

## *Lectures on the History of the LCSA OctoberNovember2011*

### **Weber, W.: On the History of the Bleckmar Mission.**

As an introduction I referred to the Almanac 2012 and to the newly printed constitution of the LCSA and asked that everyone uses them as a reference to know the newest given information on office bearers and congregations of the five dioceses of the church and its legal basis.

Dear brothers and sisters!

I prepared a few pages on the topic, and still much, very much more, many an aspect of the history of our over hundred year old mission and still young independent Lutheran Church in Southern Africa was not even hinted at, e. g. the work of the Enhlanhleni seminary is only mentioned here and there. The work done in building churches, the hospitals at Itshe Lejuba, Botshabelo and Dirkiesdorp, the work of the Themba Centre, the Umhlangeni Literature Centre, the work of producing and printing literature in Zulu and Tswana: e. g. The Zulu Hymnbook and Catechism, the Book of Concord in Zulu, and the translation of the Lutheran Confessions in Tswana, the book with daily devotions edited by missionary Heinrich Dammann, the Church Bulletin: Umngane wamaLuthere, Tsala ya Balutere; Umlayezi - Molaetsa; IziNdaba ezifingqiweyo - Dikgang tse dikhutshwane; the Almanac; the printed sermons for every Sunday in Zulu and Tswana since 1963; the active part one of our missionaries played in the revision of the Zulu Bible in the mid fifties; and now the active part of one of our pastors in the preparation of a new translation of the Bible in Zulu, the Kalanga Bible Translation project, etc. are not even mentioned.

Still I hope that what I want to say will be a little stimulating. I hope that it will not be a case of bringing full grown owls to Athens, when I speak on the principles which guided the work of our mission, or on its origin; on the work in Germany and Southern Africa, on teachers and students at Bleckmar, Germany, and Salem, South Africa, on the mission superintendent and mission director, on the mission journal entitled "Missionsblatt," on the work among Indians, Tswanas and Zulus by missionaries, pastors and many a layman.

Let us now point the spotlight on some aspects of the life and history of the Bleckmar Mission which was called during the past decades by the following names:

The Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission, 1892-1951;

The Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Churches, 1951-1989;

and since 1989: The Mission of Lutheran Churches, (MLC)

"Die Lutherische Kirchenmission (Bleckmarer Mission).

### **Principles guiding its life and work <sup>1</sup>**

In his introductory essay to the "Festschrift" for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Bleckmar Mission Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf, the mission inspector from 1951, mentions three principles which guided the life, work, and history of the Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Churches from the beginning. They read as follows:

1. A Lutheran church can only pursue and support a Lutheran mission.
2. A Lutheran mission can only be pursued by a Lutheran church.
3. The work of a Lutheran mission must lead to the constitution of a Lutheran church.<sup>2</sup>

The first two principles were formulated as early as 1889. The third one was added in 1953. After I attended the last missiological congress at Unisa in Pretoria this year I would like to add a fourth principle which was formulated already as early as 1968 when The Lutheran Church in Southern Africa made its first official agreement with The Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Churches:

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<sup>1</sup> Hopf, F. W.: "Lutherische Kirche treibt Lutherische Mission." In Lutherische Kirche treibt Lutherische Mission. Festschrift zum 75jähigen Jubiläum der Bleckmarer Mission. Bleckmar, 1967, p. 13-47.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, p. 13.

Where a church is constituted a Lutheran mission continues to do its work in cooperation and close connection with this Lutheran church.<sup>3</sup>

These principles found their way also into the constitution of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, where we read in its third paragraph:

"By virtue of being bound by Scripture and Confessions, the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa is aware of the unity of faith with the Church of the Apostles and orthodox Christians of all times. The Lutheran Church in Southern Africa is therefore in fellowship with the Lutheran Churches in the whole world, in so far as these churches abide by the teachings of the Lutheran Confessions "and act accordingly" (my emphasis).

"There is no church fellowship with congregations and churches which stand on a different foundation or, who on their part, have fellowship with those that accept teachings contrary to Scripture."<sup>4</sup>

Because of the first principle that a Lutheran church can support only a Lutheran mission, the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church pledged itself to continue the work of the mission which was founded by Louis Harms, the leader of the Lutheran revival in the Hermannsburg area in Germany in the mid of the nineteenth century. The aim and goal in his missionary efforts was to bring the Lutheran church to the heathen in every nation. This aim and goal of Louis Harms and this principle according to which the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church pursued its missionary work urges us to meditate and reflect on the validity of these principles, to meditate and reflect on the "peculiarity" of our Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission, to meditate and reflect on the confessional consequences of the seventh article of the Augsburg Confession, i. e. on the doctrine of the true unity of the church. Also the churches in Africa, Asia, Australia and South America have to give their answer to these questions, and take and accept the confessional consequences of the Lutheran doctrine on the unity of the church.

It is the conviction of the Lutheran church and mission that by accepting these confessional consequences, the Lutheran church and mission act in accord with the one universal, catholic, Christian church and do not pursue the peculiarities of a certain particular church. In the preface to the Apology<sup>5</sup> we read:

"Rather I have assembled the main arguments, to testify to all nations that we hold to the Gospel of Christ correctly and faithfully. ... But we cannot surrender truth that is so clear and necessary for the church."

It is a pity that this part of the Apology is translated from the Latin rather than the German of Justus Jonas. Translated directly from the German this section reads <sup>6</sup>:

"I have gathered the best and highest reasons in order that all high and low estates, all who live now, and all our descendants, all native Germans, and otherwise all the world, and all foreign nations may have a clear witness before their eyes, and that this witness may stay there for ever, to be a witness that we have taught the Gospel of Christ purely, godly, and correctly. ... we know and confess the public, godly truth without which the Church of Christ cannot exist or survive, nor can we, nor may we deny and reject the eternal holy Word of the Gospel."

According to these words of the Apology, if we pledge ourselves to bring the Lutheran Church to the heathen, and build a Lutheran Church among other nations and peoples, we pledge ourselves, to preach to them, and teach them the Gospel of Christ purely, godly, and correctly, and according to Article 7 we add:

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<sup>3</sup> Missionsblatt der Mission der Hannoverschen Evangelisch=Lutherischen Freikirche, oder der Mission Evangelisch=Lutherischer Freikirchen. Hereafter cited as Missionsblatt, with the respective year (before 1951 also with the respective month), and page. The passage concerning the agreement is explained in the Missionsblatt, 1968, p. 233-4.

<sup>4</sup> "Constitution of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa." Printed by THE NATAL WITNESS (PTY.) LTD., Pietermaritzburg. (without year). p. 1+2.

<sup>5</sup> "The Book of Concord." The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert. Concordia Publishing House Saint Louis. 1959 by Fortress Press. p. 99, paragraph 15 + 16.

<sup>6</sup> "Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch=lutherischen Kirche." Herausgegeben im Gedenkjahr der Augsburgischen Konfession 1930. 3. verbesserte Auflage. Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht. Göttingen, 1956. p. 143-4, § 15+16.

And bring them the sacraments according to the Gospel of Christ, according to the Word of God, according to the Words of their institution. This is the aim and goal of a Lutheran church pursuing and doing Lutheran missionary work, and where we work within an indigenous Lutheran Church we can and may pursue this work only according to these principles.

Two passages from Luther's writings show and address clearly the responsibility of the Lutheran Church for the one Holy Christian Catholic Apostolic Church, and testify to the truth that Luther did not pursue a particular church, but stood for the one Christian Church by standing up for his, that is, for the Lutheran doctrine and the Lutheran Church. The first citation is found in "A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to all Christians to guard against Insurrection and Rebellion, 1522."<sup>7</sup>

"In the first place, I ask that men make no reference to my name; let them call themselves Christians, not Lutherans. What is Luther? After all, the teaching is not mine (John 7:16). Neither was I crucified for anyone (1 Cor. 1:13). St. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 3, would not allow the Christians to call themselves Pauline or Petrine, but Christian. How then should I - poor stinking maggot - fodder that I am - come to have men call the children of Christ by my wretched name? Not so, my dear friends; let us abolish all party names and call ourselves Christians, after him whose teaching we hold. The papists deservedly have a party name, because they are not content with the teaching and name of Christ, but want to be papist as well. Let them be papist then, since the pope is their master. I neither am nor want to be anyone's master. I hold, together with the universal church, the one universal teaching of Christ, who is our only master (Math. 23:8)."

The second passage we find in "Receiving both Kinds in the Sacrament, 1522:"<sup>8</sup> There Luther states: Who denies him and his doctrine and church in effect also denies Christ, because Luther's teaching is not his but Christ's.

"Finally, I see that I must add a good word of admonition to those whom Satan has now begun to persecute. For there are some among them who think that when they are attacked they can escape the danger (of being persecuted, and today it would be to escape the hatred, scorn, and contempt of all unionists, pluralists, and indifferentists) by saying: I do not hold with Luther or with anyone else, but only with the holy gospel and the holy church, or with the Roman church. For saying so they think they will be left in peace. Yet in their hearts they regard my teaching as the teaching of the gospel and stand by it. In reality this kind of statement does not help them, and it is in effect a denial of Christ (my emphasis). Therefore, I beg such people to be very careful.

"True, by any consideration of body or soul you should never say: I am Lutheran, or Papist. For neither of them died for you, or is your master. Christ alone died for you, he alone is your master, and you should confess yourself a Christian. But if you are convinced that Luther's teaching is in accord with the gospel and that the pope's is not, then you should not discard Luther so completely, lest with him you discard also his teaching, which you nevertheless recognize as Christ's teaching. You should rather say: Whether Luther is a rascal or a saint I do not care; his teaching is not his, but Christ's (my emphasis).

"For you will observe that the tyrants are not out merely to destroy Luther, but to wipe out the teaching. It is on account of the teaching that they attack you and ask you whether you are Lutheran. Here you must be sure not to speak with slippery or evasive words but frankly to confess Christ, no matter who did the preaching - Luther, or Tom, Dick, or Harry. The person you can forget; but the teaching you must confess. Paul also writes thus to Timothy in 2 Tim. 1(:8): "Do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord, nor of me, a prisoner for his sake." If it had been enough here for Timothy to confess the gospel, Paul would not have commanded him not to be ashamed also of Paul - not of Paul as a person but of Paul as a prisoner for the sake of the gospel. Now if Timothy had said, I do not hold with Paul or with Peter, but with Christ, when he knew that Peter and Paul were teaching Christ, then he would actually thereby have denied Christ himself. For Christ says in Math. 10 concerning those who preach him: "He who receives you receives me,

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<sup>7</sup> "Luther's Works" (LW) edited by Jaroslav Pelikan (Vols. 1-30) and Helmut T. Lehmann (Vols. 31-55). St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House and Philadelphia: Fortress Press (Formerly Muhlenberg Press), 1955ff. Vol. 45, p. 70-1.

<sup>8</sup> LW, Vol. 36, p. 265-6.

and he who rejects you rejects me." Why this? Because holding thus with his messengers, those who bring his word, is the same as holding with Christ himself and with his word."

### *Its Origin<sup>9</sup>*

The Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church saw this big aim and goal of bringing the Lutheran church to the heathen and to other nations according to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions endangered and jeopardized, when in 1890, the Hermannsburg Mission, the orthodox Lutheran mission founded by Louis Harms, reached an agreement with the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran State Church changing the status of the mission. The Hanoverian State Church had suspended the pastors of the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church from office only twelve to fourteen years earlier in 1876 - 1878.

Those who had opposed decisions of the State Church concerning the order of service were retired or suspended or left Hanover. Superintendent Dankwers from Ebstorf and pastor Wittrock from Roosche asked to be retired. Pastor Raven in Sievershausen was suspended in October 1876, and died on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June, 1877. Pastor Müller was called to Geneva. Pastor Kreipe from Elliehausen was suspended in August 1877 and left Hanover. Pastor Robert Stromburg at Scharnebeck was suspended in December 1877. During the following three months the suspension from office of pastor Theodor Harms at Hermannsburg, Karl Dreves at Wriedel, and Adolf Heicke at Nettelkamp followed. Superintendent Rocholl left the State Church, and became pastor of the congregation in the Weinstreet in Hanover for a short time before he was called to the Old Lutheran congregation in Radevormwald. The Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church came into being during this period. This church called suspended pastors from Hesse. In Lower Saxony more congregations, than pastors, drew the consequences from the suspension of the few pastors. In Hesse many more pastors (43) were suspended. Their congregations mostly did not follow them into the separation from the State Church in Hesse.<sup>10</sup>

Theodor Harms was the director of the Hermannsburg Mission. When he was suspended from office as a pastor of the Hanoverian State Church, the Hermannsburg Mission was led and guided according to the principles of the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church. After his death his son, Egmont Harms, became his successor in the office of mission director, and he favoured the separation of the Large Congregation of the Cross in Hermannsburg from the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church. Using the altar and pulpit of his congregation, he hoped to find a way to unite Lutherans from the State Church and the Free Church in supporting the Hermannsburg Mission. These plans failed because of the opposition of the congregation. Nevertheless, State Church Pastor Oepke (a very fine, and able man) became the co-director of the mission, and when Egmont Harms was in South Africa together with Dr. Georg Haccius making an official visitation of the Hermannsburg Mission in Natal and Transvaal, the Hermannsburg Mission negotiated an agreement with the Hanoverian State Church which was finalized after the death of Oepke by Haccius. This agreement has five points and reads as follows:

1. In the Hermannsburg Mission we have the legitimate order and rule that all members are free to take part in holy communion in the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran State Church, and that all members of the Hanoverian State Church have access to the sacrament in all congregations which were constituted by our mission in Africa and elsewhere. That means that altar fellowship exists between the Hanoverian State Church and the mission.
2. The vacancies in the mission board will be filled in such a way that half of its members belong to the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran State Church.
3. One of the directors should always be a State Church pastor.

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<sup>9</sup> "Geschichte der Hannoverschen evangelisch=lutherischen Freikirche." Herausgegeben von dem Pastorenkonvent. Druck und Verlag von Otto Romberger (vorm. W. Grossgebauer). Celle, 1924. p. 32-5. (Hereafter cited as: History of the HELFC).

<sup>10</sup> History of the HELFC, p. 12-13.

4. The directors/leaders/principals of the mission institutions/mission seminary will always be willing to allow the Royal State Church consistory - if it wishes - to look into the activities of the institution and into its financial matters.

5. In future only men should be elected to the mission board, and be called as directors of the mission who accept the above arrangements as correct and legitimate (zu Recht bestehend).<sup>11</sup>

Because of this agreement it was declared in Bergen near Hermannsburg during the synodical conference of a district of the Hanoverian State Church as early as 1890 that The Hermannsburg Mission had become again a State Church Institution.<sup>12</sup> History proved this declaration to be correct. The influence of the Hanoverian State Church on the Hermannsburg Mission increased over the years. After the retirement of Mission Director Hans Otto Harms and the change of name of the Hermannsburg mission to "Evangelical Lutheran Mission Work in Lower Saxony"<sup>13</sup> it became legally an organization within the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran State Church without any legal representation and influence from the side of the previous Hermannsburg-Hamburg Evangelical Lutheran Free Church.

