



Photo by Jonathan Houser

TRIBUTE TO HAPPYSON WILLIAM MATSILELE CHAUKE 1952 - 2009

Tillman Houser

It is not often that men meet great men that influence their lives. Happyson Chauke was one of those in my life. Born and reared in a humble home near Lundi Mission in Zimbabwe, he never flaunted his royal ancestry. My wife and I spent thirty-five years as missionaries in Zimbabwe with our first assignment at Lundi Mission. Our two sons played with Happyson while learning his language.

Happyson attended the local primary school and secondary school managed by the missionaries. Later on he returned to teach in 1976 at Lundi Mission. Missionaries were evacuated from the mission because of the danger in the area of the guerilla-type warfare when the Africans struggled to gain their independence.

In the 1990s, while staying with Happyson's family at their home in Harare, he told me that he had documented the events that had occurred at Lundi Mission in the four years until independence in 1980. I asked him to send me the account as well as other papers he had written. I immediately saw their high quality and sensed the importance of preserving them. Certainly they should be published for readers worldwide. That is the reason I have compiled the documents into the following book format.

Which leads me to the observation I have often made of the distinctive qualities I have seen in those of royal blood. There was displayed a characteristic fineness in the life of Happyson. I saw pride accompanied by a natural humility in his relationships toward others. These qualities I saw in those that I knew of his relatives of royal blood.

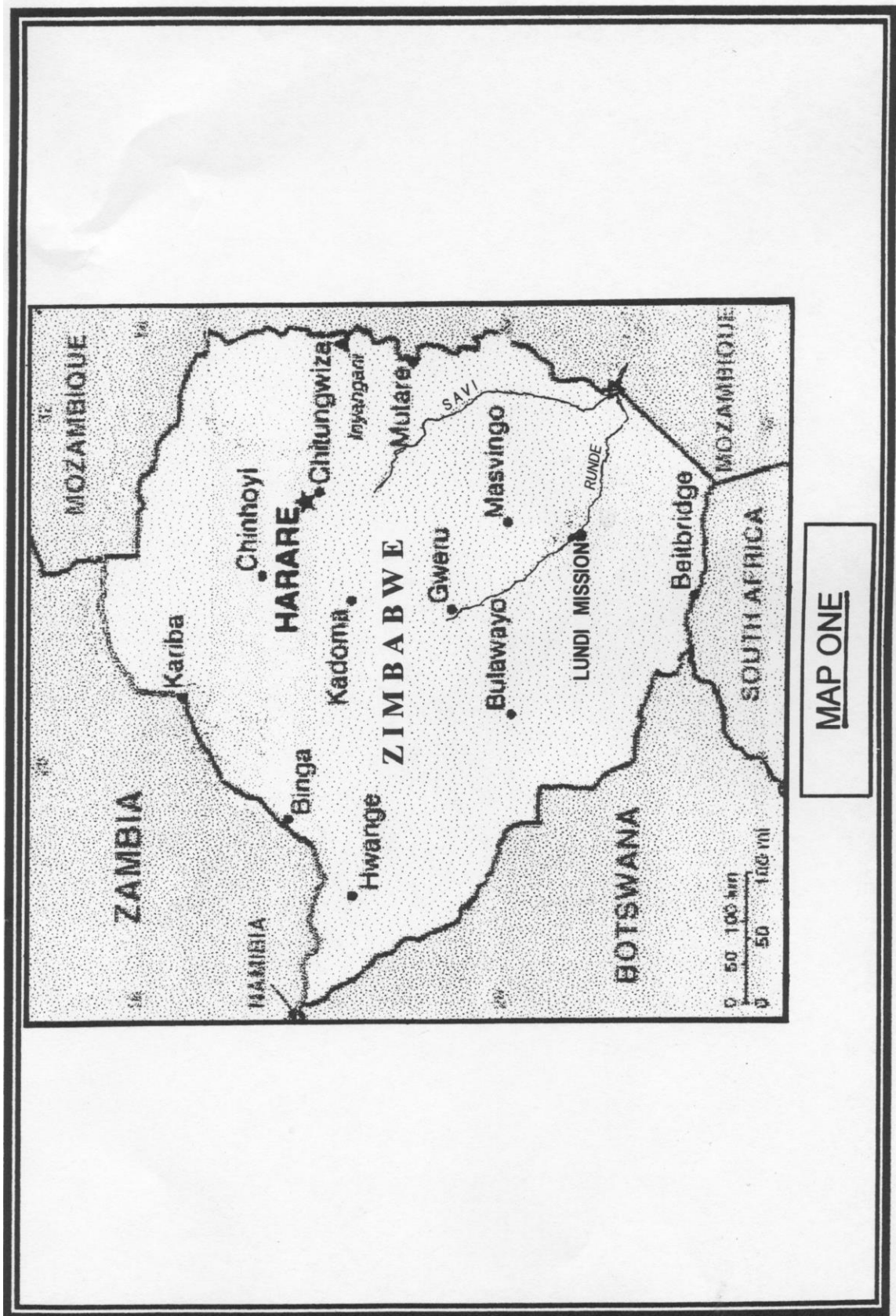
Happyson showed leadership qualities as he was promoted in his teaching career. After teaching at Lundi Mission, he obtained a teaching position at Churchill High School one of the most prestigious white boy's schools in the Capitol city in Harare. There he was promoted to head the Sixth Form that led eventually to service as Assistant Headmaster of the school. Later he joined the Zimbabwe Education Department and was appointed to define all of the dialects in the various languages in Zimbabwe.

During these important duties, he was also working on a dictionary of the language of his own people that had never been done before. Another of his projects was to write the history and culture of the Hlengwe people. This also had never been done before.

