerous duties of that little dispensary which changed into an efficient hospital; a nurses' training school comes into being; a good water supply and a strong lighting plant see that things go on normally. The characteristics of a Mission hospital are simplicity, but effectiveness, no fancy gadgets, but efficient tools, and, if possible, labour saving devices.

The best equipped Mission hospital will never be an effective and efficient member in the whole body of missionary enterprise, if above all the missionary spirit does not prevail in every branch. Not being a medical missionary, I can state here quite
openly that the work our medical missionaries, both doctors and nurses, have done during these last seventy-five years, is not only a great humanitarian task well performed, but that by their attitude, and the spirit they have put into their work, the Love of God has been well manifested; many are those who have found Christ through the humble but effective witness of our medical staff, both European and Non-European.

To illustrate this assertion, may I quote the views of a Native ex-patient. I helped in compiling a census of the population of our Reserve. I agreed to give a hand, provided I had not to work near one of our outstations. The few farms allotted to me were on the boundary of the Game Reserve, and I was quite unknown to the local people. When I asked one man about his religion, he said: "Write 'Swiss'," and at my enquiring glance, he added: "I am now a Christian, because a few months ago I was brought to the Swiss Mission Hospital in a rather desperate state. I had tried all the famous witch doctors, my cattle had gone by then; finally I asked 'Moneri' (the White missionary) to come and fetch me. A Black man came with a car (ambulance), a Black doctor (the Staff Nurse) examined me, and then they brought me to hospital. Nobody swore at me, although I was a real bad one. I did not want the Native nurses to pray with me, so they prayed for me; I did not want to be present at prayers, so they sang a bit louder, and I could not help hearing them. Once, when I was very ill (he had pneumonia before the happy time of sulfo and penicillin), I overheard the nurses praying for me, asking God to "pierce" my bad heart, and to make me good before my last hour; I started to understand, I called them in, and they spoke very gently to me, explaining a lot of new things to me. It was all nice but very new, I asked for more and I got it. Now I am well again, I stay with my family quite alone down here, but I am a child of God, because through their love, they showed me that God also loved me."

(Rev.) M. Buchler.
It was the passion for his Master and Lord and the divine desire, to bring into the direst misery of human souls the Gospel of salvation, which led the pioneer of the Swiss Mission, Rev. E. Creux, into prison work. Here is how he relates one of his first visits in 1902: “Every Sunday morning, I go to the prison to bring the Gospel to the Tsonga (Shangaan) convicts. Their number varies from thirty to sixty. As I arrive, I knock at the door. A little spy-hole half opens; the warden at the door, sees my white tie (I put it so that the cloth may reveal the monk), and opens the door. If the governor of the prison is there, I go and make my bow. He is extremely gracious, and never misses an occasion to thank me for the trouble I take. Then, after having crossed a yard where White prisoners warm themselves up in the sun, I come to the Native yard, escorted by a warder in khaki uniform. At the door, a Black warder receives me, and introduces me in the yard where eighty to hundred prisoners, clad in white trousers and white blouses, perfectly clean, are lying on the ground, enjoying the heat. They are called Shangaaans, a name which the Gwambas or Tsongas have received from the Whites in the whole of the Transvaal, and my congregation enters into what is their sleeping quarters, a simple galvanized iron and wood building, without ceiling and roof. All along the walls of this barrack are the blankets and working clothes, well folded and lined up. My prisoners sit before these small piles of clothing. They pray on their knees; there are some wesleyans who utter ‘amen’ over and over again. They sing. Rev. Jaques has taught them: “Come, o come back”, and “Come to Jesus, he calls you”, and it is not too bad. It is a kind of Sunday School lesson which follows. What a joy to speak of the things from above to these poor prisoners who are all eyes and ears, and for whom my visit is a ray from above in their sad life!”
This work, born of a true love for Our Lord, and a no less true love of Bantu souls, grew considerably, and in 1907, the great Pretoria Local Gaol was built, and it was inaugurated by

"Without following Christ's teachings, there will never be true Freedom"
(The hon. the Senator J. D. Rheinallt Jones, at the inauguration of Masana Church, 1941)

Rev. E. Creux in a service which the authorities asked him to preside, because of the respect they had for his influence. In 1910, a great room upstairs was set aside for religious services. And Rev. E. Creux became more and more useful, owing to his knowledge of Shangana-Tsonga, and Sotho. He soon
understood that there were enormous differences between these various prisoners coming from all South African Bantu tribes. He learned to know the worst characters, and strange to say, he made at the time the experience which has been mine, and that is that the Nguni people are more violent, more directly inclined to brutality than the other South African Bantu. He discovered that sodomy had been introduced, and that old lads forced upon youngsters these sordid practices; and he already noted the fact that simple statutory offences leading unsophisticated Bantu men in prison brought them to real crime by contamination. For many years there existed in the prison a secret gang of about thirty members with two leaders, who had set their full effort on demoralizing the young men coming in and on fomenting disorder and at times the murder of warders. Fortunately some of these men went through a real conversion and the whole gang was broken. Ernest Creux started to distribute as generously as possible, spelling books, testaments and hymn books, and he says: "in the twenty-five cells of one prison, with ten prisoners each, from six to nine p.m., the cells become school rooms. At nine, one of them prays, after a hymn, and everyone lies down on his mat. Such is the result of our work of many years. Evil is no more triumphant, and souls are converted. Last Sunday, at the service presided by Jacobus (a Bantu subsequently ordained minister), there were conversions with tears and prayers."