We cannot follow step by step all the negotiations from 1889 to 1892 which took place within the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church before and after the agreement between the Hermannsburg Mission and the Hanoverian State Church was finalized. We only note the outcome that the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church, a small church, at that time not numbering 3000 members, at its synodical conference on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, 1892 in Hermannsburg in the Small Congregation of the Cross, decided to constitute the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission. The eight congregations of the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church were represented by their pastors and a church elder of each congregation at this synodical conference:

Congregation:	Pastor:	Church elder:
Hermannsburg	Conrad Dreves	Martius from Beckedorf
Nettelkamp:	Adolf Heicke	Bauck from Hansen
Scharnebeck:		Peters from Masendorf
Bleckmar:	Friedrich Wolff	Söhnholz from Südbostel
Wriedel:	Karl Dreves	Studtmann from Brockhöfe
Verden:	Heinrich W. Gerhold	Willenbrock from Holtum
Celle:	Eduard Bingmann	Lindmüller from Celle
Rabber:	Mützelfeldt	Engelke from Brockhausen

Pastor Robert Stromburg from Scharnebeck was absent because of illness.

This synodical conference took six decisions concerning the mission of which the first two read as follows:

1. We accept it as our responsibility, duty, or obligation to continue to pursue the old Lutheran Mission Work of Louis Harms, first of all in Africa.
2. We want to pursue this missionary work as a work of the church, i. e. as the Mission of the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church.<sup>14</sup>

With this decision the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission was established on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, 1892 in Hermannsburg/Germany.

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<sup>11</sup> History of the HELFC, p. 32-3. On page 53 Pastor Wolff states that Mission Director Egmont Harms wanted to avoid the separation of the Large Congregation of the Cross from the Hanoverian Ev.-Luth. Free Church.

<sup>12</sup> "Geschichte der Freien ev.-luth. Synode in Südafrika." 1892-1932. Im Auftrage der Synode herausgegeben von Pastor J. Schnackenberg, Wittenberg, Transvaal. Druck von Otto Romberger (vorm. W. Grossgebauer). Celle, 1933, p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Its German name and its appreviation: Evangelisch-Lutherisches Missionswerk in Niedersachsen [ELM])

<sup>14</sup> Missionsblatt, 1967, p. 148. History of the HELFC, p. 35.

### *The development in South Africa<sup>15</sup>*

Concurrently a few of the Hermannsburg missionaries in Africa and a few of the congregations which were established among the Hermannsburg colonists were opposed to the agreement. The first who was affected by the agreement was Pastor David Oltmann who did not accept the agreement, while his New Hanover congregation did. Therefore he had to leave the congregation. Although it had been repeated again and again by the Hermannsburg Mission that nothing had been changed within the mission by the agreement, Superintendent (Propstverweser) Röttcher had to inform Pastor Oltmann that he could not be accepted as a missionary again if he did not accept the agreement. He even had to be excluded from the community of the mission. That happened at the end of 1890. How the case of Oltmann was handled opened the eyes of several pastors and missionaries as to the legal consequences of the agreement between the Hermannsburg Mission and the Hanoverian State Church.

Christoph Johannes (Mbokojwane)<sup>16</sup> who was born 1886, April 14, and died a few days before his 90th birthday in April 1976 remembers how his father experienced the agreement which was signed on April 15, 1890 through which the Hanoverian State Church was honoured to be a genuine Lutheran Church still. His father Christoph Johannes (Mboza), Superintendent Heinrich Christoph Prigge, Heinrich Cassier, Heinrich Gevers, Gustav Stielau had as young men in the seminary at Hermannsburg experienced that Theodor Harms und their pastors at home had been suspended from office and had constituted the Hanoverian Ev. Luth. Free Church,<sup>17</sup> and that David Oltmann was not accepted as missionary anymore in the Hermannsburg Mission when he did not subscribe to the agreement. Therefore the congregations Lüneburg and Bergen constituted the Free Ev. Luth. Synod in South Africa (FELSISA) on the 13/14 September 1892, and pastor Gustav Stielau together with his Kirchdorf congregation joined the FELSISA also the Uelzen congregation, and also Peter Stoppel at Umhlangeni. Christoph Johannes remembered the visits of Sup. Prigge at Bergen and the serious deliberations concerning the constitution of the HELFC, also the letter which Heinrich Cassier wrote 1893 to the Hermannsburg Mission Board to state his disagreement with the agreement. He wrote: "I would honour my old, faithful pastor and teacher in dogmatics very badly, would remember him not honouring his peaceful departing from this world - it is known that I kept the watch at his bed when he died and closed his broken eyes. - I would follow him not thanking him anymore for his faith in the holy, unerring and inerrant Word of God and his sincere faith and conviction that the confession of the Lutheran Church is dear and genuine if I would accept the altar fellowship between the mission board and the consistory of the State Church. It is this consistory which dismissed my pastor, teacher and mission director from office. The only reason was that he honoured the commandment of God more and higher than a commandment of men, because he did not want to lie and cheat on holy ground."

"Our parents honoured the judgment of Father Harms and of Pastor Ernst whose written council confirmed them in their attitude and intention not to become involved again with the Hanoverian State Church. Pastor Stielau<sup>18</sup> wrote: "Lord, preserve a small flock to testify against unionism. It is difficult to stand firm against secret compromises with which unionists want to trap people to enter unionistic fellowships. The faithful God may help us in his mercy against ourselves. Then we will be able to overcome friends and foes."

Superintendent Prigge had written to the mission board of the HELFCM: "It is not wise to act against conscience. That is the reason that we had to separate from the Hermannsburg Mission, although it was difficult (and heart breaking) for us. As I still want to be a missionary with the help of God, and your church is prepared and intends to pursue the old, genuine Lutheran Mission according to how Harms pursued it, I humbly ask whether you can accept me as one of your missionaries."<sup>19</sup>

### *Among the Zulu<sup>20</sup>*

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<sup>15</sup> History of the HELFC, p. 35-9.

<sup>16</sup> Pictures of him are found in No. 4; April 1976 of the Missionsblatt, p. 76, and of conferences of the pastors' and missionaries' during the twenties and thirties of the 20th century on page 87.

<sup>17</sup> HELFC; 1878.

<sup>18</sup> Father-in-law of mission superintendent Christoph Johannes.

<sup>19</sup> Lutherische Kirche treibt Lutherische Mission, p. 48-49.

<sup>20</sup> History of the HELFC, p. 35. History of the FELSISA, p. 20.

Also here we cannot follow step by step all the negotiations which occurred till the congregations Bergen and Lüneburg with their pastors Christoph Johannes and Heinrich Gevers withdrew from the Hermannsburg Mission and constituted the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa during their joint meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of September, 1892. Missionary Heinrich Prigge from Goede Hoop who was present at this meeting withdrew and resigned from his service in the Hermannsburg Mission officially on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November, 1892. Missionary Prigge was elected as president of the synod. Still in 1892 Pastor Stielau and the largest part of his Kirchdorf congregation joined the Free Synod. Through the decision of Prigge, Stielau, and Johannes their Zulu congregations also found their way into the fellowship of the Free Synod and the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission, as did the Zulu congregation at Rosenen near Glencoe where the Zulu missionary, Heinrich Schroeder, and after his death in 1891, his widow and their sons had gathered a Zulu congregation. These congregations were the beginning of the missionary work of the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission in South Africa among the Zulus.

### *Among the Tswana<sup>21</sup>*

Among the Tswana missionaries it was Heinrich Cassier who could not abide to the decisions of the agreement. He wrote two letters to the Hermannsburg Mission council, but did not receive any answer. These letters were printed later in the Church periodical: *Unter dem Kreuze*. One sentence always touched me very much. It shows how he was conscience bound to reject the agreement between the Hanoverian State Church and the Hermannsburg Mission. He wrote that he could keep quiet and carry on with his missionary work among the Tswana. He certainly never would have come into the situation where he had to accept a member of the Hanoverian State Church at the altar of his congregation, but he wrote: "The hour of death, the judgement seat of Christ, and the long, long eternity which will reveal it all. It took four years before his inner struggle came to an end. He had to leave his mission station Bethel, Transvaal, and only those members of his congregation who lived on the mission and who did not follow him were allowed to stay at Bethel. All others who followed him into the fellowship with the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission had to leave. Cassier had baptized more than 2000 during his work of ten years among the Tswana. That was the birth in 1896 of the Tswana Congregations of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa. Ernst Wilhelm Henning, a very active pioneer missionary of the Lutheran Free Church among the Tswana said all his life that Cassier had done wrong to separate from Hermannsburg with his congregation. Although he himself never left our church and mission he thought till two weeks before his death, that it was wrong that our mission was working among the Tswana. At that late date he heard that the congregations of the former Hermannsburg Mission had decided to constitute one Lutheran Church together with the Berlin Mission, a mission society with its "Hinterland" within in the Prussian Union Church, and others among the Zulu. Then Henning said: "Und Cassier hatte doch recht." And yet Cassier was right.

### *Umhlangeni<sup>22</sup>*

In addition to the above mentioned six Hermannsburg missionaries: Prigge, Oltmann, Johannes, Gevers, Stielau, and Cassier who left the Hermannsburg Mission because of its 1890 agreement with the Hanoverian State Church, Pastor Stoppel who had started a missionary work in 1866 on the mission station Marburg near Port Shepstone on the Natal South Coast, separated from the Hermannsburg Mission in 1883 or 1884, and became the pastor of the German speaking congregation Umhlangeni. This congregation split in 1888, and one part of the congregation constituted the Hermannsburg congregation Bethanien near Umhlangeni. Stoppel carried on doing mission work, and from 1894 he and his German- and Zulu- speaking congregations asked to be admitted into the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa and into the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission. The negotiations for their admittance took about five years. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of June, 1899 Pastor Stoppel and his German-speaking congregation were admitted

<sup>21</sup> History of the HELFC, p. 36. "Aus der Anfangszeit unserer Betschuanen=Mission." Bleckmar, 1958. p. 3-8. The two issues of "Unter dem Kreuze" in which the letters of Cassier appeared at the moment not available, but compare Missionsblatt, 1952, p. 70; 1955, p. 37-41.

<sup>22</sup> History of the FELSiSA, p. 59-61.

into the Free Synod during the synodical conference at Ebenezer near Glencoe. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July, 1900 Pastor Stoppel died. Missionary Johannes Schroeder, the uncle of Dr. Johannes Schroeder, who was teacher at the LTS Enhlanhleri from 1956-1975 and died 1998, became the pastor of that congregation on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January, 1901, but only for a short time. He could not stand the climate at the coast.

### ***Wrogemann and Schnell**<sup>23</sup>*

Cassier died during a visit to Germany in 1898 where he had sought medical help for his wife. He did not leave for Germany earlier until he could leave his congregations in the care of the young missionary Wilhelm Wrogemann. When the doctor in Germany saw the Cassiers, he told Cassier that he himself was much sicker than his wife. He had burnt the candle from both ends during his ten years of restless missionary endeavour among the Tswana. At the beginning he had taken over a congregation of about three hundred members at Bethel in 1887 from his father-in-law, the missionary Lohann from Mabaalstad. During the next ten years he wrote more than two thousand names into the baptismal register of his congregation. After Cassier's death, Johannes Schnell was urged to finish quickly his examinations at Bleckmar in order to be sent to West Transvaal and to help his brother-in-law Wrogemann.

### ***At the turn of the century**<sup>24</sup>*

We may briefly summarize the work of the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission and the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa at the turn of the century not taking the disruption caused by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer-War into account:

From the West to the South East: (Columns from left to right show the year of the missionary's arrival in South Africa, his name, the place where he was working, and the language in which he was working:)

1899 Johannes Schnell	Vogelstruisknop/Botshabelo	Tswana
1896 Wilhelm Wrogemann	Palmietfontein/Roodepoort	Tswana
1857 Heinrich Prigge	Goede Hoop	Zulu
1882 Christoph Johannes	Bergen	German / Zulu
1885 Heinrich Gevers	Lüneburg	German
1896 Wilhelm Hellberg	Ebenezer	German / Zulu
1880 Gustav Stielau	Kirchdorf	German / Zulu
1866 Peter Stoppel	Umhlangeni	German / Zulu

Wilhelm Hellberg, Wilhelm Wrogemann, and Johannes Schnell had been sent already by the young Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission to South Africa before the turn of the century. Heinrich Prigge the son of the first mission superintendent had been examined in a hurry on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November, 1899. He left Germany on the same day because he had been called home by the South African Republic to become a soldier in their struggle against the British.

### ***The office of Mission Superintendent**<sup>25</sup>*

Heinrich Prigge, the eldest among the missionaries who opposed the 1890 agreement, was appointed mission superintendent. He was superintendent of the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission till his death or retirement. Christoph Johannes took over from him in 1919 and served for 42 years till he asked to be released from this office on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July, 1961. Georg Schulz was appointed to be his successor by the mission council in Germany on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October, 1961 and missionary Friedrich Dierks became his deputy. Since 1967, Georg Schulz served as bishop of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, the independent Lutheran church that succeeded the Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Churches. He also served as mission superintendent till Gerhard Heidenreich was inducted into office on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March,

<sup>23</sup> History of the HELFC, p.38.

<sup>24</sup> History of the HELFC, p.38-9.

<sup>25</sup> Missionsblatt, 1961, p. 195; 1986, p. 33.



1986. During his time the idea of mission superintendent was abandoned. Since then the mission is legally represented by the mission representative in Southern Africa..

### ***The work of the mission in Germany***

On that note let me come back to Germany, and what had been done there after the constitution of the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission in 1892.

### ***Support by several Lutheran Churches<sup>26</sup>***

Several other Independent or State Free Evangelical Lutheran Churches decided to give their support to this Lutheran Free Church Mission. The Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hesse gave half of its Epiphany collection to the Bleckmar Mission, and its superintendent became an ex officio member of the Mission Board. Also the Renitent Church of the unaltered Augsburg Confession in Hesse and the Old Lutheran Church in Prussia supported this Mission. The Buffalo Synod of North America decided in 1902 to accept the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission as its own mission. From the mission seminaries in Melsungen and Dreihäusen quite a few young men went to America and became pastors in the Buffalo Synod before the turn of the century. With the early death of Pastor Dietrich the seminary in Dreihäusen closed down. I do not know when official support by the former Buffalo Synod ceased. After World War Two during the fifties some support came from the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod for certain projects. Church fellowship was broken off as late as 1986 by the WELS because the LCMS practices fellowship with the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (SELK) and the LCMS. Closer cooperation has developed with the LCMS in recent years.<sup>27</sup>

### ***Intercession for the mission***

All congregations of the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church used formulated intercessions in the Sunday prayer, a prayer for the mission of their church. This intercession was formulated as follows in the order of service which was printed in 1911: "We pray to thee: Bless graciously all work which is done in missions, and especially the work of the mission of our church, bless the small beginning of the work and let it grow. Give all missionaries and especially our brethren among the heathen courage, faith, and patience, and richly bless their work, so that the fullness of the heathen together with Israel enters your kingdom, and so that your Son may come quickly to bring everything to an end on the beloved last day!"<sup>28</sup>

### ***The Mission Seminary<sup>29</sup>***

Another step to support and to further the course of its own mission was the decision of the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church to have a training institution for its missionaries. Already during the constituting synodical conference in June 1892 pastor Wolff from Bleckmar declared his willingness to take over the training of the mission students. There occurred many controversies in Hermannsburg in the mid eighties. Student Wilhelm Wrogemann from Bleckmar had left the Hermannsburg mission seminary because of the agreement with the Hanoverian State Church, and Wilhelm Hellberg had left already earlier during 1887 or 1888. Hellberg pursued his studies at the universities of Erlangen and Breslau, and made his first theological examination at the seminary of the Old Lutheran Church at Breslau. Wrogemann had to be trained at home. Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf once said: "At Bleckmar there was a student willing to study and to be trained as a missionary, and there was a pastor willing to teach. That is the reason why the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission came to Bleckmar." The Bleckmar congregation built a house on its own premises and rented it to the mission. This house was dedicated in 1897. Only after the First World

<sup>26</sup> History of the HELFC, p.36; Missionsblatt, 1955, p. 80.