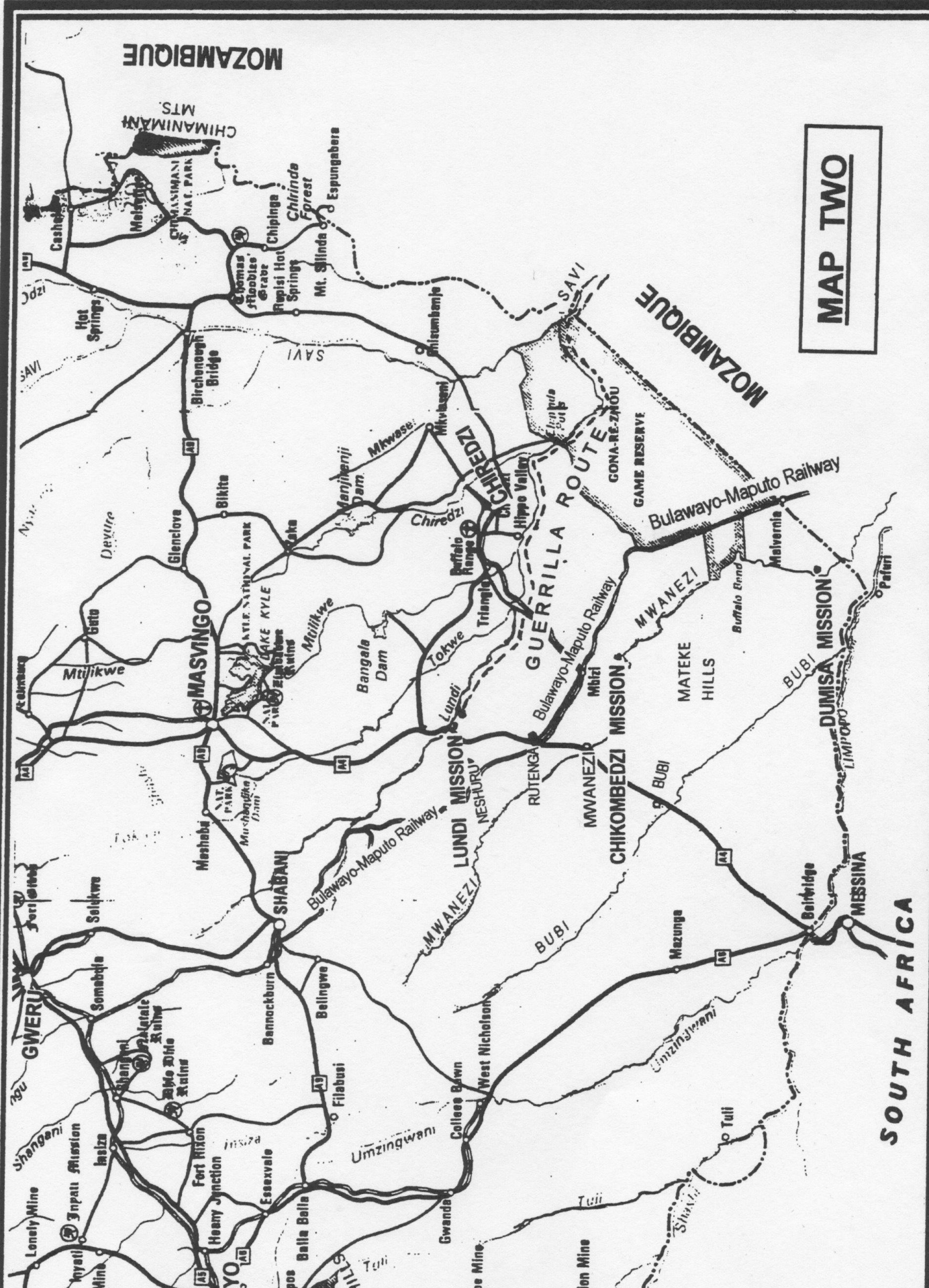
I pay tribute to this man who has contributed so much to primary knowledge about his own people. The following document is presented to preserve this very important work.

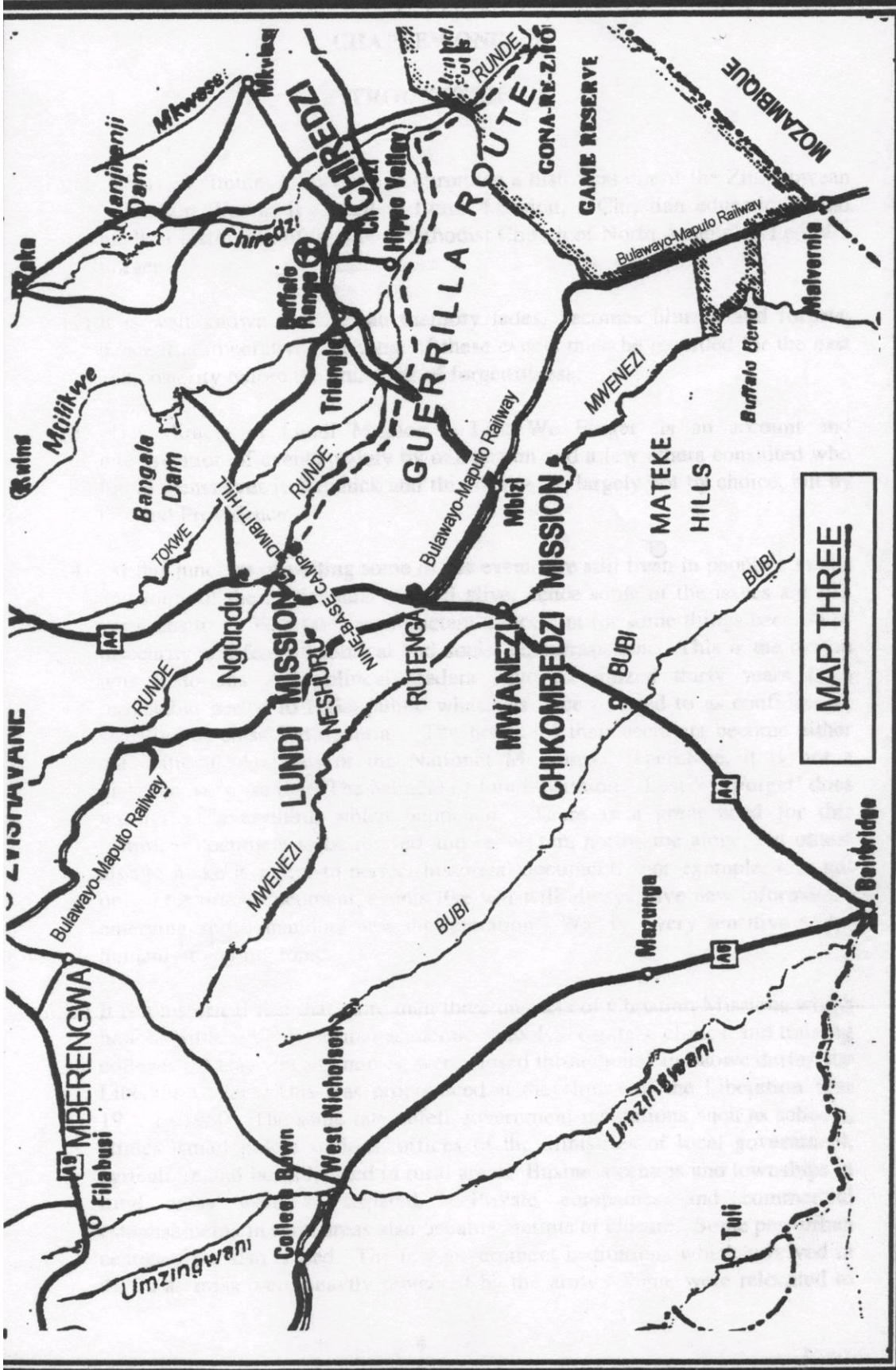
	PAGE
TRIBUTE TO HAPPYSON MATSILELE CHAUKE	1
CONTENTS	2
MAP – ONE	4
MAP – TWO	5
MAP – THREE	6
CURRICULUM VITAE – APPLICATION FOR PHD. DEGREE	7
COVER	12
THE MIRACLE OF LUNDI MISSION...LEST WE FORGET	13
CHAPTER ONE	14
The Introduction	14
Geographical Location of Lundi Mission.	17
Security Forces Positions vis-a-vis Lundi Mission.	18
Guerrilla Operations vis-a-vis Location of Lundi Mission.	19
CHAPTER TWO	20
The Impact of Gonakudzingwa Restriction Camp on Free Methodist Church Activities.	27
CHAPTER THREE	27
Paramount Chief Peter Chimamise Chitanga Lives in Exile 1975 – 1980.	37
CHAPTER FOUR	37
ZANLA (Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army) Freedom Fighters Officially Introduce Themselves into Lundi Mission.	42
CHAPTER FIVE	42
The Abduction and Disappearance of Rev. Naison Chauke 1978.	47
CHAPTER SIX	47
The Guerrilla Supply Order List – 1978.	55
CHAPTER SEVEN	55
The Arrest of Lundi Mission Top Brass 1978.	59
CHAPTER EIGHT	59
The Nine-Band Massacre 1978.	85
CHAPTER NINE	85
The Dimbiti Hill Massacre 1979.	90
CHAPTER TEN	90
The Last Three Months of 1979.	99
CHAPTER ELEVEN	99
The <i>Mujibhas</i> (The Liberation War Collaborators) and Lundi Mission.	107
CHAPTER TWELVE	107
Relationship between the Hlengwe and Other Early Christian Missions.	118
CHAPTER THIRTEEN	118
Factors Which Contributed to the Survival of Lundi Mission during the War.	151
CHAPTER FOURTEEN	151
Andrew Ndebele the Headmaster and Superintendent of Lundi Mission.	159
CHAPTER FIFTEEN	159
Lundi Mission Medical Services – 1939-1970.	