Ernest Creux also started our ministry with the condemned men; and it is with gratitude that I quote one story of an execution from his pen: "Little by little, slowly, light came in, very dim as yet, in this dull mind, in this conscience still full of darkness. And when we were kneeling down and he tried to pray, we could feel that some divine rays had penetrated him: 'O God!' - he was saying - 'Have pity on me, a great sinner, save me for the love of Jesus who died for me; give me to repent from my sins.' The last days he said he was ready to
die and did not fear anything. This morning (24th of August of 1904), at six o'clock, I arrived at the prison and had ten minutes with him. He was calm and even happy. He helped the executioner to bind him and shook hands with everyone. He showed me the executioner and said: 'That is the one who is going to kill me, but it does not hurt me.' Then he shook his hand and said goodbye to all. The five warders looked deeply moved by such courage. I remained at the foot of the gallows, exhorting him to look at Jesus on the cross, as the converted brigand. It was not long; a dull noise of a body falling and struggling for a while, and this poor heathen went, so I hope, to join the one whose conversion at the last moment was the prelude of thousands of other conversions... I turned towards the authorities, warders, chief, doctor and sheriff: 'We too are condemned, and our death is as certain as that of this poor Native; but he believed in God's Grace through Jesus, and we have no other means of salvation...

It seems to me as if I were reading my own notes... In 1911, Rev. E. Creux got the help of a lay worker, Mr. Webb, and both went on with the prison work for ten years, until Ernest Creux, now an old man, was so riddled with rheumatism that he moved with difficulty. At the end of 1921 he handed the work over to Charles Bourquin, another Swiss missionary, who carried the burden of this work with the temporary help of others until 1931, the year in which I came to Pretoria, relieving my old colleague of this work in 1932.

Charles Bourquin had a very different nature from that of Ernest Creux. Very sensitive to the beauties of pictural art, Charles Bourquin covered his study, his sitting-room, drawing-room and passage, with reproductions of the painting masters, and they were always of the best quality, as for example the Jesus Christ of Leonardo, Our Lord as a young man, perhaps one of the greatest interpretations of the Son of Man at all times, — a picture which has been very poorly reproduced, but which has also been
admirably copied by the Germans. Charles Bourquin had, of course, the latter. In a letter to the Swiss Mission Board, in 1924, he says: "The late pastor Buchenel, a chaplain of Witzwil (an institution for long-timers in Switzerland) with whom I had a chat in Neuchâtel, one day told me: 'As for me, I work in the sewers.' Thinking of these hundreds of prisoners, of condemned men, of lepers whom we must instruct, console and save, of all these outcasts of fortune, these victims of life whose paganism, or our materialist civilization, has made diseased persons or criminals, I would be tempted to say as my honoured colleague of the State Church of Neuchâtel: 'I also am working in the sewers.' And though, this work, I would pay to do it, if I had the means. To bring what is highest, noblest, most powerful, the Gospel of the Grace of God in Jesus Christ, to what is most defiled, lowest and most repulsive on earth, what a glorious privilege and what responsibility."

On that very Sunday which Charles Bourquin then describes, I had the privilege of being with him in the prison, and I addressed this great crowd which became later my congregation for so many years. In 1931–32, after ten years of this ministry, Charles Bourquin left this extraordinary congregation in my hands, and for fifteen and a half years, it was my turn to say: 'I also work in the sewers' . . . but should I be requested to leave, I would pray to remain in it, to be a silent and awe-struck witness of the miraculous power of God. Even after I relinquished the direct responsibility of this unique cure of souls to my colleagues, now that I organize the Penal Reform League of South Africa, I still often go back to the condemned cell, blessing my Saviour to have this opportunity of seeing Him at work: because that is the important point. In the condemned cell, it is not Ernest Creux, or Charles Bourquin, nor Henri Junod, or René Bill or Bernard Terrisse who are of any value at all. It is not even John Mbowen, the faithful, able, calm, and consistent witness of Christ, who for now twenty years has
been with us in the condemned cell: it is the 'Very God of Very God', who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate. And these words are no theological, mysterious, or unfathomable problem. It is Christ Himself who is needed. And it is He who is coming, because "man's extremity,—and there are no examples of a direst extremity indeed,—is God's opportunity".