<sup>27</sup> Compare also the publication of Wangelin, William: The History of the FLSiSA and its Relationship with the LC-MS. St. Louis, MO. 2008

<sup>28</sup> "Wir bitten Dich auch, Du wollest Dich der Werke der heiligen Mission und insonderheit der Mission unserer Kirche in Gnaden annehmen, zum geringen Anfang gesegneten Fortgang geben, die Missionare und besonders unsere Brüder unter den Heiden mit unverzagtem Mut, Glauben und Geduld ausrüsten und ihre Arbeit reichlich segnen, dass die Fülle der Heiden samt Israel eingehe in Dein Reich und Dein lieber Sohn bald wiederkomme zum lieben letzten Tage, um alles zu vollenden." "Agendarischer Anhang zu der Lü neburger Kirchenordnung." Poeschel & Trepte in Leipzig, 1911, p. 4-5.

<sup>29</sup> History of the HELFC, p. 36-7. Missionsblatt, Dezember 1924, p. 90-1; Januar 1926, p. 1-3; 1951, p. 136; 1952, p. 64; 1966, p. 254-8.

War in the mid twenties when the mission needed to enlarge the house, was the house and land legally transferred unto the name of the mission. Before the Missionshaus was built, the students and the teachers lived with families of the Bleckmar congregation. Even after the First World War and before the house was enlarged in the mid twenties, Johannes Schroeder and my father lived with the Wrogemann family at Dageförde for quite a time. Hence the great familiarity and close relationship between the older generation of the missionaries and the Bleckmar congregation.

Pastor Friedrich Wolff started to train Wilhelm Wrogemann at Bleckmar. Heinrich Orth from Hessa became the second student at Bleckmar, but he fell ill and died during 1896. A second course was started in 1893 with Johannes Schnell, Heinrich Prigge, and Johannes Schroeder. Karl Meister stepped into this course during 1896. Johannes Schnell came from the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church, Karl Meister from the Old Lutheran Church in Prussia, Heinrich Prigge and Johannes Schroeder came from South Africa and both were sons of missionaries.

### ***The Mission Inspectors, and Mission Directors*<sup>30</sup>**

Two young men helped with the training during their vicarage: The first was Georg Rothfuchs, the father of the two superintendents Rothfuchs: Wilhelm and Rudolf, and the grandfather of the three Rothfuchs pastors in the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church: Eckart, Wilhelm and Hermann. Georg Rothfuchs was pastor in Rodenberg, where three Rothfuchs were pastors in succession. The other was Karl Eisenberg who was called back to Hessa when his father died. He became pastor in Marburg/Warzenbach and later in Dreihäusen. In 1897 after the Bleckmar congregation had build the house for the mission, a mission inspector, or fulltime teacher could be called. Georg Lochte, who taught at Bleckmar from 1897 till 1904, was called. Georg Marth took his place in 1905. He also taught only for a short time at Bleckmar, only six years, and then was called to Walpershofen/Saarbrücken in 1911. He did his work at Bleckmar for six years as his grandson Volker Stolle later served as head of the mission from 1978 till 1984, also for six years. In 1911 came Adolf Blanke. He was mission inspector till 1951 when he retired, and Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf took his place. Lochte and Marth came from the Old Lutheran Church, Blanke and Hopf from Hessa. Johannes Schnell married Martha, a sister of Wilhelm Lochte; August Lür married Emma, a sister of Georg Marth; and Willi Reusch married Agnes Dietrich, the sister-in-law of Adolf Blanke; and Wilhelm Weber married Lieselotte Eisenberg, the godchild of Mrs. Adolf Blanke. I thought this piece of information to be interesting.

During the time of Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf the title Mission Inspector was abandoned. The teaching and training of future missionaries was no longer the main obligation of the man in fulltime office at Bleckmar. Since 1971, May 27, the principal or rector of the Mission Institute (Missionsanstalt) at Bleckmar is called Mission Director and not Mission Inspector anymore. Pastor Wolff, who was the man in charge of the seminary, let me call him the rector of the seminary till his death; never was called Mission Inspector. The teachers who helped him with the training of the future missionaries were called Mission Inspector: Lochte, Marth, and Blanke, till Blanke became the rector of the seminary and was called Mission Inspector as man in charge of the seminary. The theological teachers who helped Blanke and Hopf with the training of the future missionaries were not called Mission Inspector, e. g. Pastor Hans Salzmann, the pastor of the Bleckmar congregation, and later his successor Pastor Hujer, or Church Superintendent Brüggemann and Pastor Rose, also teachers from nearby Bergen who taught secular subjects, also Pastor Marth again after the Second World War, Dr. Peter Hauptmann, Bernhard Schütze, Wilhelm Rothfuchs, Hinrich Brandt, Dieter Knoch, and Hans Peter Mahlke. I am not sure how the work and responsibilities in the Missionshaus were distributed between Hans Peter Mahlke, the pastor of the Bleckmar congregation and Volker Stolle in the Missionshaus after Volker Stolle became Mission Director in 1978 as the successor of Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf. In 1984 Volker Stolle was called to Oberursel as professor for New Testament, and Kirchenrat Pastor Johannes Junker took his place as Mission Director. After mission director Junker:

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<sup>30</sup> Missionsblatt, 1967, p. 151; 1971, p. 147; 1978, p. 79; 1984, p. 101.  
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mission director Gerhard Heidenreich, then mission director Markus Nietzke, and now mission director Roger Zieger.

*The missionaries  
coming from Bleckmar till 1939<sup>31</sup>*

Wonderful work was done in Bleckmar, already during the time of Pastor Friedrich Wolff. The future missionaries received a very thorough training. The first missionary to finish his studies at Bleckmar was Wilhelm Wrogemann, who was ordained together with Wilhelm Hellberg at Bleckmar on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October, 1896, and they were sent to South Africa: Wrogemann to assist Heinrich Cassier at Palmietfontein, and Wilhelm Hellberg to be the pastor of the Ebenezer German and Zulu speaking congregation near Glencoe in Natal. Including these two, fifteen missionaries were sent to South Africa during the first twenty-one years of the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission from 1892 till 1914 the beginning of the First World War. Except for Wilhelm Hellberg all had received their training in Bleckmar. After their studies at Bleckmar, Bernhard Schwarz and Christoph Johannes studied a few semesters at Bresslau and Leipzig. Wilhelm Völker attended courses in medical training before he was sent to South Africa. Let me list the names, with the years they studied at Bleckmar, where they came from, year of birth and death, and where they worked in South Africa:

1890-96 Wilhelm Wrogemann	Bleckmar	1865-1918	Palmietfontein/Roodepoort
Wilhelm Hellberg	Hermannsburg	1866-1923	Ebenezer/Uelzen
1893-99 Johannes Schnell	Gistenbeck	1872-1959	Botshabelo/Sophiatown
1893-99 Heinrich Prigge	Goede Hoop	1870-1962	Goede Hoop/Etshondo (1918)
1893-00 Johannes Schroeder	Rosenen	1873-1981	Umhlangeni 1901
			Ebenezer 1903-1911
			Mabola till 1914-1919,
but later served in the Church of Sweden Mission near Hlobane.			
1895-00 Karl Meister	Kreuzburg	1878-1958	Umhlangeni/Paddock/Pella/ Salem seminary till 1954
1900-06 Hermann Ehlers	Dageförde	1873-1961	Pniel/Mahamba till 1946
1900-06 Martin Bielefeldt	Cammin		Pella / Eschede
1900-06 August Lüer	Oelersee/Arpke	1882-1943	Leeufontein / Ebenezer
1902-06 Christoph Johannes	Bergen	1886-1976	Salem
1900-05 Bernhard Schwarz	Küstrin		Pella / Lüneburg 1956
1906-11 Johannes Kehrhahn	Lärz(Meckl)		Bergen/left FELSiSA 1927
1906-12 Martin Schwacke	Völkersen	1886-1951	Pella / Umhlangeni
1906-12 Ernst Wilh. Henning	Bremen	1889-1962	Roodepoort
1906-13 Wilhelm Völker	Hermannsburg		Goede Hoop
			/left FELSiSA 1927

Between the two wars only six were sent to South Africa, Wilhelm Stemmann who finished together with Willi Reusch and Johannes Schnackenberg was not sent to South Africa because of bad health. He became pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church. Quite a few more started together with Ludwig Wiesinger and Wilhelm Weber, and later with Walther Bast but could not stand the strain of the training in Bleckmar. Here follows the list of the six who were sent by the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission during the twenties and thirties:

1912-22 Willi Reusch	Leisten	1894-1981	Uelzen till 1967
1912-22 Joh. Schnackenberg	Deinstedt	1896-1974	Wittenberg till 1965
1922-29 Ludwig Wiesinger	Gistenbeck	1905-1980	Botshabelo/Kirchdorf till 1974
1923-29 Wilhelm Weber	Bergen	1897-1974	Itshe Lejuba till 1962
1929-36 Walter Bast	Treptow		Botshabelo till 1948
1923-27 Johannes Schroeder	Uelzen	1906-2001	Pella/Ebenezer till 1946
			Enhlanhleni 1955-75

<sup>31</sup> Missionsblatt, 1952, p. 65-9.

From 1927 - 1932 Pastor Graustein was pastor of the Kirchdorf congregation, but he was not sent from Bleckmar,<sup>32</sup> and Pastor Herbert Böhmer was pastor at Panbult and in Johannesburg from 1946-1960 when he left the FELSiSA and became pastor of the Cape Synod. During World War Two Ernst Heinrich Schwacke studied at the Zehlendorf seminary of the Ev. Luth. Free Church. He came back to South Africa in 1946 and was called to be missionary at Ebenezer till he was called to Umhlangeni in 1953 after the death of his father Martin Schwacke in 1951. These are in short the names of the missionaries of the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission and the names of the pastors of the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa before Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf became Mission Inspector in 1951. With these names I only wanted to indicate what was achieved by the mission seminary in Bleckmar during the first sixty years of its existence. With the missionaries who graduated from the seminary in Bleckmar the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church had its greatest impact in the life of the Lutheran congregations among Germans, Zulu and Tswana in South Africa.

### *Missionsblatt*<sup>33</sup>

The Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission exercised great influence through the *Missionsblatt*, its mission periodical, beyond its own boundaries. The *Missionsblatt* came into being in 1899. Its first editor was Pastor Conrad Dreves who served for sixteen years. He retired on the 1<sup>ST</sup> of January, 1916 and died on the 26<sup>TH</sup> of March, 1917. From 1915-1920 pastor Friedrich Wolff edited the *Missionsblatt*. From 1920 till 1950 it was edited by Mission Inspector Adolf Blanke. During the war it could not appear. It was only possible from March 1950 to print it again. Pfarrer Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf notes in the first issue he edited that Pastor Blanke had always tried very faithfully to give in-depth information on the work which was done by Bleckmar's own missionaries, and on political developments in Southern Africa, and on the work of other missions in the world.

With the first issue of the *Missionsblatt* in 1951 a new era started. The Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission had become the Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Churches, with the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church, the Evangelical Lutheran (Old Lutheran) Church, the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa, and also Evangelical Lutheran Free Churches and congregations in France, Belgium, England, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland supporting the Bleckmar mission as the mission of their churches. Hopf saw it to be a great task of the *Missionsblatt* to inform and to keep in contact with the missionary work which was done not only by those churches, congregations, pastors and friends who had supported the mission with their prayers and offerings already before that time. It was also his intention to contribute to the big aim that the Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Churches should become more and more accepted as the mission of the independent Lutheran churches who were in church fellowship and who wanted to continue their cooperation in mission work to other nations after the mission societies which they had previously supported had taken decisions which they, as Lutheran Churches bound to the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions could not accept. He wrote in the first issue he edited: Lutheran Mission Work as a work pursued by the Lutheran Church must be free from all connections and relationships which are not in accord with the confessions. These connections and relationships paralyse the Lutheran witness of the Lutheran State Churches within the unionistic church of the whole of Germany. Our witness to the freedom of the Church from unionistic connections and relationships and to the freedom of the full Lutheran confession has made us to be very lonely people. Still we confess that under this great affliction, tribulation and distress of our lonely church we may do our work under the promise of the Lord. ... We are convinced that we may and have to pursue the work of our mission according to the confessional stand of our churches. May God our Lord help our Lutheran Free Church Mission to witness to him in word and deed at home and overseas, to act and work in doctrine and life according to the Lutheran confession.

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<sup>32</sup> History of the FELSiSA, p. 50.

<sup>33</sup> *Missionsblatt*, 1951, p. 3-4; 1978, p. 163; 1984, p. 186.

Pfarrer Hopf added a short passage which Dr. Rudolf Rocholl had sent to the editor of the Missionsblatt on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January, 1899, after he received the first issue. It was published in the second issue. A few sentences from it read as follows: "If, my young little brother, somebody does not receive you well, or closes the door before you, you may not become angry, you may not scold, you may not have spite or a grudge against him. No, you are a child of peace. Then you will make your way. You may not look unto the great things, nor may you expect your help from the powerful. Take your steps in confidence and be friendly towards everyone. Then you cannot miss your aim. It is because of the great task you have undertaken, and for which you stand." Because of the great task the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission had undertaken through its Missionsblatt that it should present its convictions and aims in a convincing and friendly manner. I thought these sentences of Rudolf Rocholl to be noteworthy also for us today.

Pfr. Hopf edited the Missionsblatt from January 1951 till June 1978, when Mission Director Dr. Volker Stolle took over from him. He then edited the Missionsblatt from July 1978 till August 1984, when Mission Director Johannes Junker took over from Dr. Stolle. He signed as editor till May 1995, mission director Gerhard Heidenreich from June 1995 till July August 2003; mission director Marcus Nietzsche together with pastor Benhoefer from September/October 2003 till February / March 2010, till mission director took over since April/May 2010. Superintendent Roger Zieger was elected to be missions director by the mission collegium on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2010, and was inducted as such on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2010.