CHAPTER SIXTEEN	175
Lundi Mission Medical Services and the Liberation War 1971 – 1980.	
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN	182
Conclusion.	
BASIC AFRICAN LANGUAGE PRONUNCIATION GUIDE– SHONA	188
JUNE 24, 2004 – TILLMAN HOUSER REPLY TO HLENGWE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PROJECT	190
CORRESPONDENCE INFORMATION FOR THE HLENGWE DICTIONARY – OCTOBER 8, 2004	191
HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE HLENGWE PEOPLE	195
GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE HLENGWE	196
ORIGINS AND DEFINITIONS OF THE HLENGWE	202
REASONS FOR THE HLENGWE MOVEMENT	222
HLENGWE POPULATION	230
HLENGWE POLITICAL SYSTEM	233
THE MYSTERY OF MAKAPAILE POOL	263
ARMY DOCUMENT REFERENCE ONE	271
CHISANDAKO INTERVEIW	283
THE HLENGWE CIRCUMCISION SCHOOL	285
AN OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH ROLE IN DEVELOPING THE LITERAL OF THE HLENGWE LANGAUGE 1939 TO 1980	347
THE IMPACT OF MODERN AND SCIENTIFIC MEDICAL SERVICES ON THE HLENGWE LANGUAGE	351
THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE XIHLENGWE (XICHANGANA) LANGUAGE IN ZIMBABWE UNTIL 1980	353



MAP ONE





MAP THREE

APPLICATION FOR PHD. DEGREE

CURRICULUM VITAE

HAPPYSON W. M. CHAUKE

2004

(Edited by Tillman Houser)

CURRICULUM VITAE

SURNAME: Chauke
FIRST NAMES: Happyson William Matsilele
DATE OF BIRTH: 12th December, 1952
NATIONAL ID NUMBER: 000000000000
PASSPORT NUMBER: 00000000
SEX: Male
MARITAL STATUS: Married
NUMBER OF DEPENDANTS: 4
NATIONALITY: Zimbabwean
CITIZENSHIP: Zimbabwean
RELIGION: Christian
HOME LANGUAGE: Shangani-Hlengwe
OTHER LANGUAGES: English (Fluent)
 Shona (Fluent)
 Ndebele (Basic)
DRIVER'S LICENCE: 000000
RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: 12 Dunstable Circle
 Avonlea
 Marlborough
 Harare
 Zimbabwe
 Tel- 304849
 Fax-487161
 E mail- chauke.p@mmcz.co.zw

WORK ADDRESS: Churchill Boys High School
 P O Box CY 616
 Causeway
 Harare
 Zimbabwe
 Tel- 747088/94

EDUCATIONAL HISTORY:
LAST SCHOOL ATTENDED: Tekwani High School
HIGHEST FORM: 'A' levels (Cambridge)
YEAR COMPLETED: 1972
SUBJECTS PASSED: General Paper
 English Literature
 History
 Geography

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION:**INSTITUTION ATTENDED:**

University of Zimbabwe

YEAR COMPLETED:

1976

DEGREE OBTAINED:

Bachelor of Arts (General Degree)

Major subject – History

POST GRADUATE STUDIES:**INSTITUTION ATTENDED:**

University of Rhodesia

YEAR COMPLETED:

1977

CERTIFICATE OBTAINED:

Graduate Certificate in Education

INSTITUTION ATTENDED:

University of Zimbabwe

YEAR COMPLETED:

1985

DEGREE:

Bachelor of Arts – History Honours

INSTITUTION ATTENDED:

University of Zimbabwe

YEAR COMPLETED:

1991

DIPLOMA:

Diploma in Education

INSTITUTION ATTENDED:

University of Zimbabwe

YEAR COMPLETED:

2003

DEGREE:

Master of Arts in History

WORK EXPERIENCE**1. 1974 – 1975:**Temporary teacher at Zimuto Secondary School
(Dutch Reformed Church) Masvingo**Subjects taught:**

English Language and Geography

Forms taught:**1 – 4****2. 1978 – 1979:**Teacher (appointed teacher on probation) -Lundi
Secondary School (Free Methodist Church)
Masvingo**Subjects taught:**English Language, English Literature, History and
Shona**3.1979-1982****Responsibilities 1979-82:**Appointed permanent teacher at the same school
HOD – English and History**4. 1982:****Subjects taught:**

Teacher - Ellis Robins High School

Forms taught:Shona
1 – 6**5.1983todate :****Subjects taught:**

Churchill Boys High School

Forms taught:History and Shona
1 – 6

Responsibilities:	1986 – , HOD Shona, Grade 1
	1998 – , HOD History Grade 111
	1991 – , Senior Master Grade 1
	1997/09 to date, Acting Deputy Headmaster Grade 1
	2004/03 – Acting Headmaster
<u>Other Duties</u>	1985 – to date Churchill School examinations secretary for ‘O’ and ‘A’ Level Cambridge Public Examinations
	1992 – to date in charge of school transport, member of the School Finance Committee, Teacher in charge of soccer, volleyball, basketball, current affairs club

OTHER EDUCATIONAL RELATED RESPONSIBILITIES

EXAMINER MAKER

1. 1983 – 1984: History Z. J. C.
2. 1984: History – O Level Cambridge
3. 1984 – 1999: Shona – O – Level – Cambridge
4. 2000 to date: History – A Level Cambridge/Zimsec
5. Churchill School’s Public Examination Secretary for ‘O’ and ‘A’ Level 1985 – current
6. Chief Invigilator for Central Africa Correspondence College for Diploma and degree courses at their Churchill Boys High School Center 1996 – current

OTHER INFORMATION

1. A full member of the Geographical Names Standing Committee of Zimbabwe. Appointed 27th June, 1989 to the present.
2. Part-time News Reader and Translator - Shangani-Hlengwe Language, Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, Radio Four (National Radio F. M.) 1995 – 31/12/01).
3. A professional translator and interpreter for the following languages – English, Shangani – Hlengwe and Shona.
4. Basic knowledge and experience of editing Shona and History educational textbooks Form 1 – 6. Longman Zimbabwe Orientation programme.
5. A certificate of attendance of teachers in charge of school libraries organized by the school libraries section of the University of Zimbabwe in 1980.
6. A Certificate of attendance of a course in Political Economy conducted by Zimbabwe Ministry of Education 1985 – 1989.

PUBLISHED RESEARCH ARTICLES

1. **Peter Forrestall (Ndambakuwa) – Native Administration, Chivi District 1895 – 1921, Zimbabwe – Department of History, University of Zimbabwe 1985.**
2. The Relevance of Hlengwe Male Circumcision in Education – Department of Education, University of Zimbabwe 1991.
3. The Miracle of Lundi – ‘Lest We Forget’ – A historical account of events which took place during the Liberation War in Zimbabwe 1975 – 1980 at Lundi Mission, Mwenezi, Masvingo Province – Free Methodist Church U.S.A. (ed). Rev. T. Houser, 2002.
4. A History of Hlengwe Male Circumcision in Chiredzi and Mwenezi Districts in Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe 1840 – 1980 – Department of History, University of Zimbabwe 2003.