In a little book in French now published by the Swiss Mission, on the occasion of our Jubilee, and entitled *Beyond Death, Life*, I have tried to relate a few of these extraordinary experiences: failures as well as successes; restitutions which have led to life everlasting; and one awe-inspiring example of an accumulation of lies which led to the saddest defeat I have recorded in my ministry. I do not intend describing this work further. One day, I hope, a comprehensive publication in English, under the title *Life Inviable*, will sum up my views on the great question of capital punishment. After having assisted two hundred and six Natives and Coloureds to the very last moment, when they plunged into the pit of the gallows, I can only say here that I have become a completely unemotional, convinced opponent of a penalty which human justice imposes, although death and life are prerogatives of God, and the death of the victim of a murderer does not entitle the community to descend to the level of the criminal and use the same methods. It is sad to think that the British Commonwealth, which has been such a power for good, for enlightenment and the propagation of the Gospel in the world, should be the last Upholder of a punishment which is barbaric, antiquated, unpsychological, and above all, un-Christian.

When my turn came to take charge of the cure of souls in the Pretoria prisons, I did so with a deep sense of the inadequacy of my qualifications and perhaps more of the very imperfection of my faith in Our Saviour. But a long experience of this work has not helped to dismiss such misgivings: on the contrary,
I feel more than ever how poor my efforts have been in front of a task which was beyond any human power. At that time, in 1931, we were still in charge of the Middelburg Chronic Sick Prison; and since I took charge of the Penal Reform League, the Department has most kindly given me entry to all South African Prisons, and I have seen the Prisons in Cape Town, and Belleville, in Knysna, in Grahamstown, in Port Elizabeth (both the old, and the heart-rending new dungeon), in East London, in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, in Bloemfontein and Grootvlei, in Kimberley, etc. That there are many urgent reforms needed in our Courts and Prisons is obvious; but there are also a great many good points about them: there are many middle-aged warders at present on service, who try to work in the right spirit and earnestly desire to save their charges. May God bless and multiply the action of all those who are animated by good will. The criminals are no 'lily-whites', as someone was said to have reported my opinion to be. There is a hard fight going on in the saving of souls; and men have sunk to dreadful levels at times. But with God, nothing is impossible.

Just one note at the end: A certain Sunday, I was preaching at the local gaol where, after eight years of consistent effort, I got the authorities to build a shed; and I was just pointing out to my thousand or more prisoners listening that swallows had come, as a visit from God, and had built up their little nest in the roof . . . when, suddenly, a little swallow, too feeble to fly, fell from the nest, flapping its wings, and fell on my white crop of hair, like on a cushion. . . I went on, with the little bird in my hands, and at the end asked one of the prisoners to put the little bird back in its nest. – Yes God visits the gaols . . . and no soul is too low for His Grace.

(Rev.) Henri Ph. Junod.
"GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF THY STEWARDSHIP"

Such is the order given by the rich man to his servant in the parable of Jesus. And after seventy-five years' work it is what we are called to do; in business this is referred to as stocktaking. Not in the idea of boasting, but, on the contrary, of humiliating ourselves.

A long article would be needed to explain what has resulted from that call of God, long ago, to His two servants, the Reverends E. Creux and P. Berthoud. The first effect was to give their small Church, viz. the Evangelical Free Church of the Canton de Vaud, a sense of duty as regards the heathen world. It would be necessary to show how that small beginning, in the home base, developed; how the interest in the missionary activity increased and spread to other churches nearly all through the Protestant part of Switzerland; how men and women in their hundreds, gave themselves to do the always expanding work; how the small budget of the beginning has jumped to the figure of 540,000 Swiss francs (at the present rate of exchange over £44,000), and now numerous activities of all kinds have been created to maintain this enterprise.

Let us now give a rapid glance at what has been done in Africa. The statutes of the Mission indicate its work as follows: "To contribute to the advancement of the Kingdom of God amongst the heathen, by the establishment of Christian churches, capable, at a spiritual and material point of view, of living their own lives, propagating themselves and changing the moral life of the individual as well as the social conditions of the Natives."

For that purpose the Mission uses the following means: "Evangelization, the diffusion of the Holy Scriptures, school instruction from the lower classes to the higher ones, the care of the sick, the development and improvement of the social conditions of the Africans."
This is the principal task of the Mission work, and to carry this responsibility the church has been founded. The first one was at Valdezia in the Northern Transvaal, followed by many others; but the mission field was very soon extended to Portuguese East Africa, and then to Pretoria and Johannesburg; in these last years it has gone as far as Beira. There are now in all these regions, fourteen churches headed by European missionaries, twenty which have African pastors as their leaders; and depending on these numerous outstations, with or without an evangelist to conduct them.