According to Rocholl our Missionsblatt should not become angry, nor should it have any grudge against anyone. It should be a child of peace always, and be friendly towards everybody. Here we have to remember what it really means to bear one another in love. It is to endeavour to keep the unity, (not multiplicity) of the Spirit in the bond of peace over all barriers of race, culture, language, politics, free only to urge each other over all ecclesiastical barriers to take St. Paul serious who beseeches us by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among us; but that we be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, and as Lutherans being bound to teach, live and act according to Scripture and the Lutheran confession, the Formula Concordia included.

During the first years of the appearance of the Missionsblatt Ernst Wilhelm Henning was an apprentice and studied to become a tailor with a master in his craft, a Mr. Withuhn, a church elder of the Hanoverian Lutheran Free Church congregation in Hanover. After the day's work the apprentice had to distribute the Missionsblatt among the members of the congregation, but before he left on a bicycle to do his monthly work, he disappeared in his room and read the Missionsblatt from a - z. Then he knew what he brought into the houses of the congregation and could give advice about the contents and which articles were good to read. When he read of the new missionary course which started in 1906, he applied to be accepted as a student.

From the beginning, the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission played a big role in the life of the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church and in the life of the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa, and since it became the Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Churches it plays a big role in the life of many congregations of these churches, even beyond the bounds of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Churches. .

### ***The fruit of the missionary work***

From the beginning God has blessed the missionary work among Zulu and Tswana, and since the work was started among Indians in Northern Natal and in the Durban area also among the Indians of South Africa.

### ***Roodepoort***

Take for example, the Roodepoort congregation: Cassier during his approximately ten years of service (1887-1898) baptized more than 2000, Wrogemann during his about twenty years of service (1896-1918) about 3000, and Henning during his over forty years of service (1913-1960 with the interruption during World War One when he was imprisoned and deported and could only come back after 1920)

baptized more than 5000.<sup>34</sup> By mentioning what the missionaries did I do not want to indicate that they ever worked alone. They always had faithful and eager helpers, church elders who conducted services in those parts of the parish where they took over responsibility. They were not chosen by the missionary. They were just there and did their work and after a time they were inducted as church elders by the missionary. I also have to mention the so called "misters" who helped to teach the large confirmation classes. There was a Diseko, and Thomas Modise who was ordained later, and also Nathan Mogale, the father of Krispus and Paul Mogale, who taught for many years at Roodepoort. When Wilhelm Wrogemann died during World War One, and Ernst Wilhelm Henning had been deported in 1916, Nathan Mogale served at Roodepoort and taught the confirmation class. About Diseko and Thomas Modise I heard that they even had learned German. From the daughter of Thomas Modise I got commentaries<sup>35</sup> written in German which the father had made use of. Here and there I found notes he had written in Tswana to explain the meaning of a German word. These notes proved to me that he had made use of the German commentaries. The wife of missionary Wrogemann told about Diseko that she heard him coming to the house repeating and repeating a German word to ask for the meaning. I do not know why he did not bring the book along to show her the word in writing.

### ***The first Tswana pastors<sup>36</sup>***

The work expanded. Already before World War One Wilhelm Wrogemann started with regular church services in Randfontein and Welverdiend. After Wrogemann's death Piet Mokone was ordained on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December, 1918 at Botshabelo, and Thomas Modise, pastor at Magokgwane till his death in 1936 was ordained on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October, 1920. Both were faithful pastors, honoured and loved and much remembered by the congregations; in the early sixties many of the old people were still talking about their work.

### ***Their own fireplaces<sup>37</sup>***

During the thirties the church in Sophiatown was built in a combined effort of the congregations of Botshabelo and Roodepoort/Ventersdorp. Ernst Wilhelm Henning had hoped that after they had built the church in Sophiatown in a joint effort a church would be built in Roodepoort/Johannesburg where many from the Ventersdorp area were living and working. The school in Sophiatown was built first, and the church in Roodepoort/Johannesburg was never built. Although World War Two started in 1939, the work in congregation and school flourished in Sophiatown even though the missionary, Johannes Schnell, was old, long past in retirement age. The Tswana from Botshabelo and from Roodepoort liked their own fireplace and kept the fire burning. I mention the sup-inspector of schools Nun Mokone by name and his very gifted wife Priscilla, and Franz Segoe. Nun Mokone was a son of Pastor Piet Mokone and was given to Johannes Schnell and his first wife, Martha, who had no children. Franz Segoe was confirmed at Roodepoort/Ventersdorp and later became the first dean of the Goldfield Diocese. Very often Johannes Schnell could preach and administer the Lord's Supper only while sitting.

Because the people who were confirmed at Botshabelo or at Roodepoort, when they came into the bigger towns or even moved to other farms in West Transvaal wanted their own fire place, the missionaries were obliged to visit them and bring the Good Message and the Lord's Supper to them. Many of them did not want to be transferred to another church. When they were visited twice or thrice a year at their own fireplace they were satisfied. In the meantime they kept the fire burning by singing, praying, and also preaching themselves. The children were sent to the two-year confirmation class, and later to the one-year confirmation class at Roodepoort or Botshabelo. They also came to the services conducted by the missionary

<sup>34</sup> Baptismal register of the LCSA congregation at Roodepoort near Ventersdorp.

<sup>35</sup> Starke, Christoph: Synopsis Bibliothecae Exegeticae in Vetus et Novum Testamentum. Kurzgefasster Auszug der gründlichsten und nutzbarsten Auslegungen über alle Bücher Altes und Neues Testaments. Berlin und Halle. 1741-1746.

<sup>36</sup> Data of missionaries and pastors are taken from an unprinted list of the missionaries of the MELFC and pastors of the LCSA which was prepared by E. A. W. Weber during 1988 for the sake of own references in class. The list was photokopied and handed to the students taken part in these classes

<sup>37</sup> "Vater Mokone erzählt." Ein lutherischer Bantu=Christ aus Südafrika spricht mit seiner Mutterkirche. In Afrikaans gesprochen, ins Deutsche übertragen von Wilhelm Weber, für den Druck durchgesehen von Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf. MELF, Bleckmar, 1960, p. 18-22.

at the home congregation or to another outstation near to them for the Lord's Supper. That was how the work has spread all over the Witwatersrand, also to Potchefstroom, Stilfontein, Klerksdorp, even to Botswana in the beginning of the seventies of the last century. The one or other member asked the missionary to bring word and sacrament to his place.

Let us now meditate a little on the whole of the work among the Tswana. Sometimes I wonder how the work among our Tswana congregations would have developed if Ludwig Wiesinger would have become a real Tswana missionary and would not have accepted the call to the German-speaking congregation at Kirchdorf only a few months after he had started to learn Tswana at Botshabelo and Magokgwane. It is a pity that his successor Walter Bast was imprisoned at the beginning of the Second World War and then left the service of the mission in 1948.

The teacher Paul Melatoe was ordained in Botshabelo on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May, 1942 and served the congregation till his death on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, 1958. Still when a younger generation of missionaries came after the war during the fifties and the early sixties it was not necessary for us to start anew. The fire in their own fire places had been kept burning, and we young missionaries could step in and reap what had been planted. We also had to plant anew and do away with many weeds, but we only needed to carry on with the work. There were living congregations. It is true they had all their weaknesses, but they were really living Lutheran congregations. Take for example Friedrich Dierks. He came in 1952 and started to learn Tswana at Roodepoort and took over the Botshabelo congregation in 1954. He had to burn the candle from both ends, serving the congregations in the far West and on the Rand, till Siegfried Damaske took over from him at Botshabelo in 1958, and Dierks himself could move to Homestead Park, a suburb of Johannesburg. There were Hanoverian Free Church Lutherans all over the Witwatersrand and West Transvaal eager to hear the gospel and to partake in the Lord's supper.

Or take my example: I arrived at Roodepoort on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January, 1959, and learned Tswana and learned to know the Tswana congregations together with Ernst Wilhelm Henning till June 1959 at Roodepoort, and till the end of November 1959 at Botshabelo with Siegfried Damaske, and during the second half of January and the first half of February with Friedrich Dierks in Homestead Park. Then I returned to Roodepoort and stayed again with the Hennings till I was inducted at Roodepoort on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May, 1960, after I had been ordained in the German-speaking congregation at Wittenberg near Piet Retief in South Eastern Transvaal on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March, 1960.

The best feature of all was that we did not try and did not need to do our work by ourselves. We had our regular small conferences bringing the families of Dierks, Damaske, Nietzsche, Albers and Webers together at Roodepoort, Botshabelo, or Homestead Park. We had our monthly meetings with the church elders at Roodepoort, and weekly meetings with the evangelists Titus Lenkwe, Hendrik Molefe, Titus Phogojane, and later also with Krispus Mogale, who was called to be an evangelist from his work at a filling station in Ventersdorp. During these meetings on Tuesday afternoons quite a lot was done: the preparation of the Sunday sermon; the translation of the Augsburg Confession was completed; and the translation of the Large Catechism was started. Problems and financial matters were discussed regularly.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of June, 1962 Titus Lenkwe, who later became the first dean of the West Transvaal Diocese, was ordained by bishop Schulz, and on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November, 1963 Hendrik Molefe was ordained by missionary Friedrich Dierks. Friedrich Dierks had heard that Goedgevonden where Molefe was stationed as evangelist, would be moved very soon following the government's policy of removing black people from areas designated white. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of April, 1964 Manfred Nietzsche was ordained on the day when the church in Ikageng near Potchefstroom in Western Transvaal was dedicated, and on the first Sunday in Advent 1965, the 28<sup>th</sup> of November, Krispus Mogale and Abraham Khashane were ordained.

In the Johannesburg area Franz Segoe, who was a foreman in a tobacco firm, and Samuel Mkhwanazi were called as evangelists, and after certain courses at Salem they were ordained on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April, 1960 at

Mofolo North, in Soweto. On the third Sunday in Advent 1962, the 16<sup>th</sup> of December, Paul Mogale was ordained at Khutsong near Carletonville. We all could work in living congregations which had survived the many years in which they were served by only a few ordained ministers. We had to teach big confirmation classes. At Roodepoort the classes lasted from the end of January till the beginning of October, from Monday till Friday for four hours a day with fifty, sixty, and even more than seventy children attending. What satisfying and gratifying work!

The difference between today and that time is perhaps that we had the big confirmation classes and a good number of lay people who helped and served with their gifts where God had put them. He had given them also eyes to see the need for their input and service. It was not necessary to urge them always again and again to do something. The men just were there who wanted to work and who worked. In 1965 when I left Roodepoort I made in my book of those for whom I pray by name a list of the men in the big Roodepoort area who were church elders, who were helping with many a necessary task, or who had the calendar for the church services and who notified the members of the congregation when and where church services were held by the ordained ministers. This list has names of twenty then active church elders: Jakob Thibedi - Modubung; Piet Mofokeng, Samuel Ramokala, and Josef Mpaneng - Goedgevonden; Willem Morei, Darius Motlhabane - Magokgwane; Andries Segoe - Boskop/Tsetse; Johannes Nong, Amos Modise - Ventersdorp; Ismael Segoe - Kaalfontein/Moshabetsane; Hendrik Metswamere, Elias Tsholetsane - Rooikop; Ernst Motswasele, Thatius Lenkwe - Blesbokfontein; Stuurman Morule - Mogodiri; Josef Mmutlwane, Willem Moeng, Samuel Metswamere, and Hendrik Maragelo - Potchefstroom; Gottfried Mosenogi - Eleazar; and five contact persons Labius Mompei - Mogopa; Noa Motswe - Leliefontein; Gerson Mosename - Fredrikstad; Salomon Modisane - Palmietfontein; Justinus Legwase - Makokskraal. When Mission Inspector Hopf visited Botshabelo in 1966 he took a photo of Siegfried Damaske with ten of his closest co-workers, five church elders, the helper Titus Phogojane, who was ordained on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October, 1969, the old "mister" Nathan Mogale, the two evangelists, Dan Lefete and Gustav Matladi, and Pastor Abraham Khashane.<sup>38</sup>

**List of Tswana and Zulu pastor who were ordained before 1951:**

Name of pastor	Day of ordination of death		Congregation	among
Piet MOKONE	15. 12. 1918	17. 09. 1921	Botshabelo	Tswana
Solomon NYANDENI	13. 05. 1920	16. 10. 1939	Mabola	Zulu
Josef MKHALIPHI	13. 05. 1920	27. 09. 1945	Salem	Zulu
Thomas MODISE	17. 10. 1920	24. 09. 1936	Magokgwane	Tswana
Johannes NXUMALO	10. 12. 1925		Pella	Zulu
	He left the church on the 1. 8. 1926.			
Paul MELATOE	14. 05. 1942	06. 02. 1958	Botshabelo	Tswana
Daniel MKHALIPHI	05. 06. 1944	24. 05. 1946	Mabola	Zulu
Elias THANJEKWAYO	11. 06. 1944	25. 02. 1954	Ntithane /Mabola	Zulu
Absolom SIBIYA	11. 06. 1944	03. 10. 1971	Pella Itshelejuba	Zulu

God had given these men eyes to see what had to be done and what could be done by making use of the tools they had in hand: a Tswana Bible in a much weaker translation than the one we have today, a Tswana Catechism in a much weaker translation as the one we have now, a Tswana hymnal much weaker than the modern version. Nevertheless, we did not criticize these translations always again, but we tried during long hours of confirmation classes and in long hours of meetings and discussions to understand and to make understand what was said in weak Tswana. Through this knowledge God gave understanding, motivated people to have the right attitude to the work and brought them to action, blacks and whites together. That also during those years many of those who were baptized and confirmed in our congregations were not reached and went astray, I will not deny, and cannot deny. For at all times it will be true that the harvest is plenteous, but the workers are few. Still much satisfying and gratifying work could be done and was done.

<sup>38</sup> Missionsblatt, 1969, p. 234; and 1970, p. 153; Dezember 1950, p. 4; 1954, p. 96; 1955, p. 116. Compare also: p. 8. 125-31.  
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### *Among the Zulu*

The same is true for the Zulu congregations. What a harvest could be brought in by so few workers during these over hundred years of mission work, and with so few resources and facilities at their disposal!

Let me mention a few examples to give an impression of the commodities at their disposal.

Christoph Johannes was asked by his father who was then pastor at Wittenberg, to go to Rockey Home in Swaziland near Itshe Lejuba to baptize the child of the Brase family and conduct a communion service for them. It was more than seventy kilometers from Salem, and he did it on a bicycle.

At Itshe Lejuba, the first house was built in 1932 with £ 25 from the mission treasury. The floors had to be smeared with cow dung regularly to preserve them; there were no concrete or wooden floors. The water had to be fetched in buckets from a fountain about 300 meters away from the house in a deep donga before a borehole could be sunk a few years later for £ 25 near the house.

Missionary work was done on foot, or on horse back. This is about 85 years ago.

When my wife and I started at Roodepoort 50 years ago we had a hand pump on a well, but still every drop of water had to be carried into the house, and out again. After a short time we built a small drain in the bathroom so that the used water at least could be poured into it and run through the wall unto the yard. In 1963, when Nietzkes came to live with us, a water tank was bought, and we got running water into the kitchen, a toilet in the house and a bathroom. The house had been painted many years earlier in dark grey oil paint, the cheapest paint available at the time. "Renovate the house, but remember that the mission has no money," I was told when I started at Roodepoort.