COVER FOR "THE MIRACLE OF LUNDI MISSION...LEST WE FORGET"

THE MIRACLE OF LUNDI MISSION IN
ZIMBABWE

LEST WE FORGET!



HAPPYSON WILLIAM MATSILELE CHAUKE
2002

THE MIRACLE OF LUNDI MISSION...LEST WE FORGET
Happyson Matsilele Chauke
FOREWORD

This account of "THE MIRACLE OF LUNDI MISSION IN ZIMBABWE" is most certainly correctly named. My involvement with the Free Methodist Mission in Zimbabwe started with our arrival at Lundi Mission in 1948. Until 1981 my family and I resided there at various times keeping me in touch with the events recorded in this volume. The members of the author's family were our neighbours. We claimed many of the people mentioned in this book as our friends. After the missionaries left in 1976 during the guerrilla war, my wife and I lived in the urban areas as the liaison between the General Missionary Board and the Administrative Board of the Zimbabwe Free Methodist Church, which controlled its educational, medical and church ministries.

Chauke, of the royal family of the Hlengwe people, taught in the Lundi Secondary School during these extremely stressful four years. Realizing the historical significance of those years, he has preserved the record of the events for posterity. The events were not forgotten. One is shaken by the conflict between the school administration, the government security forces and the guerrillas. The guerrillas often demanded food and supplies. On some nights guerrillas gathered students and taught them about the Liberation War. Hearing this, the security forces threatened to close the school for feeding and assisting the guerrillas. In each instance the school authorities always responded truthfully.

When demands of the guerrillas became impossible to meet, Mr. Ndebele, the brave Headmaster of the school, along with Teacher Chauke who was reared in the local community, bravely faced the guerrilla commander in his base camp. After they spent the whole day explaining the school situation, the commander eventually relented.

The Headmaster and his staff kept the school operating throughout the four-year period without one student leaving during school sessions. Mission financial books always were in order each year. Near the end of the war, the Headmaster and the Deputy Headmaster Mr. Abner D. Chauke travelled over 100 kilometres with no military escort to my residence in Chiredzi to inform me of a security force threat to bomb and destroy Lundi Mission. At the security base, I pled for the military to wait until the students finished the term. The Mission was not destroyed. Miraculously, for that four-year period the school was one of a very few in the whole country that did not close.

The book clearly explains the historical missionary background of Lundi Mission. Chauke gives full credit to the thorough spiritual training the Africans received by the missionaries before they left in 1976. The Biblical faith and vision of the founder, Rev. R. J. Jacobs, bore fruit in the concentrated prayer of the staff and residents of Lundi Mission during this frightening time. Sunday worship services continued in spite of gunfire around the Mission compound.

The final sentences of the book give the real reason for the miracle. "The Miracle of Lundi Mission to survive throughout the Liberation War was **Prayer**. Lest We Forget! Amen!!"

Tillman Houser

CHAPTER ONE

THE INTRODUCTION

- (1) This is an attempt to record and chronicle a historical era of the Zimbabwean Liberation War as it related to Lundi Mission, a Christian educational and medical institution of the Free Methodist Church of North America – Lest We Forget.
- (2) It is well known that human memory fades, becomes blurred and forgets, hence it is imperative that some of these events must be recorded for the past and posterity before the great loss of forgetfulness.
- (3) ‘The Miracle of Lundi Mission – Lest We Forget’ is an account and interpretation of events mainly by one person and a few others consulted who found themselves in the thick and thin of events, largely not by choice, but by fate and Providence.
- (4) At this juncture of writing some of the events are still fresh in people’s minds and some of the participants are still alive, hence some of the issues are still very sensitive. Witnesses are reluctant to account for some things because of insecurity and fear of political and social embarrassment. This is the reason why historians and political leaders have recognized thirty years as a reasonable period to make public what was once referred to as confidential, sensitive or classified material. The home for their accounts become either the National Archives or the National Museums. Therefore, it is not a historical surprise that ‘The Miracle of Lundi Mission – Lest We Forget’ does not reflect everything which happened. There is a great need for this historical document to be revised and re-written, not by me alone, but others also to make it a near-to-perfect historical document. For example, it is not only a historical document, events like war will always have new information emerging and demanding new interpretation. War is a very sensitive and a humanly touching topic.
- (5) It is a historical fact that more than three quarters of Christian Missions which housed Bible schools, formal academic schools, hospitals, clinics, and training colleges for teachers and nurses were closed throughout Zimbabwe during the Liberation War. This was pronounced at the climax of the Liberation War 1972 to 1980. The same fate befell government institutions such as schools, clinics, small police stations, and offices of the ministries of local government, agriculture and lands located in rural areas. Business centres and townships in rural areas were not spared. Private companies and commercial establishments in rural areas also became victims of closure. Some peri-urban centres were also closed. The few government institutions which survived in the rural areas were heavily protected by the army. Some were relocated to

urban areas or safe locations such as the Protected Villages.

The very few mission or government institutions that were not closed had their activities reduced to almost zero or remained with a skeleton staff to keep the main infrastructure. However, the general picture was that many were closed, ransacked and vandalized. Accompanying the closure and property destruction was loss of life; sometimes very innocent lives of youths and elders. In most cases these were gruesome deaths perpetrated by either security forces or guerrillas. Torture, which was sometimes accompanied by methods of the “Shariah Law,” and bodily dismemberment were common. There are many today who are disabled or maimed that have survived to tell the story and serve as concrete evidence of the war.

(6) During this period under discussion the following were the prominent Christian mission institutions which existed in Masvingo Province and belonged to various Christian church denominations:

(a) The Free Methodist Church of North America – Chikombedzi Mission, Dumisa Mission and Lundi Mission.

(b) The Roman Catholics – Matibi Mission, Mukaro Mission, Bondolfi Mission, Berejena Mission, Silveira Mission, Gokomere Mission, Saint Anthony Mission and Serima Mission.

(c) The Dutch Reformed Church – Alheit Mission, Gutu Mission, Chibi Mission, Mutero Mission, Morgenster Mission, Pamushana Mission, Jichidza Mission and Zimuto Mission.

(d) The Missionary Church of Christ Church of America - Mashoko Mission.

All secondary and primary schools, which operated at these missions, were closed except Lundi and Chibi Missions. Activities such as training colleges, Bible schools and medical institutions were heavily reduced or closed, but Lundi Mission became exceptional. Normal functions, though with hitches here and there, continued throughout the war to its end. The geographical location of Lundi Mission must be explained. Reference made to maps.

There were many military incidents that took place within and around Lundi Mission similar to those which happened to the other missions. These events led to loss of life, serious injuries, destruction of property, and finally closure. The closure was done either by security forces or ZANLA guerrillas. This did not happen to Lundi except for the abduction and disappearance of the Rev. Naison Chauke, principal of the Lundi Bible School in 1978. What largely and commonly happened on the other missions, against all common sense and great odds, didn't happen here—hence ‘The Miracle of Lundi Mission – Lest We Forget.’

(7) The approach to the discussion on ‘The Miracle of Lundi Mission – Lest We Forget’ is as follows:

(a) The background and history of Lundi Mission before the Liberation War.

(b) Discussion on the major specific incidents or events which happened within or around the mission which could have led to its closure by the Rhodesian

forces or authorities or ZANLA guerrillas, responsible authorities of the mission, or even an en masse abandonment by residents of the mission.