In this way a Christian body has been formed and is being trained to carry on the Kingdom of God to the Native people.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Our first missionaries, who had spent three years in Basutoland, thought, when they arrived among the Tsonga, that the Suto literature would be understood by them, but they soon found their error. A new language had to be learnt, and the Bible translated anew, hymns and books written in this dialect. The first of these—the Buku—appeared in 1883, containing parts of Genesis, a Harmony of the Gospels and fifty-seven hymns. In 1894 the New Testament was published, and in 1907 the whole Scripture.

SCHOOLS

One of the primary occupations of the missionaries was to teach reading and writing; Rev. E. Creux, who was the first teacher, opened a school in one of the huts of the old establishment, at Valdezia. But already in 1879 a few young men were ready to be sent to the Bible and Teaching Schools of Morija (Basutoland). Wherever a church was founded, a school followed, and they
multiplied rapidly. In 1899 a Bible School of our own was inaugurated at Shiluvane, near Tzaneen, which was to serve our two mission fields; but after the Boer war it was closed for various reasons, one of which was that the Portuguese Government prevented its young people from attending school in the neighbouring country.

Children listening to a Sermon

The Lemana Training Institution was then founded near Elim for the Transvaal students, and the Rikatla Bible School for the Portuguese East Africans. After many years of useful work, this last institution was closed by the authorities, who also closed most of the elementary schools of our church in Portuguese territory. But the Lemana Institution developed and has to-day, besides the Teaching Department, a High School and a Domestic Science School.

At different times we have had Pastoral and Evangelist schools, to train our personnel; three hospitals have a Training school for nurses.
MEDICAL WORK

The last issue of the *Tsonga Messenger* deals with this subject and I need not say much here. We have now five hospitals and a few dispensaries, with nine doctors (two being interns), and about thirty European nurses.

SOCIAL WORK

This work is done on all our stations, especially by the assistant lady missionaries, and in schools which have an Industrial and Agricultural syllabus.

If space permitted, I would write of the Church organization, the Shangaan literature, the *Blue Cross* (temperance movement), the *Patrulha* or Patrols of Lourenco Marques, a Scout troop with a more religious bias, the finances, etc.

Such is, very rapidly exposed, the point to which the Mission has attained. The future should lead to a greater autonomy of the Church.

(Rev.) F. A. Cuendet.
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JAARE
1875-1950

SWITSERSE SENDING
IN
SUID AFRIKA
THE TSONGA MESSENGER

DIE TSONGA BODE

'n Driemaandelikse Uitgawe van die Switserse Sending onder die Shangaan stamme in Suid Afrika.

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SWITSERSE SENDING IN SUID AFRIKA
VOORWOORD

Die geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika, en veral die geskiedenis van die beskawing en ontwikkeling van die Naturelle van Suid-Afrika is in 'n groot mate die geskiedenis van die Sendingwerk. In elke deel van die Unie het sendelinge van die Vasteland van Europa en die Verenigde State van Amerika hulle rol gespeel, langsaa hulle Britse en Suid-Afrikaanse medewerkers. 'n Bekende Amerikaanse sendeling, b.v. was die predikant van die Voortrekkers, en dit is hy wat die toekomstige President Kruger as 'n lid van die Kerk aangeneem het. In Transvaal het Duitse sendelinge as baanbrekers van die Sendingwerk opgetree, en kort daarna het die Switserse sendelinge hulle gevolg.

Dit is vyf-en-sewentig jaar gelede, op die 9de Julie, 1875, dat die twee jonge sendelinge Paul Berthoud en Ernest Creux die sendingstasie van Valdezia in Noordelike-Transvaal gestig het. Sedert daardie tyd het die aktiwiteite van die Sending tot andere dele van Noordelike-Transvaal en tot Portugése Oos-Afrika uitgebrei; en nie alleen van territoriale standpunt nie maar in die karakter van sy werk en die verskeidenheid van sy ondernemings het die Sending gedurig ontwikkel. Sy hospitale is bekend vir die doeltreffendheid van hulle werk en die praktiese dienste wat sowel vir blankes as vir Naturelle gelewer is. Sy skole en sy Normaalkollege het uitstekende werk gedoen. Van wetenskaplike standpunt het Sending-skrywers soos H. A. Junod, H. P. Junod, A. A. Jaques, en andere, tot die Bantologie in al sy takke, b.v. Taalkunde en Sosiale-anthropologie, baie bygedra. Van nog groter belang is die Kristelike liefde en vriendskap en self-opoffering van die gewone sendingswerk, die predeking van die Evangelie, die help wat aan individue gegee is. Dit is die liefde van ons Here wat die sendelinge besiel het. Dit is Sy liefde wat hulle aan die Naturelle getoon het; en dit is die moeite werd, was dit net ter wille van die individu self en
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