All this changed. The broader base of the mission brought also more money. I mention the difficulties with the water supply because of a "Life's like that" story several years ago in Reader's Digest, where a mother and daughter who had a well equipped kitchen talked about what they would choose of all the facilities if they could choose only one. The daughter chose the refrigerator, the mother the running water. Please, do not think that I want to belittle the difficulties with the water supply or with other facilities young missionaries have today. I never wanted to tell how difficult we had it when we started, but with 1 Peter 5:9, we remember that others did and do experience their difficulties in their service to the Lord. When I came to Bleckmar in 1952 the Missionshaus was still crowded with quite a few families of refugees from the East. They, together with all the students, the family of Pastor Hopf, Pastor Marth and Friedrich Dierks used one toilet without water, and had to pump every drop of water by hand from a well in the house.

But the lack of all the mentioned facilities did not cause the missionaries to stop their work. Let missing commodities never hinder you in the work to be done. Services were regularly, baptismal and confirmation classes were held. People were visited at their homes.

### *To reach out to the unreached*

The missionaries thought of the unreached, whether they had to look for ways to serve better those who moved away from their home congregations, or to get the gospel to the heathen and unbaptized. When they still could manage to serve their big congregations, they preferred to wait a few more years to be released from the big burden of serving many congregations in order that the unreached could be cared for. Here I think of Ernst Wilhelm Henning who was asked in 1956 when he was sixty-six years old already whether he would prefer to be retired, or could wait for the next missionary to finish his training. The option was whether the work in Johannesburg could be pursued straight away by sending Friedrich Dierks to Johannesburg since Siegfried Damaske could take over in Botshabelo, or whether Pastor Dierks should be sent to care for the well settled congregation Roodepoort. Pastor Henning chose to continue so that the need of those not cared for regularly yet in all the townships of the Goldfield could be met.

Or take the example of Christoph Johannes who took over to care for Mabola and Etshondo in Eastern Transvaal when Heinrich Prigge and Johannes Schroeder retired in 1918 and 1919. The problem of Mabola was solved by ordaining Solomon Nyandeni, but Etshondo was without a resident pastor for many years. In 1932 the mission rather sent my father to start anew at Itshe Lejuba, rather than sending him to Etshondo. The missionaries were concerned with calling the heathen to repentance and baptism. The fact that over 600 names were written into the baptism register at Itshe Lejuba till 1962 when my father retired, is proof of how necessary it was to begin missionary work in the vicinity of Itshe Lejuba. It was even more necessary that our mission and church was settled already in the vicinity of Pongola in South East Transvaal when hundreds were moved by the government from the Piet Retief area to the southeast. The same determination to reach out to the heathen led the Mission in 1955 when Gottfried Stallmann was stationed at Enhlanhleni in Natal and when Johannes Weinert was commissioned to start missionary work among the Indians in Northern Natal in 1956. New work took priority over releasing Christoph Johannes, who became seventy in April 1956, from his heavy burden of caring then even for his own congregations and Mabola too, and Ebenezer also was without a pastor or missionary since Ernst Heinrich Schwacke had to take over the work at Umhlangeni in 1953.

### *The Zulu pastors up to 1951<sup>39</sup>*

At Salem much work was done by Pastor Josef Mkhalihi who was ordained together with Solomon Nyandeni on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May, 1920. He died on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September, 1945. After the death of Solomon Nyandeni during 1939, Mabola was without pastor for a few years. During World War Two three Zulu evangelists were ordained: on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June, 1944 Daniel Mkhalihi, and on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June, 1944 Elias Thanjekwayo and Absolom Sibiya. Pastor Daniel Mkhalihi died after only a short time of service as pastor at Mabola in 1946. His successor at Mabola was Pastor Elias Thanjekwayo. He suffered a stroke in 1949 and died in 1954. From then till the two Mdlulis: Asser and Amos, and Moses Thwala were ordained in 1957, Christoph Johannes was the only ordained minister in the whole Salem, Mabola, Etshondo, Panbult area. Karl Meister was a teacher at the seminary and helped with many services, but he was already over seventy years old having been born in 1878. Still it was decided to start new work at Enhlanhleni and among the Indians in Northern Natal and to wait for the new missionaries from Germany, Georg Schulz and Hans Junker, who came at the end of 1955 and were designated for the work among the Zulu. Georg Schulz took officially over in Salem on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 1959, and Hans Junker at Ebenezer during those years, and Stillfried Niebuhr at Dirkiesdorp in 1960.

The decision to start mission work among the Indians, however, was the result of a certain difficulty. It became clear that Johannes Weinert would hardly manage to learn the Zulu language. He had been a missionary in India for a short time before the Second World War and was deported from India after the war. Although he was a pastor in Eastern Germany in one of the Old Lutheran congregations, he was very keen to become a missionary again. He came to South Africa in 1953 with his family and started to learn Zulu, but his difficulties of not managing the Zulu language became apparent. When Pastor Hopf reported on the decision to designate Johannes Weinert to do mission work among the Indians in Northern Natal he cited the words of Wilhelm Löhe: "Unsere Verlegenheit ist Gottes Gelegenheit." Our dilemma or embarrassment is God's opportunity. It was indeed God's opportunity. Christoph Johannes said: If we say A, we also have to say B. After one missionary is designated to do missionary work among the Indians, a second one must follow. Johannes Schulz was sent from Germany in the early sixties to become a missionary among the Indians. In 1990 three of our missionaries were working among the Indians: missionary Heinrich Damman from Glencoe in Northern Natal, missionary Johannes Schulz in Catsworth and missionary Burghardt Hecklau in Phoenix in the Durban area.

### *The spiritual care<sup>40</sup>*

<sup>39</sup> Dezember 1950, p. 4; 1954, p. 96; 1955, p. 116. Compare also: p. 8. 125-31.

<sup>40</sup> Missionsblatt, Dezember 1950, p. 3.

We have to admit that the spiritual care for our Zulu congregations in the late forties up to the mid-fifties was not at all according to Lutheran standards. With 304 communicant members at Mabola, for example, only 286 communicants were registered during 1949, and with 175 communicant members at Etshondo, 177 communicants were registered during 1949. Certainly the sudden illness of Thanjekwayo is one reason that the number was so low at Mabola during that year, but it still shows how inadequate the spiritual care was. Another reason has to be remembered. It was expected that the younger congregants should attend the Table of the Lord at Salem and not at the different outstations. After the number of communion services was doubled in the early sixties in the Roodepoort congregations, the number of communicants doubled from one year to the next.

Although the spiritual care was inadequate concerning the Lord's Supper, during that same year twenty nine adults were baptized in the Salem and Mabola area. This number shows how active some members of the congregations were to witness to Christ and call the heathen to repentance and baptism. Certainly more could have been done, but still living congregations were there. As Christoph Johannes once put it: When an active member of the congregation moved from one farm to another farther away from where they could not send their children to day school at Salem, many a mother gathered her own children, taught them reading and writing and especially also the catechism, and very often the children and even older folks of their neighbourhood were invited to take part in these catechism classes. That is the way in which Pastor Hopf explained the wonderful growth of the Salem congregation during the fifty years of Christoph Johannes' service at Salem. From his father Christoph Johannes took over a congregation of about three hundred in 1908/09, and when he retired after fifty years at Salem, there were a few thousand baptized and communicant members. The missionary activity was also kept alive by the weekly meetings with pastors, evangelists, catechists, helpers, and church elders. In the morning the early comers took part in the confirmation class which was held before the school started. There was a time for the preparation of the Sunday sermon, and much time for discussing the matters of the different congregations and preaching stations where they came from, bringing also the money from the Sunday collections, and the money they had received by selling books, etc.

In the beginning there were small attempts to train catechists, for example, at Goede Hoop during 1906 till 1908 by father and son, Heinrich Prigge, but after this first attempt the work was not continued by them. Christoph Johannes trained four catechists during World War one, but also this effort was not continued. When Christoph Johannes went to Germany and Bleckmar in 1902/03 it was proposed to send Solomon Nyandeni with him for training in Germany. This proposal did not materialize. I do not know where Solomon Nyandeni and Josef Mkhalihi, who were ordained in 1920, received their training, or even if they received any formal seminary training at all, or whether they were two of the four participants in the course for catechists during World War one at Salem. The same applies to all the other pastors who were ordained in the Salem area till 1950. To repeat their names: Solomon Nyandeni, Josef and Daniel Mkhalihi, Elias Thanjekwayo, whom I mentioned already, and in the mid forties Absalom Sibiyi, who was ordained on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June, 1944, to take over the work at Pella when Dr. Johannes Schroeder was transferred to Ebenezer. They were men who just were there, willing to help in the congregation. At first they were unpaid helpers, church elders, and then when the need arose they were called to work for a very low salary as preachers or evangelists, always in close cooperation with Christoph Johannes over many years and attending regularly the weekly co-workers meeting. In the case of Solomon Nyandeni, he had already been in close cooperation with the father of Christoph Johannes. They saw and heard how the work was done by an experienced missionary. After such a long training in service, they were ordained. I never heard any complaints about the work of these five pastors. The same applies to the two Tswana pastors Piet Mokone and Thomas Modise who became pastors according to this pattern in 1918 and 1920. Much praised was the great humility with which these men reacted when they were called to be ordained, and with which they always did their work as pastors.

Only in 1957 on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April were the first ordained who had studied at the Salem seminary: Asser Mdluli, and Moses Thwala who had finished their studies at the seminary on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 1945,

and Amos Mdluli after he finished at the seminary on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December, 1947. Another seven of the twenty nine who studied at the Salem seminary were ordained. Only one of these ten was ever suspended from office. The other nine did their work according to their gifts and talents till they were duly retired, or died while still in office. One of them was still in the active service of the church during 1990, Johannes Khumalo at Itshe Lejuba. Twenty-nine students of whom six were Tswana studied from 1940 till 1954 in five courses at Salem. Eight of them did not enter the service of the church or left the service of the church because of various problems, that is about one third of the students. A similar proportion still holds at Enhlanhlani. Two young men from Itshe Lejuba, students of the fourth course at Salem from February 1948 till October 1949, had to interrupt their studies, and I remember my father being very depressed that they had had to return home. He then talked with Superintendent Johannes about their failure. My father was missionary for sixteen years already at Itshe Lejuba, and Johann Dlamini an elderly man who also came from Itshe Lejuba had finished his course successfully at Salem in 1942. Superintendent Johannes said to my father trying to comfort him: "Du fängst erst an!" You are just starting to have such troubles. This word of truth shows that along with all fruit and the great harvest which could be brought in, within the satisfying and gratifying mission work, many disappointments had to be overcome in the work, including men who promised to help in the work, but failed afterwards.

### ***Pella 1926***

One of the great disappointments in our mission was experienced at Pella. Nxumalo was a gifted man and had been trusted very much by Pastor Stielau. Pastor Stielau never would have reached so many people without the help and hard work done by Nxumalo. Pella grew to be the largest congregation among the Zulu congregations. Johannes Nxumalo, only a short time after he had been ordained on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December, 1925, had to be transferred to another congregation, but he did not agree and left our church together with the congregation on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, 1926. Very slowly the congregation grew again.

### ***Constituting the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa***

Just before Nxumalo left with his congregation, there had been a synodical conference during July 1926 at Pella where the constitution of an independent Evangelical Lutheran Church was presented. The independent church would have been constituted during the following synodical conference not later than 1928, but when Nxumalo left with his congregation, the pastors Nyandeni and Mkhalihi asked Superintendent Johannes to delay the constitution. These talks were taken up again as late as 1956 during the synodical conference at Salem where Mission Inspector Hopf was present on his first visit to South Africa, and they reached their goal in 1967, when the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa was constituted on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April at Roodepoort. The decision to go ahead was taken two days earlier on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, the first day of the synodical conference which was held at Ventersdorp.

The constitution was prepared very thoroughly. A few documents show what was considered to be really prepared to declare an independent, autonomous Lutheran Church. Then mission inspector Pfr. Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf published theses during 1951 on how to understand what it means to be a free, independent autonomous Lutheran Church. He envisages the situation in Germany where one has churches free from the state and are not bound to organizations ruled by the laws of a country depending even financially from the ministry of finances of the country. Who pays attention will notice how relevant it also is to clarify the idea of the freedom of an independent or autonomous church where churches are not legally dependent on the state. It is interesting how similar the 2<sup>nd</sup> president of the LCMS Friedrich Weyniken argues in his 18 theses on rights, privileges, and duties of the Free Church in the year 1874 for America,<sup>41</sup> as did Pfr. Hopf in the year 1951 after World War two for the problem of independent and autonomous churches when churches came into being from congregations originating from the missionary work European and North American missions in Africa, Asia, Australia and South America.

### **Independence and autonomy of a church according to Evangelical-Lutheran Doctrine<sup>42</sup>**

<sup>41</sup> Harrison, Matthew C.: At Home in the House of My Fathers. Lutheran Legacy. 2009. .p. 437-477.

<sup>42</sup> Theses written by mission director Dr. Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf, in 1951 and translated by E.A.W. Weber DD in 2011. Published in German in Lectures on the History of the LCSEA / Oct. Nov. 2011

## **I. The problem**

1. We understand as such that a church is independent if she as a church does not depend on any forces or authorities from outside, e. g. political, cultural, influences, or even other church organisations which do not belong to the church.

2. The problem of independence and autonomy of a church arose when the relationship between church and state was questioned after democratic structures were introduced and kings were replaced by consistories to be responsible for the affairs of the church in the different regions of Germany, or even when kings changed agendas in the church, when churches saw the necessity not to be depended on decrees or decisions by men, but to be depended only on what the Lord of the Church says.

As a result of the struggle between church and worldly authorities for the freedom of the church may not only be that the church declares through a constitution, agreements, or regulations not to be dependent anymore on worldly authorities. As long as a church still depends on financial support or privileges granted by the state it is not independent yet. This is true concerning congregations and churches as long as they are still structured according to norms or institutions of state churches, or churches of a nation. (*Volkskirche*)

3. The problem concerning independence and autonomy of churches which originated by the work of missions was tackled when churches wanted to constitute their structures in constitutions. It concerns the relationship between constituting a young church and the mother church or the mission, from whose missionary work the congregations in the foreign country originated, or even in the same country where the church must be aware to keep its freedom and independence and autonomy not to be influenced by depending on political, social, cultural, racial, or even religious forces in their own country. The independence or autonomy of an independent church is not guaranteed if it becomes legally or financially independent from the church which sends financial and personal support. Independence or autonomy of a church is based if the structure of the congregations and the whole church and its administration can be structured in being free to decide on its constitution and on by-laws of the church.

4. The independence and autonomy of a church depends on the fact that it is not depending on forces, laws, regulations, demands, and ideologies which contradict the absolute and unlimited Lordship of Jesus Christ and do depend on His mandate. The independence and autonomy of a church will be endangered by demands coming from within or from outside the church.

5. The independence or autonomy of a church depends also on the structure how every congregation depends on the governing body of the church and is bound to the whole set up of the church body.

## **II. The Lutheran doctrine on the independence and autonomy of the church**

6. According to Lutheran doctrine it is the living Lord Jesus Christ who constitutes the independence and autonomy of the church who acts in His congregation as the real present Lord.