- (c) A discussion on possible reasons and various interpretations as to why, against all odds, Lundi Mission did not fall by the fate of closure that befell many Christian Missions.
8. It would be academically unforgivable if I did not express my gratitude to Rev. Tillman Houser. He supplied me with his own vital material on the historical background of Lundi Mission. I have had many informative discussions with him. My appreciation is sincerely extended to Beth and Eugene Stewart for editing some of the scripts.
 9. A list of events discussed is attached. The events are roughly in a chronological order. Let it be made clear that this document is still under research. Dates and certain information still need to be cross-checked, verified and specified.
 10. 'The Miracle of Lundi Mission – Lest We Forget' is dedicated to all those who directly or indirectly, in one way or another, contributed to the survival of the mission throughout the Zimbabwe Liberation War. However, the bottom line is to portray the power and glory of "Jehova we Mabandla" – God is the protector and safeguard of the mission – 'The Miracle of Lundi Mission – Lest We Forget'

FOOTNOTES FOR INTRODUCTUION

1. Hammond-Tooke, D. W. (ed) – THE BANTU PEOPLES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA
pg 69
2. Junod, H.A. – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE - Vol 1 pg - pg 395
3. Wright, A. –THE VALLEY OF IRONWOOD - pg 200
4. Sparrow, A. W. – "LOWVELD RITE – A SHANGAAN CIRCUMCISION LODGE"

THE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF LUNDI MISSION

Make reference to the map

- (1) Lundi Mission is 100 kilometres along the Masvingo to Beitbridge highway.
- (2) It is 188 kilometres from Beitbridge, the border post, to South Africa.
- (3) 5 kilometres from Ngundu centre junction to the Sugar Estates of Triangle, Hippo Valley and Chiredzi Town.
- (4) It is 138 kilometres from Chiredzi by highway and about 70 kilometres by direct route.
- (5) From Lundi Mission to the nearest direct point on the boundary with Mberengwa in the northwest is about 50 kilometres away.
- (6) Lundi Mission is 40 kilometres from Rutenga Railway Station on the Masvingo-Beitbridge highway, where it crosses the Bulawayo – Somabula Mbizi, to Chiredzi Railway and Mbizi to Maputo railway.
- (7) A direct route to the nearest border post with Mozambique is about 400 kilometres.
- (8) Lundi Mission is built on the banks of Runde River, in Chief Chitanga's Area in Mwenezi District of Masvingo Province.
- (9) The mission covers 100 acres in which the Clinic, Bible School, Secondary School and residential areas are situated.
- (10) The mission boundary stretches from the Masvingo to Beitbridge highway in the north, then along the Runde River to the East and Southeast.
- (11) On the east of the Runde River and Lundi Mission is Chivi District, which stretched a distance of 15 kilometres along the river in pre-independence days, 1980.
- (12) A distance of 8 kilometres from the mission to the south east and south west it was bordered by white commercial ranching farms.
- (13) White commercial ranching farms stretched about 300 kilometres to the southeast border with Mozambique.
- (14) Before the Mozambique border, the only communal areas passed through were Chilonga, Marumbini, Mpapa, Gezani and Sengwe. The communal areas were about 50 kilometres from the boundary. By 1978 people in these areas were placed in 'protected villages' in reality 'concentrated camps'.
- (15) The large sugar estates of Triangle and Hippo Valley are located on the south east and parallel to the white commercial ranching farms from Lundi Mission towards the border with Mozambique.
- (16) The areas surrounding Lundi Mission or within reach from the Mission had attractive sabotage targets by the guerrillas. The Masvingo to Beitbridge highway, an economic lifeline for Rhodesia. The same applied to the railway line linking Bulawayo, Chiredzi and Sango to Maputo. The Masvingo – Ngundu – Triangle – Hippo Valley to Chiredzi highway an internal economic life line to the sugar, cotton and citrus producers.
- (17) Most of the commercial ranching farmers who were notorious for their ill-treatment of black workers and who served in the Rhodesian army in

different capacities, were major guerrilla targets.

SECURITY FORCES POSITIONS VIS-A-VIS LUNDI MISSION

- (1) On the Lundi Bridge less than a kilometre away, on the Masvingo – Beitbridge highway from Lundi Mission there was an army camp. It was very easy for the army to walk into the mission within 15 minutes and gather all information and events directly happening in the Mission. This is what they practically did during the Liberation War on a daily basis. They could easily lay night ambushes.
- (2) At Ngundu Centre there was an army camp, District Commissioner camp and police camp. They drove into the mission at any time within about twenty minutes. During the Liberation War they did so regularly on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. They also came in at odd hours.
- (3) Neshuro Centre, about 20 kilometres northwest towards Mberengwa, there was a security camp and a District Commission Camp. From the Masvingo – Beitbridge highway there is a stretch of 15 kilometres of dusty road and risk of mines. However, security forces could move into the mission within 20 minutes. They often came into the mission. Sometimes they used helicopters to fly into the mission.
- (4) At Rutenga, 40 kilometres from Lundi Mission, was a mini air force base and an army base. The air force could within 10 minutes fly into the mission and in about 25 minutes drive into the Mission. They often did so.
- (5) Nuanetsi District Commissioner Station, 65 kilometres from Lundi Mission, was the headquarters of the District Assistant's camp, a police camp and army camp. They could drive into the mission within less than an hour. They often did so.
- (6) Buffalo Range, about 80 kilometres by highway and 50 kilometres by Lundi Mission, was an air force direct route from headquarters in the southeastern areas of the country. Lundi Mission was under this operation area. Jets, Dakotas and helicopters could fly into the Mission in less than 20 minutes, when major contacts took place within the vicinity of the mission. Their operations from the air were witnessed by mission residents.
- (7) During the Liberation War security forces from one of the mentioned basis came in and out of the Mission positions on a daily. Dakotas, helicopters and spot planes daily hovered over the Mission. They intensified their activities every time after contacts. The security forces had detailed correct information that the Mission, because of its nature such as the clinic, boarding school and regular salaried staff, was a reliable financial and material source for guerrillas; an ambush or contact could have taken place within the mission with serious consequences. The Miracle – this did not happen and the mission never closed. Lest We Forget!

GUERRILLA OPERATIONS VIS-A-VIS LOCATION OF LUNDI MISSION

Guerrillas did not have permanent bases like security offices. However, they had what they called bases, which were more of hideouts and temporary posts.

- (1) Guerrilla major targets such as the Masvingo – Beitbridge highway, Ngundu to Chiredzi highway, Bulawayo to Malvern (Sango) to Maputo railway were identified.
- (2) The geographical environment of large tracts of commercial ranching farms, riverine forest, mountains, kopjes or hills close to the railway lines and highways provided strategic points for sabotage or ambush.
- (3) Guerrillas identified Lundi Mission as a major source for their food, material and financial needs.
- (4) From Lundi Mission to and from the Mozambique border, a distance of about 400 kilometres, the mission was the only reliable source of their basic requirements in order to operate. They could not easily venture into the sugar estates, white commercial ranches and protected villages for food and other supplies. These were institutions controlled by the government supporters and sympathizers. The only place with any hope of safety was Lundi Mission.
- (5) From Lundi Mission guerrilla directions of operations were north, northwest and northeast. These directions led them into Mberengwa, Chivi and Midlands Districts. It was a distance of about 300 kilometres before they came to a reliable source of supplies. Therefore, Lundi Mission was roughly a half way distance between their operational zones and rear base in Mozambique.
- (6) By mid 1978, most business centres in the ZANLA – ZANU operation area of Gaza zone had been closed and also most black communal areas in ‘protected villages’, leaving Lundi Mission exposed to be the major source of guerrilla supplies.
- (7) The *povo* who were outside ‘protected villages’ had been in the war since 1975 so by 1978 their resources to support guerrillas were depleted and in some cases it was zero. Therefore guerrillas could not afford to avoid the mission. It was their lifeline.