7. Word and sacrament as deeds and acts of the living Lord Christ are the only unerring and infallible signs of the presence of the church in this world. Independence and autonomy of a church are a reality where the church has the absolute freedom to administer the means of grace according to the mandate of Christ, and to make use of them.

8. Word and sacrament are the only signs of the church (*notae ecclesiae*). That is the reason that two qualifications of the church must always be distinguished, but never may be separated: The hiddenness and the recognisability of the church. Talking about the independence and autonomy of the church is only concerned with the recognisability of the church. That is the administration of the means of grace and the gathering of the congregation which happens through the action of Christ by means of word and sacrament.

9. As the church is bound and closely connected to its signs: word and sacrament, it is called to the everlasting struggle to keep the means of grace according to their institution. This struggle is also the struggle to keep the true unity of the church. In this struggle to keep the integrity and unity of the church the church is concerned on the one side to preserve the common consent in doctrine which the orthodox, genuine, properly so called Lutheran Church acknowledges, confesses, accepts, and has confirmed in the confessions of the church and has bound itself to it by the confessional stand of the church and has promised to act accordingly - on the one hand -, but on the other side to be free from all ecclesiastical connections and

unions with those adhering to false doctrines, to safeguard the own confessional stand - especially concerning closed pulpit and altar fellowship - and not to fall for open church fellowship. Independence and ecclesiastical autonomy is only given where the church is continually engaged in the struggle to preserve the integrity of the means of grace and draws the necessary consequences against error in doctrine and practice in order to persevere in union with the orthodox Lutheran Church.

10. According to Lutheran doctrine the ecclesiastical office of pastor is instituted. Therefore the independence and autonomy of a church stands with the freedom of the ministry. The connection between ministry and congregation may never be ignored. Independence or autonomy of a church is visibly expressed if the gospel is preached and the sacraments are administered without depending on any ties, considerations, or restrictions that contradict the mandate of Jesus Christ.

11. To be bound to Jesus Christ establishes the solid foundation of the freedom of a Christian congregation which is served by the ministry with the means of grace. The congregation of Jesus Christ must defend her freedom against all anti-Christian forces from outside the church, but also against all forces of institutions within the church which contradict the Word of God or do not go accord to it.

12. Decisions concerning the independence of the church in doctrine, life and practice are taken on the ground of regulations concerning law and order. The Word of God does not decide on regulations, by-laws, constitutions of a church according to Sol. decl. 10, § 9.<sup>43</sup> This freedom is abused to the detriment of the congregation and the church where changes in good order or Christian discipline promote corruption of the confessional stand of the church, or the goals of the enemies of God to destroy real unity of the church. In such a case the change of the outward order of the church would suppress the pure doctrine of the church and would obscure it, and the congregation would be lead astray. As soon this danger appears also outward, indifferent orders of the church are to be taken as matters of faith and confession, and every kind of yielding would become a betrayal of Christ. This limitation of the unlimited freedom of the church concerning the outward regulations of the church reveals the only and real aim of regulating in church orders the life of a church, which has to serve that ministry of the pastoral office will be performed according to the mandate of Christ and to make it possible and to promote the gathering of the flock and to edify the congregation through the means of grace. As means to achieve this goal they have to be defended and if necessary to be changed according to the local and temporal circumstances.

### **III. Conclusion for the independence and autonomy of churches constituting themselves**

13. The possibility and necessity and feasibility to constitute an independent church on the mission field do not depend on the matter of constitutions, or matters concerning financial or personal support, but depend on the matter of faith whether one trusts in the Lord that he will fulfil today and in future his promise: I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it, Math. 16:18. To be convinced of this promise is the presupposition of every future step towards real independence and autonomy of a church to initiate to detach it from existing regulations, methods, financial and personnel support, and rights. Every effort to regulate the independence and autonomy of the church have to be tested or to be judged whether they are fruits of this conviction to trust the Lord of the church, or whether they are motivated by other tendencies.

14. The goal of independence and autonomy of a church is reached according to the promotion of responsibility taken for the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments according to the confession of the genuine Lutheran Church according to the Scriptures. Accordingly it is necessary for independence and autonomy of the church to take over responsibility for finances, persons in office, to be able to do mission work and govern the church, to reach the status of self-supporting, self-propagation, and self-governing, and also to be prepared to take over the struggle against old and new heresies, and accept the limits of church fellowship.

15. In order that the church reaches the full independence and autonomy step by step, the sending church has to support the development with all possible means, e. g.:

\* the training of men to be able to take over the ecclesiastical ministry in the congregations in their

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<sup>43</sup> Kolb/Wengert, p. 637.

country who will be capable to theologize independently and be willing and able to co-operate with other genuine Lutheran Churches in other countries.

\* also to be able to motivate the congregations to become self-supporting, and to be able to lead the congregations in real Christian life and church discipline, and deeds of mercy and missionary endeavours.

\* also the co-operation and independent decisions in areas outside the local congregation concerning matters and activities of the church as a whole.

16. Independence of a Lutheran Church may not be understood as separation from the sending church nor as isolation, nor as getting connected to a church body in which heresy dominates. - Instead a young Lutheran Church will proof her independence and autonomy by keeping connected with the genuine orthodox Lutheran Churches.

17. Independence and autonomy of a church cannot be guaranteed by being independent from financial support or personal help or assistance in administrative matters. It must be tested and be confirmed again and again in temptations, and be defended against perpetual attacks. In this context it is necessary to be reminded of the fact that the freedom of an independent genuine Lutheran Church which is bound to Word and sacrament is in principal not the same as that of nations politically, economically or in the social and cultural sphere. Although the independent church will loosen ties from the sending church or mission, its independence and autonomy has to be confirmed in her own struggle against detrimental attacks from nationalism and unionism.

18. The great challenge in future is to tackle the problem of independence and autonomy of an independent church in co-operation, mutual responsibility of both the sending church or mission and the church constituting itself as an independent Church, in order to help to answer the question:

Will the constituting churches be genuine Lutheran Churches bound to the infallible Word of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, bound to the pure doctrine of the Lutheran Church, or are those congregations that originated through the proclamation of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments of Lutheran missionaries be observed and swallowed into the unionism and syncretism of the world wide ecumenical movement or into the mainstream of Protestantism.

The sending churches in Europe and America themselves have to decide whether they will be faithful to the eternal truth of the Word of God and to be also in future churches according to the pure doctrine of the Lutheran Confessions in order to want and to adhere to it or not.

So far the publication of pastor Hopf from 1951.

I deem the following declaration to be very helpful to be remembered and considered that it was a good guideline on the way to pursue on the way to constitute an orthodox, genuine independent autonomous Lutheran Church in Southern Africa.

### **Declaration or announcement concerning the co-operation of Lutheran Missions in South Africa (1953)<sup>44</sup>**

From different corners we were invited to co-operate with Lutheran Missions and Churches in South Africa that emerged from the missionary endeavour. Also the MELF has been asked to declare its position concerning plans and proposals made for the co-operation. We declare the following:

1. At the beginning of our work we find the principles: A Lutheran Church can only pursue and support a Lutheran Mission, and a Lutheran Mission can only be pursued by a Lutheran Church. We add to these principles of our fathers a third: The work of a Lutheran Mission must lead to the constitution of a Lutheran

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<sup>44</sup> It is translated by E. A. W. Weber (2011) from its German origin as it is found in *Lutherische Kirche treibt Lutherische Mission*, p. 165-166.

Church. For us mission work has to be done in principle and practically as to be the responsibility of a Lutheran Church bound to the Lutheran Confessions.

2. Co-operation with Lutheran Missions can only be pursued where church fellowship, (pulpit and altar fellowship) exists between these Missions and the Churches behind these missions. The norm for every decision in these matters is the Lutheran doctrine according to the Word of Scripture concerning the genuine true real unity of the Christian Church. This unity exists “Where the gospel is preached (and taught) harmoniously (with one accord) according to a pure understanding of the sacraments administered in conformity with the divine Word.” (CA vii, § 1, p. 42). To achieve and to preserve the true unity of the Church is also in Missions to bind oneself for all ecclesiastical endeavours to the confessions of the Lutheran Church which was composed on the basis of God’s Word”. (Sol. decl. p. 524 § 3) Being bound to the doctrinal decisions of the confessions we accept the principles stated therein concerning church fellowship.<sup>45</sup>

3. The Lutheran Missions in South Africa suffer under the great calamity that what is required and necessary for full church fellowship does not exist for co-operation *in sacris* among these missions and their supporting churches, be it that they themselves are not bound to the same principle, or that they practice church fellowship differently although they have on paper the same confessional stand. In this situation there is only one way possible to establish church fellowship: doctrinal negotiations to confirm whether the same stand bound to Holy Scripture and its exposition in the Lutheran confessions exists, or whether the full unity can be reached where unity is missing. It has also to be examined whether existing connection to churches with contradicting unionistic connections can be given up to open the way to unity for churches that are separated. The intended co-operation is possible as a goal and fruit of such negotiations, not as a result in advancing the negotiations.

4. With this declaration we do not oppose the goal of ecclesiastic unity of all true Lutheran Mission Churches in South Africa, but bind us to the only way which can lead to this goal. Such negotiations are not only desirable, but necessary, and we are convinced negotiations will lead to good encounters between different Lutheran missions not only to learn from each other, but also be able to handle many aspects of ecclesiastical procedure and missionary endeavour in harmony.

Bleckmar, 8. 6. 1953: Mission Collegium and Board of MELF: sgn. Wilhelm Rothfuchs, Sup.;

Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf, mission inspector

Itshe Lejuba, 4. 8. 1953: The conference of the missionaries of the MELF and the pastors of the FELSISA: sgn. Christoph Johannes, sup.; Wilhelm Reusch, president; Joh. Schnell, K. Meister, E. W. Henning, Chr. H. W. Weber, E. H. Schwacke, F. Dierks, G. Stallmann, B. Schwarz, J. Schnackenberg, L. Wiesinger, H. F. Böhmer.

1956 a synod was convened at Salem where Mission Inspector Hopf was present on his first visit to South Africa as mentioned above, and announced the following guidelines as a message from the mother church and Mission of the Ev. Luth. Free Churches in Germany

### **Wegweisung für die junge Kirche 1956** Guidelines for the constituting Church<sup>46</sup>

1. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa<sup>47</sup> comprises all congregations which originated from

<sup>45</sup> Tract § 42, Kolb p. 337; Trigl. p. 516) In German § 42 reads: Here the mandate of God is written, that everyone must be aware not to co-operate with those who teach wrong doctrine ... but divine authority commands us not to be allies and defenders of impiety and unjust cruelty (impiety is rendered in German as *unrechte Lehre* - heretic doctrine -.)

<sup>46</sup> It is translated by E. A. W. Weber (2011) from its German origin as it is found in *Lutherische Kirche treibt Lutherische Mission*, p. 167-168.  
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the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission (HELFCM) and which intend to persevere being on the foundation on which they have been build.

1 Cor. 3:11: For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

2. Accordingly the ELCSA confesses that Jesus Christ is her only Head and Lord, - He the only begotten Son of the living God, He the Crucified for our sins and the Resurrected for our righteousness, the Exalted to the Right Hand of the Father, who is really present in His congregation on earth through Word and sacrament, the Saviour of the whole world, the Judge of the living and the dead, who will come again sitting on the clouds of heaven, the King of kings and the Lord of Lords,

Col. 1:18: And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in every thing he might have the supremacy.

3. As firm foundation of faith and doctrine of the ELCSA God's own Word and nothing else is accepted and valid, i. e. all books of the Old and New Testament as the unerring true, (verbally - 1 Cor. 2:13 added by translator) inspired by the Holy Spirit. As correct and binding interpretation of Holy Scripture all confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church are accepted and valid, i. e. The three ecumenical creeds of the ancient Church, the Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, the unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the CA, the Smalcald Articles, the Small and Large Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther, and the Formula of Concord.

Accordingly all congregations are taught thoroughly Luther's Small Catechism, the evangelists must know the unaltered Augsburg Confession and accept it as the confession of their church; the pastors are bound through their ordination vow to the doctrine of the Lutheran confessions.

2 Thim. 3:14-17: But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

4. To join the ELCSA is possible for congregations which adhere to the same principles of faith and doctrine if they accept the laws and order of the ELCSA. No church fellowship exists with congregations and churches that have a different foundation, or on their side have and practice church fellowship with such who adhere to false doctrine.

Ef. 4:3-6: Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to one hope when you were called - one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

5. Admittance to the Holy Supper in the ELCSA is only admissible for those, who really in unity believe the Words of Jesu: "This is my body! This is my blood! Which is given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." Who confesses the presence of Christ's real body and blood in bread and wine has to renounce all fellowship with all who teach and live different to what God's Word teaches.

Acts 2:42: They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

6. The superintendent as bishop of the church and the synod as gathering of all pastors, evangelists and representatives of the congregations are responsible to join all congregations of the ELCSA to work together.

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<sup>47</sup> The synodical conference at Salem in 1956 had decided on the name Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, but this name was also chosen by the regional church which constituted itself in 1963. Therefore the name Lutheran Church in Southern Africa was chosen when the LCSA constituted itself in 1967. But in these guidelines the abbreviation ELCSA will be used.

Ef. 4:15-16: Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and build itself up in love, as each part does its work.

7. The main goals of the synod are to build an independent Lutheran Bantu Church, when the right time has come. The white missionaries and the mission council in Germany and in Africa will do every thing in fellowship with the Bantu-congregations to help that a young independent Bantu-church will be established.

Rom. 12:10-11: Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord.

8. The next task of the synod is to prepare a constitution which will help all congregations to serve its own members and the heathen for whom they are responsible to hear the Word of God.

Act. 2:39: The promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call.

These guide lines were a word from the mission to the young church. The name of the church was established by indigenous Africans who emphasized that they did not want a Bantu-bound church by name. Later it became the LCSA as the ELCSA had been registered under the ELCSA name.

### **The Pastors' convention 1966 at Enhlanhleni**

Then at the pastors' convention in 1966 at Enhlanhleni, where Mission Inspector Hopf and Supt. Nagel of the Evangelical Lutheran (Old Lutheran) Church in Germany were present, the conference gave its consent to pursue the idea of constituting the independent Lutheran Church in Southern Africa only after the Mission Inspector Hopf had promised in the name of the Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Churches and Superintendent Nagel in the name of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Churches that they would not leave the young independent Lutheran Church alone, neither in regard to personell nor finances. "Wir lassen die Kirche weder personell, noch finanziell allein." After the Zulu and Tswana pastors heard this promise, the opposition was overcome, and the consent was given to constitute the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa the following year.<sup>48</sup>

At this pastoral conference in 1966 **the following sixteen pastors** and eleven missionaries were present, only Dr. Johannes Schroeder was absent: Absolom Sibiya, Moses Thwala, Amos Mdluli, Franz Segoe, Samuel Mkhwanazi, Ephraim Mthembu, Titus Lenkwe, Paul Mogale, Hendrik Molefe, Simon Zikhali, Andreas Xaba, Johannes Khumalo, Johannes Mthimkhulu, Isashar Dube, Krispus Mogale, Abraham Khashane, of whom eight attended a full training course at the Salem seminary, three at Enhlanhleni. Five had been called out of full-time secular work to become full-time evangelists in their congregations, and after courses for ordination or studying for a certain time in Enhlanhleni, they were ordained. Pastor Moses Khumalo was ordained just after the constitution of the church on the <sup>23rd</sup> of April, 1967. **The eleven missionaries** in the order of how they came to South Africa after World War Two: Ernst Heinrich Schwacke, Friedrich Dierks, Gottfried Stallmann, Johannes Weinert, Georg Schulz, Siegfried Damaske, Wilhelm Weber, Stillfried Niebuhr, Johannes Schulz, Manfred Nietzsche, and Erwin Dammann.<sup>49</sup>

Kurt Günther Tiedemann and Fritz Adolf Häfner came to South Africa a few months after the constitution of the church.

The statics for the year after the constitution of the church include the following data for 1968/50:

Parishes	37
Congregations	125
Tswana and Zulu Pastors	17

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. Missionsblatt, 1967, p. 59.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. report on this pastoral conference by F. W. Hopf, Missionsblatt, 1966, p. 185-8; and a photo of the participants of this conference, Missionsblatt, 1967, p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> Missionsblatt, 1970, p. 10-11.

Missionaries		12
Missionary candidates	2	
Evangelists		50
Paid Helpers		5
Unpaid Helpers	58	
Children baptized	813	
Heathen baptized	144	
Confirmations	480	

with the total membership of 21964 The growth of the total membership was registered as follows:

1955	1960	1965	1967	1968
14506	16083	19844	21416	21964

That means an increase of 51% in thirteen years.

The registered baptisms of heathen read as follows during the respective years:

1955	1960	1965	1967	1968
94	129	146	100	144.

These numbers show a little of the life within the congregations. Much was done, and much fruit could be gathered. Still the numbers may be out of proportion. Yet the work of the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission and what was done by the Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Churches gives us much ground to rejoice that the Lord fulfills his promises that His Word accomplishes what He desires and achieves the purposes for which He sent it (Is. 55:11) and that the work and labour which is done in the name of the Lord is never done in vain (1 Cor. 15:58). It is certainly worth while to take note of what Bishop Dr. George Schulz wrote in the Festschrift of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mission published in 1967, edited by Pfr. Hopf as a summary on the .

### **The way to become an independent church<sup>51</sup>**

The Lutheran congregations which originated from the MELF in Southern Africa constituted to be an independent Lutheran Church through its decision at its synod at Roodepoort near Ventersdorp on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 1967 - The name The Lutheran Church in Southern Africa. This synodical decision was the last step to be taken to constitute legally this independent Lutheran Church after many years of preparations and difficulties that had to be overcome. The congregations of this church originated from missionary work among Zulu, Tswana and Swazi. To talk about missionary work shows that these congregations are a fruit of the preaching of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments. This sentence may sound very simple and clear in itself, but it emphasizes what often is overlooked talking and thinking about the matter of constituting a church legally. All becoming, originating, growing, edifying of congregations and a church is a work of God, even constituting a church is not the result of human hard work, achievements, decisions, and planning. God calls his congregation and church into life everywhere where he lets it happen that the Gospel is preached and his sacraments are administered. Not the constitution makes the congregations to become a church, but the church exists in that moment when God leads people among all races and nations through the preaching of His Word to repentance and faith and accepts them through Holy Baptism into the already existing church of Jesus Christ. Our congregations among the Bantu were already before their constituting the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa in the real sense of the word church of Jesus Christ, known, seen, and recognised with the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments.

Every proclamation of the Gospel and every administration of the sacraments urges and intends that a church is established. That is the reason that the congregations of the mission decided to constitute a church and doing that they acknowledged what happened through the means of grace. What happened through word and sacrament was organized to act in fellowship of a constituted church as an ongoing process over years. Together with the growth of the organization a spiritual growth has to go on, in order that the started work

<sup>51</sup> Georg Schulz, *Lutherische Kirche treibt Lutherische Mission*, p. 103-116.

must grow and go on and not to be hindered or even stopped. We want to mention periods of organizing and building or creating and materializing of what could be done to show how in 75 years of missionary work and caring for congregations a church body developed. We remember those who worked as God's fellow workers according to 1 Cor. 3:9.

### **The first co-workers of the missionaries.**

Our mission has grown under the grace of God among Zulu and Tswana. That was the first sentence of a report on our mission during the year 1900. In 1900 the statistics of our congregations did show among Zulu about 800 and among the Tswana about 2000 members. The report of the missionaries during those years reported a steady growth in members and extension of the work.

If congregations originate and come into existence the training and calling of pastors is necessary, because where a congregation is it must have a pastor. The ministry and caring for the young congregations was done by European missionaries. The missionary was the messenger of the Gospel and shepherd and teacher of the young congregations. In the beginning men out of the congregations did preach and teach helping the missionary guided by him. Church elders were chosen, taught and even were called to be helpers, catechists, and evangelists. The minutes of a missionaries' conference in those years state: Every missionary can train helpers during weekly gatherings during which the most necessary first steps must be taught. In one of the reports on visitations which the first mission superintendent Heinrich Prigge undertook on a journey visiting the mission stations in Natal one can learn how this training was done teaching a catechist at Eben Ezer: On Monday morning I visited the school and found that most of the pupils could recite the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> part of the catechism with explanations very good. The catechist Naphthali does the work good that the children can learn by heart. He should be more able to explain in own words, but that is too difficult for him. The work of this untrained, but faithful men mostly resulted in being able to let the children and older folks (preparing for baptism) learn by heart. Also the missionaries working among the Tswana reported that these "misters" taught reading and writing, and helped as catechists in baptismal and confirmation classes. - The steady growth of the congregations in the beginning was the good fruit of these men, and would have been not happening without the work of these men. With their faithful input, love and convinced way to enforce the necessity to know the catechism and bible stories. They knew how to apply them to the life of the children and the elderly women and men.

### **The way of a school for catechists to a seminary for evangelists<sup>52</sup>**

The conference of missionaries 15 and 16 May, 1905 decided to start a school for catechists at Goede Hoop with curriculum: Thorough knowledge of the Biblical Story and Catechism (which was translated already into Zulu and Tswana) also reading, writing, arithmetic and English. It is a pity that the school existed only about 3 years, 1906-1908.<sup>53</sup> But when the connection from Germany to the mission field was closed again in 1939 because of world war two the plan for an own seminary materialized. During 1940 a seminary building was erected at Salem, with office and living/bed room for the seminary teacher: Karl Meister was called from Pella as teacher (1940-1954). Teaching started on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February 1941 with introduction to the Bible, reading and writing was practised. Sup. Johannes taught catechists, students took part in confirmation class which was held every morning at Salem. This experience did bear great fruit for the students' future work. Sup. Johannes taught also homiletics. In Dogmatics the doctrine of the church and ministry played an important role, also the difference between the churches and the importance of a clear and genuine stand concerning church fellowship. Church History in its development (in großen Zügen). The translation of the CA done by the seminary teacher of Hermannsburg Reibeling was available and taught. Rev. Meister had translated Vilmar's Theological Morals - a thorough and binding teaching and application

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<sup>51</sup> Very soon already during the visitation of Sup. Adolf Heicke Sup. Prigge and Heicke examined the possibility to find a building site at Piet Retief for a catechists' school. The Anglo-Boer war did not let this idea to materialize. (Missionsblatt 1900, Nr. 6; p. 53.)

<sup>53</sup> No money would be available for such a school from the mission treasury. From the congregations was no money available. This principle was changed during 1956 when it was decided that training of future pastors was so important that the mission should support the seminary at Enhlahlweni as a priority.

of the ten commandments.

The last course closed at Salem on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1954 when rev. Meister was retired. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 1955 the joint conference of the missionaries of the MELF and the pastors of the FELSiSA at Uelzen decided the seminary to be transferred from Salem to Enhlanhleni. Teaching started during February 1956 at Enhlanhleni with Dr. Johannes Schroeder and Gottfried Stallmann and teacher Lukas Lefete as teachers. A seminary board of 2 teachers and two missionaries decided that 8 and 10 years of schooling should be required for admission.<sup>54</sup> Still it was envisaged to take care of a good and thorough training. The seminary building with 3 class rooms and a small room for the library could be dedicated on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1958. In his report on the seminary activities for the year 1956 Dr. Schroeder the principal of the seminary wrote: We are pursuing a great and important task here at the seminary because from this seminary we expect that men will graduate who will be leaders of the indigenous church. The important task to arm young men with the tools to serve in the ministry of the church and every congregation has to be done at the seminary year after year, every year anew. Disappointments, shortage of money and other difficulties occurred. Still the work of the seminary progressed from a small beginning till it became a full Lutheran Theological seminary. The training of evangelists and pastors is one of the most important tasks that has to be done to prepare the way from congregations of the mission to constitute an independent church body (and to sustain it as such).

### **The first ordinations of Zulu and Tswana pastors**

Where missionary work begins it is progressing step by step lead by the wise hand of the Lord. Very often unexpected events from outside are the reason to take the following step. The retirement of missionary Johannes Schroeder at Mabola and of Heinrich Prigge, jnr. at Tshondo, and the early death of Wilhelm Wrogemann, and missionary Ernst Wilhelm Henning being deported in 1916 to Germany caused vacancies and was the reason that the need arose to ordain the first Tswana and Zulu pastors. **On the 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1918 the catechist Piet Mokone** was ordained to do the work of a pastor at Botshabelo. Because of the war there was no hope for missionaries to come from Germany.<sup>55</sup> That was the reason that the missionary conference of 27 and 28 November 1919 at Salem discussed the matter of ordaining Zulu catechists who did their work as catechists very faithfully. Main point was their proven faithfulness in their work as catechists, and also a good and thorough training. Among the **catechists Solomon Nyandeni and Joseph MkhaliPhi** were chosen who then were ordained after an ordination course **on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 1920**, and **Thomas Modise** at Botshabelo for Magokgane **on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 1920**.

Since then Zulu and Tswana pastors served the congregations together with missionaries, catechists, and helpers. One could ask why the ordination of indigenous pastors was not planned because of reasons based on principles instead of reasons of a practical need? Here one has to consider that we talk of a time before the church had a seminary and it had to be considered not to burden young Christians with loads they would not be able to carry (according to 1 Tim. 5:22). Still it has to be remembered that a considerable number of men were in the service of the congregations who did the whole spectrum of the missionary work except the administration of the sacraments.

Till today<sup>56</sup> 26 pastors were ordained, of whom 17 are still in active service. Faithfulness and perseverance are two qualifications according to which candidates are judged whether they qualify for ordination. These norms go accord with the apostolic adminitons in the letters to Timothy and Titus, (also 1 Peter 5). These

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<sup>54</sup> This decision was not absolutely binding. Gifted students were also admitted with only 6 years or even less schooling.

<sup>55</sup> (Rev. Henning was allowed to come back to South Africa in 1921. The training of new missionaries was interrupted at Bleckmar because of the war. They would finish their interrupted studies only in 1923. Then the mission did not have the money to call Willi Reusch and Johannes Schnackenberg to become missionaries and the FELSiSA took them over as teachers: Willi Reusch at the Wittenberg Primary School, and Johannes Schnackenberg at Kirchdorf till Reusch was called to be pastor at Uelzen after the death of Wilhelm Hellberg (1923), and Johannes Schnackenberg was called to be pastor at Wittenberg after the retirement of pastor Johannes, the father of Sup. Christoph Johannes, 1925).

<sup>56</sup> Bishop Dr. Schulz wrote this paper in 1967.

norms are not only valid for the beginning of the work in certain areas, but should be followed under all circumstances not only to judge the level of education or knowledge of theology, but to judge especially the conduct in the personal life of a candidate, (1 Cor. 4:1-2)<sup>57</sup>. The question whether a candidate can cope with today's circumstances in Africa and in the world must be taken into consideration. Also in this aspect the church will be lead step by step. Capabilities which were enough yesterday may not answer the qualities necessary today. When most of the congregants did not have the opportunity to attend a few years at school, is different to a time where a considerable number of congregants have had the opportunity to achieve university degrees, or are occupied in high governmental positions. Still in church it must be remembered that the church can only stay alive through a good functioning of the proclamation of the Gospel and the Word of God and is bound to the administration of the sacraments according to their institution. One also never should forget, but always remember that the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments may not be separated from those who have to proclaim the Gospel and have to administer the sacraments. A church may never neglect to prepare and call men for the ministry, even if men are not available according to secular standards of education.

### **From the constitution of congregations to the constitution of the church.**

The congregations which originated from the work of the HELFCM and the MELF were organised according to the constitution of the HELFCM of the year 1903, which was revised in 1926 and adjusted to today's circumstances in 1964.

Also concerning organizing and accepting a constitution of the LCSA the congregations were lead step by step. The conference of 1905 discussed questions concerning a uniform constitution of the congregations, especially concerning a uniform order of the Sunday service. During the conference the necessary principle was touched on that all financial contributions coming from the indigenous congregations should be used for their own purposes in order to train them to become financially independent.<sup>58</sup> Also the idea of an independent church was considered and mentioned. This idea was pursued during all conferences till 1919, where in the first conference chaired by Sup. Johannes (28<sup>th</sup> of November, 1919) with the decision to prepare a constitution for each congregation and a church constitution, the congregations and co-workers were asked to make suggestions for the congregation and church constitution. Already in 1921 a proposal was accepted by the missionaries' conference with the proposal that a meeting of all co-workers should revise it before it would be forwarded to the mission board to decide on it. During the 1921 conference it was even decided that the matter of congregational contributions would be decided on by a later synod of the indigenous church. In their conferences the missionaries discussed often the how to apply the congregational and church constitution, and even an order to practice church discipline. The answer from the mission board of 1922 was discussed during the missionaries' conference in 1926, during the visitation of Sup. Jacob Böttcher. During that year an 2<sup>nd</sup> July at Pella the synod of the Zulu congregations decided the final revision of the constitution to be accepted during the next synod in 1928, revision by Sup. Johannes and 2 Zulu pastors and 1 catechist. The synod 1926 declared: We gathered to constitute a synod to help each other as members of one body. This synodical meeting is to prepare for the time when the blacks will be independent. The present missionaries uttered also the idea that at the time of independence they would leave the church in order to delegate all authority to the blacks. During the deliberations the synod accepted a regulation according to which in coming years the representatives of the congregations should be elected.

The constitution of an independent church was prepared, in order to constitute the church during the coming years. But it was a pity that just during that time the HELFCM experienced one of its most sorrowful events as a result that for years no progress was made anymore to take steps toward constituting an independent church. Pastor Johannes Nxumalo was ordained on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1925 and left the HELFCM on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 1926 with about 1700 members of the Pella congregation to join an apostolic sect, which he

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<sup>57</sup> Sup. Johannes emphasized that the candidate had a good understanding of the Gospel, to apply it in an evangelical way. If a catechist or evangelist was preaching in a legalistic way, he would not qualify to be ordained.