After some contacts they made accusations and complaints against the mission residents. They never physically harassed anybody or closed the mission although they made threats. The only great tragedy was the abduction and disappearance of Rev. Naison Chauke, the principal of Lundi Bible School in 1978.

Between June 1978 and November 1979 the guerrillas literally became part of the mission residents. It is a miracle that the guerrillas and security forces avoided and missed each other to have contact within the mission. Lest We Forget!

CHAPTER TWO

THE IMPACT OF GONAKUDZINGWA RESTRICTION CAMP ON FREE METHODIST CHURCH ACTIVITIES

The creation of Gonakudzingwa Restriction Camp in 1964 had an impact on the activities of the Free Methodist Church among the Hlengwe and their missions of Lundi Mission, Chikombedzi Mission and Dumisa Mission. The establishment of the camp influenced the attitude, position and reign of Paramount Chief Chimamise Chitanga. In 1962 the Zimbabwe African People's Union, ZAPU nationalists at Lupani Restriction Camp were giving the District Commissioner hard times. In early 1964 they were relocated at the Gonakudzingwa Restriction Camp in Matibi Number 2, the then Nuanetsi District. The leader, the late Dr. Joshua Nkomo, was interned here together with about 600 of his lieutenants.¹

The District Commissioner of Nuanetsi District, Allan Wright, immediately anticipated problems with the presence and proximity of the political restrictees among the Hlengwe. The District Commissioner immediately gave special instructions starting with the Paramount Chief, other chiefs, headmen, missionaries, headmasters, his District messengers and police to keep a close eye and ears on the ground concerning the restrictees. In his own words, he regarded the restrictees as 'thugs, murderers, dangerous agitators and instigators'.² He issued some of the senior chiefs and influential men with 12 bore shotguns and a few rounds. Paramount Chitanga was one of those who came to the very front in supporting the District Commissioner's activities against the restrictees. It must be remembered that the Paramount Chief was a retired police sergeant and very influential among the Hlengwe traditional rulers. His opposition against the political restrictees was very open and public.

The District Commissioner's fears soon became a reality. Scores of Hlengwe began to journey to Gonakudzingwa Restriction Camp to visit Comrade Nkomo. The stream of visitors became a flood within a short time and Nkomo's fame spread rapidly among the Hlengwe of Mpapa, Chilonga, Sengwe, and Masivamele. It also spread to Chitanga. It spread over the borders of Nuanetsi District to Beitbridge, Mberengwa, Chivi, Gutu, Bikita and Zaka. Then it was literally the whole of Zimbabwe, particularly Matebeleland and Midlands. The visitors went to sign their names, pay allegiance and loyalty to Dr. Nkomo and his party. Some were registering as recruits for the ZAPU army ZIPRA in formation.³

District Commissioner Allan Wright, popularly nicknamed 'Chibwe', through his spy network discovered that some of the Hlengwe chiefs, headmen and influential men in the community had been convinced or intimidated to believe that Dr. Nkomo, the leader, and ZAPU would assume political power within the near future. However, Paramount Chief Chitanga was one of the very few who did not change their negative attitude towards the restrictees.

¹ Wright, A., *Valley of the Ironwoods*, Cape and Transvaal, Cape Town, 1972, pp.359-364.

² Ibid, p.364.

³ Interview with Clarence Tagwireyi, Eastlea, Harare, August 1999. He was a student activist for ZAPU in 1965. He later on became an active member of ZAPU in Bulawayo until 1980.

The influx of visitors and popularity of Dr. Nkomo and restrictees at Gonakudzingwa continued into 1965. The months of March, April and May 1965 became very hectic. The year 1965 was a year of great famine in Nuanetsi. The District Commissioner held discussions with Hlengwe chiefs especially chiefs Chilonga, Mpapa, Sengwe, and Ngwenyenye, from whom he threatened to withhold relief food if they continued to support or play a passive role against Nkomo and ZAPU. The District Commissioner discovered that most of the Hlengwe chiefs except the Paramount Chief were prepared to starve rather than adopt an active role against the political restrictees.

The District Commissioner, in a detailed account, explained that he was disappointed by white missionaries, particularly the ones at Lundi, Chikombedzi and Dumisa Missions, who did not want to support him unreservedly against the political restrictees. He mentioned his disappointment to the chiefs and particularly to the Paramount Chief. In fact, at one point he entertained an idea to close the missions. This was not welcomed by the chiefs, including Paramount Chief Chitanga. The Paramount Chief had gone all the way to support the District Commissioner, but at this juncture he was prepared to differ. ‘*Nibyelile Chibwe eku aswingakoteki eku maMission apfaliwa himhaka avaendla tiro wahombe weswikolo neswibedlela*’.⁴ Translated, this meant that he told Chibwe, (Allan Wright) the native Commissioner, that closing missions was a non-starter since they did a great job in schools and health services. Jacobs and his Free Methodist Missionaries had made a great impact even on the anti-restrictees, Chief Chitanga. The miracle – Lest We Forget. There is no need to read between the lines to understand that the District Commissioner had a general dislike for missionaries. He made this reference many years later after 1965 when he met Rev. T. Houser in a street in Harare.⁵

The District Commissioner made a reference to an incident between Dr. Paul Embree, the mission and medical superintendent at Chikombedzi Mission and his church elders. According to the District Commissioner’s account, Dr. Embree had visited the Gonakudzingwa Restriction Camp for a church service, but some elders thought he had gone to sign his name and support for Dr. Nkomo. The District Commissioner claimed that the elders who were anti-restrictees were placated when they learned the truth about the doctor’s visit. Dr. Embree had gone to the restriction camp to hold a church service. If it was true that the church elders were angry with the doctor, they could not have gone very far with their anger because they knew that they could not do without the doctor, the mission and other missionaries.⁶

The incident of 8 May 1965 was another account concerning Dr. Embree and missionaries, which the District Commissioner explained to justify his mistrust of missionaries. At about 10 p.m. on this particular date Dr. Embree, his wife, children and missionary sisters arrived at Nuanetsi station with luggage. Dr. Embree told the District Commissioner that an African nurse had warned him of an imminent attack by political supporters of Nkomo that night. Dr. Embree had decided to evacuate the mission where magnificent medical, educational and Christian work had been carried on at first, for the sole benefit of the Hlengwe for many years. The doctor and company were going to take refuge at the sister mission of Lundi some 85 miles away. If the account was true it was another evidence to show how much the missionaries were respected and honoured by

⁴ Interview with Paramount Chief Chimamise Chitanga, Chitanga residence, May 1980.

⁵ Interview with Reverend T. Houser, 12 Dunstable Circle, Avonlea, Harare, 27, August, 2001.