<sup>58</sup> A yearly contribution of 5/- for women, and 10/- for men, about ½ of monthly wages then.

left after a short while to be the founder of an own sect. According to the handwritten report of the missionary of Pella dated the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 1928 pastor Nxumalo did not accept the ruling to be transferred to Ebenezer for one year to substitute the missionary of Ebenezer who was on furlough during that time. Rev. Meister closes his report with the remark: It was necessary to start the congregation anew. Today as I write this report 83 members have found the way back.

The work to prepare the way to independency which was started during the twenties of the twentieth century was only taken up again during the fifties. The statutes for the organisation of the congregations and the constitution which were prepared during the twenties were the foundation for the work to be done during the fifties. For the further development the synod which was held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1956 in which point 7 and 8 are reading as follows: The main goals of the synod are to build an independent Lutheran Bantu Church, when the right time has come. The white missionaries and the mission council in Germany and in Africa will do everything in fellowship with the Bantu-congregations to help that a young independent Bantu-church will be established. ... The next task of the synod is to prepare a constitution which will help all congregations to serve its own members and the heathen for whom they are responsible to hear the Word of God.<sup>59</sup>

A council with 4 indigenous representatives and 3 missionaries was created with the aim to take the necessary steps for constituting an independent church. The existing statutes (orders) constitutions were revised and in January 1962 as preliminary order accepted. It should serve as a statute till the final constitution would be accepted. The idea to prepare and accept a constitution grew and materialized in order that the constitution would be the basis for all future by-laws. Accordingly the constitutional commission<sup>60</sup> gathered during October and November 1966 met to finalize the proposal for the constitution which would be put before the constituting synod to be accepted. The proposal was distributed to all congregations and explained among the Tswana by Weber and Dierks, among the Zulu by Schulz and Stallmann. It was asked that in addition the congregational councils and even in congregational gatherings the proposal of the constitution should be discussed and explained, and during such meetings the green light was given to accept it at the constitutional synod.

The willingness to accept the constitution and to constitute an independent church by accepting the constitution was only possible as a fruit of many years of preparing the way for the constitution. The co-operation of all congregations was only possible because of synodical conferences, retreats for church elders and conferences of pastors and missionaries. The congregations belonging to the mission stations looked over the horizon to see also the other congregations. To be together in one church over the boundaries of the mission station became visible that missionaries, pastors, church elders, evangelists and congregations were bound together in one church. One learned to understand that through the constitution the togetherness was brought into a legally valid order. In that sense one could bring into action that the time had come and was ready for the constitution of the LCSA when the synod accepted it in a free decision with one vote.

### **The registration of the church**

The synod at Roodepoort decided that the church council during the following two years should act to materialize the constitution by establishing the functioning of the dioceses, parishes and congregations. The idea of mission stations should be taken over by the functioning of the congregations. The constitution prescribes that every congregation should have its council with members pastor, evangelist and church elders elected by the congregational meeting. Smaller congregations form together a parish. Members of the parish council: Pastor of parish and all councils of the congregations. The parishes of a certain region form a diocese with its dean. The diocesan council the dean and 1 pastor who are elected by the diocesan pastors' conference plus two lay members elected by the diocesan synod. The synod decided to organize four

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The minutes of the synod appeared as a word by word report of all contributions in German. This was possible because every contribution was translated either from Zulu to Tswana and German, from Tswana to Zulu and German or from German to Zulu and Tswana taking three days that young missionaries could record every word in German. Very important for me was always the fact that the Tswana and the Zulu did not want any reference to a Bantu church. They wanted an Evangelical Lutheran Church free from any reference to race or politics or culture.

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Hopf, Schulz, Dierks, Stallmann, Weber, Sibiyi, Amos Mdluli, Mpaneng, Nyandeni, Segoe

dioceses according to the four centres of the existing work. Natal, South East Transvaal/Swaziland (and Northern Natal) Goldfield and West Transvaal.<sup>61</sup> Every diocese has a dean and deputy, a diocesan council and synod with members: all pastors of the diocese, also all evangelists and a representative of each congregation. The governing body of the church is the church council being the bishop, the deans of the dioceses and a lay representative elected by the diocesan synod. The general synod of the church has the right to decide on legal matters of the church. The members of the general synod are the bishop and the other members of the church council, all pastors of the church and the teachers of the seminary and the lay representatives of the parishes, plus six or ten men, who can be chosen by the church council in addition. All the pastors of the church are members of the pastoral conference.

The creation of the dioceses had still to be explained as such. The distribution according to regional and not racial boundaries was not envisaged to date. Two dioceses were envisaged according to the ethnic lines: Tswana and Zulu. This plan was taken as given, but because of the separation according to ethnic lines would support the ethnic differences in the church and the unity of both ethnic groups would be jeopardized which had already broad together congregations in the Goldfield area. In addition it would bring in the idea of segregation into the church, even the idea to have also a Swazi based diocese. Therefore the idea of organizing the church according to ethnic lines was rejected. Therefore dioceses according to a regional basis were decided on, to keep the congregations of Zulu and Tswana origin in the Goldfield area together in one diocese. The church should never be separated because of racist, ethnic, cultural, political reasons. Accordingly Christians of Zulu and Tswana origin in the Gauteng diocese and of Zulu and Swazi origin in the South-East diocese stayed side by side in one church. The training at one seminary since 1942 did bear fruit that pastors, evangelist from different ethnic background studied together, they came together with their helpers and congregations during retreats, conferences, synods over language, ethnic, cultural boundaries. That created the knowledge to belong together, and confirmed the unity of the church over these boundaries and was accepted.<sup>62</sup>

Another reason to divide the church into four dioceses was to have dioceses that would be vital and could be operate. The big distances over the whole of South Africa, from the South of Natal to the West of Transvaal made it necessary to have smaller entities to become functional according to the constitution of the church. This aim lead to form four dioceses to cover also the four centres of the previous missionary work. The congregations can discuss and decide on the problems in their region at which representatives of the other dioceses take part or attend. All matters concerning the whole church shall be dealt with during the general synod. It has to be remembered that the dean of every diocese will be attending all diocesan synods and church council meetings. That is the basis that a united operation of the whole church will be possible although it is distributed over such a large area.

### **The European missionary in the independent church.<sup>63</sup>**

In this context the position of the European missionaries in the church can only be touched very briefly<sup>64</sup>

The constituting synod at Roodepoort accepted the proposal of the pastoral conference to accept the European missionaries as pastors of the church and to incorporate them full into the church. Another proposal coming from the church council was accepted by the synod to have for every missionary who is in a leading office an indigenous representative, and as proposal of one of the indigenous members of the church council that every indigenous office bearer will have an European pastor as representative to help him. The vote concerning this proposal which the missionaries did not expect was taken unanimous.

This decision shows that the indigenous church wanted the co-operation of the missionaries. The church wanted a united church not separated because of ethnic, cultural, racial boundaries. She was very outspoken concerning the Christ given unity of the church and wants to confess it visibly. That the church did not choose to take the more comfortable way, to confess the unity of the church only on a “higher more spiritual level”, but acted according to the principle and necessity that the unity of the church must be lived and practised over racial, ethnic, cultural, and political boundaries in the secular world. This action puts shame

<sup>61</sup> In a meeting of the church council during April 1981 it was decided that the congregation of Botswana should be organized as a fifth diocese. During the church council meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 1981 missionary Fritz Adolf Häfner was taking part as dean of the diocese of Botswana although the first synod of Botswana was scheduled for September 1981.

<sup>62</sup> Every idea of separating the church according to ethnic or racial differences was rejected.

<sup>63</sup> Schulz still talked about the indigenous church.

<sup>64</sup> Missionsblatt 1967, p. 72ff.



on all who choose or even have chosen a different way. The Zulu pastor Isashar Dube said concerning this matter<sup>65</sup> the church is not the church of a certain nation, but it is the Church of Jesus Christ. It is the one church of the whole world. One should never talk about the church of a black nation (of an indigenous church). We are not allowed to let the white missionaries leave our church. We may never think, that the white missionaries do not belong anymore or have no place anymore in our Church.<sup>66</sup>

Also from the side of the mission it must be emphasized that a mother church would not act responsibly towards a young church if she would leave the young church to early because of reasons contrary to the principles of the church of Christ. Such an unbiblical principle would be if a one sided propagation of independency or indigenisation would result to leave the church (without financial and personal) co-operation.<sup>67</sup> Such principles can not be found in the New Testament. It is not biblical to think the church will really continue to be really Lutheran or even Christian if missionaries stay, and it would be wrong to think that a church among Zulu and Tswana can be really independent only if it has only Zulu and Tswana pastors, [if it is self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating.] According to Scripture we have not a part of the church, which only becomes a full grown church, if all those “selves” are fulfilled. Such ideas are not biblical, but have a certain romantic background. Everywhere and in every nation has to be accepted and understood in her fullness a church as church of Jesus Christ where the Gospel is preached purely and the sacraments are administered according to the Gospel, to the word of God, to their institution. The church may never be driven or pursued because of ethnic, racial or other ideologic reasons or principles. The struggle to keep the given unity and community over all human boundaries must be seen as the everlasting task. As long as we are on earth the church will be attacked by foreign powers and has the task to bring its message into the community and structures where she works, where she has to proclaim the Gospel from where its members originate. She will not be faithful to her great commission if she binds herself to a certain race or nation. Therefore she must witness also in her earthly appearance that she is God’s new people which is created by the Gospel called out of all races, nations and religions and confessions.

#### **Its Future and vision for the future**

Will the young church be firm and faithful and stay to be what she is? Will she be a living congregation of Jesus Christ? She knows herself that all her congregations are not ideal congregations. In the whole world one does not find such congregations. This truth is testified by the New Testament. Their members like those of the church during all centuries and in all countries are nothing else than sinners who are daily graciously forgiven through faith in Jesus Christ, still standing in the daily struggle fighting the attacks from heathenism and sects.<sup>68</sup>

Many temptations attack the church, internal and external temptations. The members of the church have to proof faithfulness, steadfastness, perseverance in this struggle daily. They will suffer defeat, still they have to continue on their way comforted in the power and strength of the Gospel which is preached and proclaimed in their midst and the holy sacraments which are administered in their midst. These means of grace are the only guarantee that the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and King preserves his church among them alive, and builds it and makes it grow.

This is how bishop Schulz summarized the way to become an independent church in his contribution to the Festschrift: *Lutherische Kirche treibt Lutherische Mission*.

Let us also take note of the decisions of the General Synod , which were announced on the 2nd of April, 1967 at Roodepoort during the service to constitute the LCSA.

#### **The decisions of the constituting synod of the LCSA<sup>69</sup>**

<sup>65</sup> At a pastoral conference 1966, see *Missionsblatt* 1967, p. 68f.

<sup>66</sup> On the church council meeting dated the 21-22nd of June, 1974 the matter of whites working in the church was raised,. See No. 20 of the minutes, and according to No. 15 of the minutes dated the October 7-9, 1974 the church council when Pfr. Hopf and Pfr. Adolf Heicke were present the members of the church council emphasized as they did when others came from Germany to ask whether the LCSA still wanted missionaries that they want them, even said that they never thought of such an idea that they did not want them because of the colour of their skin.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Minutes of church council meeting, dated June 17-18, 1974, No. 20: “Kwamanye amakerike kuthiwa: Kufanele ukuba abafundisi abamhlophe baphume ekerikeni, ukuba ikerike likwazi ukuzimela ngempela. Kuthiwa: Umfundisi omhlophe akakwazi ukuba ngumfundisi ebandleni labansundu. Kufanele ukuba abafundisi abansundu bahole amabandla nekerike. - Amalungu ansundu omkhandlu aphenula athi: Lezizinkulumo ziyachitha ubunye bekerike, kufanele silwe nazo.” In other churches it is said, the white missionaries must leave the church. It is said, a white missionary can not be a pastor in a black congregation. It is necessary that black pastors lead congregations and the church. - The black members of the church council answered, Such talks are detrimental to the unity of the church. We must fight against them.” The minutes were signed by G. Schulz, as umphathisihlalo - chair person, and G. Stallmann, as unobhala - secretary. During the eighties of the last century I tried to avoid to distinguish between black and white, but talked or wrote about the Zulu, Tswana, or German members of the church council. In Lutheran dogmatics it was taught that the pope’s claim, that also the indigenous churches must accept his supremacy, is anti-Christian. The same judgement is valid if it is claimed that no foreigner can and may be a bishop or pastor in a church with members who do not belong to his own race or nation.

<sup>68</sup> The attacks of the enemies within: flesh, world and devil, from unbelief and heresies from the left and from the right, legalism and liberalism, from the side of Rome and Geneva, syncretism, etc.

<sup>69</sup> *Missionsblatt*, No. 4. 1967. April 1967, p. 100.

1. The Lutheran congregations which have originated from the Hanoverian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission here in South Africa constitute today an independent Lutheran Church according to the decisions of the General Synod at Roodepoort, distr. Ventersdorp on the 1st of April 1967.
2. The name of this Church is The Lutheran Church in Southern Africa. (The translation of the name in Zulu and Tswana was corrected during the 80ties of the last century.)
3. Through this announcement of the constituting the church the constitution of the LCSA which was accepted by the General Synod comes into force.
4. All who are in office whether white or black who were working in this church will continue in their office in the LCSA under the supervision of the church council. The synod confirms the present superintendent to be the bishop of this church.
5. The relationship and co-operation between the LCSA and her mother church in Germany will be regulated and ruled in an agreement.
6. Faith and life, teaching and action of the LCSA are bound to the confessional stand of the church according to No. 1.2 and 1.3 of the constitution. (Not to be changed at any time! See the final determination of the constitution!)
7. These decisions are now in force, since they have been announced here in public in this congregation which gathered in the name of Jesus.

My paper which I read at the missionaries' retreat 1990 I closed with the remark: "The history since 1967 is not proper history yet. Too many of those who were involved in the work of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa and the Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Churches are still standing in active service to allow us to direct the spotlight on these activities today. That is another topic for another time."

Today we have to ask ourselves, How convinced are we to be members, pastors, or students of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa? Do we enjoy it to be in this church? Do we feel at home in this church which claims to be legally free from the state, church unions, federations which themselves in essence not really are bound to the canonical books of the Old and New Testament and to the Lutheran Confessions, as this church is? If these lectures could be of a little help to know the history and background of this church and to accept the biblical founded principles of this church, the intended aim and goal of these lectures on the history of the LCSA have been achieved. Are we prepared to bear the reproaches, accusations, even assaults that by emphasizing the binding confessional principles of the genuine state-, union-, LWF-free Evangelical Lutheran Churches we are overlooking and even jeopardizing the commandment of love, taking for more serious the genuine Lutheran doctrine than love, taking Rom. 16:17; 2 Kor. 6:14a; Gal. 1:8-9; Jer. 23 and Math. 7:15 for more serious than Eph. 4:2. Let us remember that the admonition of St. Paul does not stop at verse 2, but carry on with Eph. 4:3: that we have to bear each other in love "endouering to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," to watch to be bound to Scripture and the Lutheran confession in the unity of the spirit - and not in the multiplicity of spirits. Let us be convinced of what St. Paul expects of the Corinthians if he writes (according to the St. James version): "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment," 1 Cor. 1:10, whether we are working in Southern Africa or further North!

Thank you to have been part of these lectures.

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