⁶ Wright, A., *Valley of the Ironwoods*, Cape and Transvaal, Cape Town, 1972.p.374.

some of the Africans.⁷

The District Commissioner said that he was dismayed when the doctor, a very keen hunter who owned several firearms, could not take up arms against the tribesmen his mission had served so devotedly for many years even if the mission itself was attacked and lives of his family and staff put in danger. For those who understood the relationship between missionaries and Hlengwe people, the doctor and African nurse behaviour was a normality. After this incident the District Commissioner muted his intention to close the Mission and heavily persuaded the African nurse to divulge all the information. The doctor restrained him to take a back seat for the time being. This could have had serious repercussions for the mission and others at that time. The District Commissioner informed the Hlengwe chief Mpapa, in whose area Chikombedzi Mission was located, Paramount Chief Chitanga, Chilonga and Sengwe, of the events and his intention to close the mission. The chiefs disagreed and advised him to let events take their course. The Hlengwe people could not do without the missions and missionaries. Miraculously there was peace until 10 years later in 1975.

Lundi Mission was not spared from the impact of Gonakudzingwa Restriction Camp. Lundi Secondary School was opened in 1965. The students were mature enough to imbibe political ideas from the restrictees. The secondary school became a recruiting ground. The schoolteacher, Mr. John Chauke, became the ZAPU contact person in the mission. There was a plot to burn mission property, particularly the school principal's residence. The act was to drive the missionaries away, not to kill or physically harm them, according to later information. However, there was a serious disagreement within the group. Some members did not see any logic to stage violent acts against missionaries and the mission.⁸ It was this dissension, which led to the act of violence being aborted or resulted in one individual burning books in the principal's study. The plot became public, not so much as an act of sell-outs, but because others saw no reason to ill-treat the missionaries. The missionaries were doing a great service and they had only opened a secondary school to serve the whole of Nuanetsi District, large parts of Belingwe and Chibi Districts. There were some that could not tolerate extremists destroying the infant secondary school.

The teacher was arrested, convicted and sentenced to 6 years hard labour. The District Commissioner advised the government to close the school for being a political nest. He accused the missionaries of being collaborators in a way because of their passiveness and having their fingers being bitten by those whom they were feeding. The principal, Mr. Clarke DeMille and other missionaries, took a noble stand. The mission or secondary school could not be closed, but culprits hunted, punished and some expelled. The principal and missionaries received support from most of the Hlengwe people. The missionaries, though white, were not their political targets. The missionaries had done great work for the Hlengwe for no material gain. It was a question of identifying an enemy, not a colour of one's skin. The enemy was a system of exploitation and those who perpetrated it.

The District Commissioner squarely confronted Paramount Chief Chitanga because Lundi Mission was located in his area. The Paramount also claimed that the mission was his, a legacy from his deceased brothers Chiefs Hlengani Chitanga and Chikovele Chitanga. The Paramount Chief vehemently supported the District Commissioner that

⁷ Ibid.p.378

the political culprits had to be flushed out of the mission and stringently punished. However, with the same vehemence he opposed the closure of the Mission or the secondary school. '*Xikolo xamina nemission yamina*'. It is my school and mission.⁹ He had the guts to oppose his political fellow traveller. The record of the mission and its missionaries saved the day for them to continue their operations. On the other hand, because of their love for the people, dedication and devotion though shaken, the missionaries were not moved or distracted from their mission.

The name 'John' became Paramount Chief Chitanga's slogan or saying whenever he expressed his opposition and bitterness against African nationalism and the Liberation War. At public meetings he always referred to John when he referred to the enemies of the government. John was an example and epitome of Hlengwe nationalism and liberation fighters. Chitanga always reminded his audience that those who opposed the government like John were going to be incarcerated.

John Chauke was released from prison in 1968 after serving four years of his sentence when the other two years were remitted for good behaviour. His first port of call from prison was Lundi Mission. His main host was Mr. C. DeMille, the principal and first target of violence in 1965. Let it be known that John Chauke was a product of missionary education from primary and secondary schools until his teacher training. The Free Methodist Church missionaries had identified that he was brilliant and intelligent; hence they provided him with financial material and moral support to start and complete his educational career. If it were true that John Chauke attempted to lead an insurrection against the mission and missionaries in 1965, possibly it was out of political overzealousness. What he displayed when he was released was contrary to what he was tried for, convicted and sentenced—inciting and instigating acts of violence against the mission and missionaries in 1965. He was sentenced to six years hard labour in prison.

In 1968 when John Chauke was released from prison and visited Lundi Mission, the author was a Z.J.C. Form 2 student. Students observed from a distance to see John and DeMille shaking hands, chatting, smiling and friendly gestures. Even when students did not hear the contents of the conversation, there was no doubt that the two were meeting not as enemies, but old colleagues and acquaintances. When they parted they shook hands and parted in a Hlengwe traditional manner. Mind you, the event was and still is vivid in the memory of the author and other students because John Chauke was not an ordinary person. He was a hero to students who were politically mature. His history at Lundi Mission created a lot of curiosity among the young students. Every year Paramount Chitanga addressed Lundi Secondary students and reminded students not to behave like John, not to listen to leaders who were like John and not to be like students who followed John's leadership. Thus, when the real John appeared in person at Lundi Mission all of the students were excited to see what kind of a person that John Chauke was.

After parting with Mr. DeMille, John briefly had an informal discussion with the male students at their boarding hostels. He informed the students that he had visited the mission to see his friends and colleagues, particularly Mr. DeMille. He also wanted to collect his books and magazines, especially forbidden political literature hidden underground at the house where he used to live. In front of the students, he knelt down and kissed the soil as a practical demonstration of his patriotism and nationalism. He

⁹ Interview with Paramount Chief Chimamise Chitanga, Chitanga residence, May, 1980.

surprised the students when he praised the mission and missionaries and their work. He strongly instructed that talented students who had the opportunity must learn to the highest limit because an independent Zimbabwe would need an educated manpower in all fields. This was contrary to the John students had been told about. The students expected to see and hear revenge against the missionaries. He must have regarded missionaries as government collaborators when he was arrested and sentenced to jail. John was a product of missionary work, missionary support, a student of Lundi Mission, who passed on to the United Methodist Church missionaries at Old Umtali (Hartzell) for secondary education and teacher training. The missionaries gave him a job and means of earning a living back at Lundi Mission. When he was released from prison it appeared as if John had reviewed his ideas and relationship with the missionaries and found them innocent. On the other hand John had identified the enemy and this he mentioned to the gathering of curious and excited young students. The enemy was all those who supported an oppressive, exploiting and discriminating system. John bade farewell to the students and vanished from the mission.

At about 5 p.m. the same day police special branch descended on the mission. It was possible that they had a conversation with Mr. DeMille concerning his meeting with John Chauke. They definitely had serious discussions with various students concerning what John had said and where he had gone. The next morning the special branch police returned. They went ahead with their investigations, sometimes threatening to physically assault students to divulge what John had said. There were some few students now in Form 2 who were primary school students at Lundi Mission in 1965, such as the late Lysias Vambire, when John was arrested. Students in this category revealed that they were verbally roasted by the special branch police. However, it all ended well because John had said nothing inciting, but demonstrated his patriotism and peacefully left. Paramount Chief Chitanga could not be silent in a case which concerned John, a dangerous nationalist. His two messenger policemen Kefasi 'Bindasi' Hlabyani and Simon 'Madakuchera' Magwayimele accompanied members of the police special branch. The Chief's messengers concentrated their investigations on local students such as the author and a few others. The chief sent a stern warning to the students and local community that all those who listened and supported John were going to suffer serious consequences.

When the armed struggle resumed in earnest after 1972, John Chauke joined ZAPU, which was operating from Zambia. During the course of the war some misinformed or misguided people could be heard saying that John was going to destroy Lundi Mission and the missionaries for getting him arrested in 1965. John Chauke knew what he was fighting for after 1965. After independence, unfortunately he disappeared from the public and the author has no concrete facts concerning his whereabouts. The John Chauke saga could have ruined Lundi Mission in one way or another during the early stages of African nationalism, but this did not happen.

By May 1965 the popularity of the Gonakudzingwa Camp restrictees had alarmed the government authorities and the local District Commissioner, Mr. Allan Wright, to the limit. The only method to curb the impending inevitable violence, as the District Commissioner, observed was to declare a State of Emergency. This would give power to the government to introduce and impose any laws without resorting to normal judiciary legal procedures. The District Commissioner made an urgent advice to the

government to do so and requested a government delegation led by Mr. Nicolle to come down to Nuanetsi from Salisbury to observe the situation on the ground. Mr. Hostess Nicolle and his delegation, which included Mr. Allan Wright, met with all the Hlengwe chiefs and headmen. He chided them for supporting the restrictees and assured the chiefs of government support against the nationalists. According to the District Commissioner the chiefs sheepishly looked at the government officials and passively listened except, Paramount Chief Chitanga who made his support of the government very open.¹⁰ On midnight 27 – 28 May, 1965 the Rhodesian Government of Ian Smith declared a State of Emergency in the whole Nuanetsi District.¹¹ The restrictees were confined in their camp, no more visitors were allowed, holding of ZAPU ‘thank you cards’ – membership cards, wearing the official dress representative of political parties was banned, singing of political songs banned and a curfew was imposed on Gonakudzingwa Restriction Camp. The next morning 60,000 broadsheet copies printed in Shona, Ndebele, Shangani (Hlengwe) and English were dropped from an aircraft in every nook and cranny of Nuanetsi District.¹² The document explained the Declaration of State of Emergency and seriously warned those who violated the State of Emergency. The District Commissioner and government were very apprehensive as far as the reaction to the Declaration of State of Emergency from the nationalists. The army, air force and police were put on stand by.

After a day without any violent response, the District Commissioner organized compulsory meetings with traditional leaders, chiefs and headmen at Malipati Field Office, Boli Sub Office and Neshuro Sub Office. At the meetings, the chiefs were chided for their support of Dr. Nkomo and his restrictees. They were harangued, vilified and never given chance to ask or discuss questions.¹³ In all these meetings Paramount Chief Chitanga was singled out as having been the only one who unreservedly supported the government against the African nationalists, particularly Nkomo and his ZAPU restrictees at Gonakudzingwa.

After the District Commissioner’s meetings with traditional leaders, his next targets were the missionaries. One May morning in 1965 at 7 a.m. he summoned four missionaries to his offices. His record was that he had harsh words for them and gave them undeniable evidence of some of their trusted converts who had cooperated with the Gonakudzingwa Restrictees. According to the District Commissioner, the missionaries not named, were dumbfounded. He warned them of their active or passive support of African nationalism.¹⁴ It was interesting that the District Commissioner claimed that he understood missionary difficulties and appreciated their viewpoint that they could not adopt an active role as opponents of African nationalism. However, the District Commissioner made it clear that he directed them to publicly oppose and fight against African nationalism. The bottom line was that Allan Wright, the Nuanetsi District Commissioner, regarded missionaries as the weak spot in his network to fight and destroy African nationalism. In many instances he contemplated closing the missions and drive away missionaries from the Nuanetsi District. This did not happen; instead it was Allan

¹⁰ Wright, A., *Valley of the ironwoods*, Cape and Transvaal, Cape Town, 1972. p.385

¹¹ Ibid.p.383.

¹² Ibid.p.382.

¹³ Ibid.p.386

¹⁴ Ibid.p.392

Wright who left in 1968.

During this era, Paramount Chief Chitanga proved to be an ardent supporter and part of the government machinery. He constantly maintained this role and attitude until 1975. Therefore it was not surprising that the Liberation War evicted him from his home and he lived in exile at Nuanetsi Office until 1980. The interesting fact was that during the course of events his attitude to preserve and protect Lundi Mission and work done by the missionaries never wavered until his death in 1982.

CHAPTER THREE

PARAMOUNT CHIEF PETER CHIMAMISE CHITANGA LIVES IN EXILE 1975 – 1980

Paramount Chief Chitanga popularly known by his nickname 'Chimamise' succeeded his brother Chief Chikovele Chitanga as Paramount Chief in 1960. He was the son of Paramount Chief Hanyani Chitanga and born 1917. He joined the British South Africa Police and attained the rank of sergeant by the time he retired in 1960. It was a white settler colonial policy to encourage sons of chiefs to join the police or District Commissioner police (messengers). Chimamise had done likewise and proved himself extraordinarily competent to attain the rank of sergeant, which was a very high position for an African to achieve before the 1970's.

When he was installed as Paramount Chief he became a 'darling' of the white settler regime. His record in the police force earned him the respect and confidence of the government. He was a member of the chief's council and in 1969 he was its chairman. The Chiefs' council and its members were an extension and instrument of the government. The council was hated and denounced by African nationalists who regarded it as part of the colonial exploitive and oppressive system.

In reality, the chiefs who collabourated with the regime were given power over their subjects. Chief Chitanga and his colleagues who collabourated with government were allowed to construct mini jails at their residence, impose short periods of hard labour, flog prisoners and make them pay stipulated fines. The government provided each chief with two police messengers and a private secretary. Chief Chitanga effectively made use of these provisions at the expense of his people. It was a Hlengwe tradition that subject people time and again performed duties for their ruler such as working in his fields, weeding, ploughing or harvesting. Chitanga's demands exceeded traditional duties and expectations. This earned him hatred from most of his subjects. He was part of the oppressive government as far as most of his subjects were concerned.

He did not hesitate to implement unpopular government policies. When Chimamise assumed chieftainship, the government policy of Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 was at its height. The Act involved resettling of some people in foreign lands against their will, allocation of permanent household plots, stipulating the number of cattle, goats, sheep and donkeys one could possess, the digging of contour ridges to prevent soil erosion and constructing of stone beacons to mark individual fields. The chief over-zealously implemented the government policies. Some of his subjects were resettled under chiefs Neshuro, Mawarire and Murove against their wishes. They felt betrayed and abandoned by their chief. They did not forgive the chief. On the other hand it must be noted that some of the policies were progressive for agriculture, but unfortunately, like most government policies, the Africans were not consulted or advantages explained. It must also be remembered that government policies were mainly intended to exploit the Africans. In the eyes of the people, the chief was a government tool. Chief Chitanga could be described as an 'enlightened despot' in historical terminology. He had good intentions to advance his people, but he bulldozed them around and worked within an unpopular government system. It would be unfair to wholesomely blame the chief

because he was a product of a colonial system. He was born in a chieftainship system influenced by colonial system, bred and recruited into a colonial system, and assumed his tour of duty under a colonial system. His position, though blamed, but must also be understood.

The Second Chimurenga started earnestly in northeastern Zimbabwe in December 1972. The government instructed all the chiefs to play an active part against the Liberation War in their areas. By 1974 the Liberation War was spreading, but it was still remote from Chitanga's area. However, news of the war was drawing closer every day. After the Portuguese coup on 25 April 1974, the road towards Mozambique's independence on 25 June 1975 started. Political and military analysts correctly judged that ZANU and ZANLA were going to open the southeastern front from Mozambique. This meant guerrilla penetration into Chief Chitanga's area. However, government leaders encouraged their chiefs to soldier on and be prepared to fight the war.

In early 1975, accepting advice from the government, Chief Chitanga gathered his subjects at his residence. He publicly vilified and lambasted African nationalists, guerrillas and the Liberation War. He also demonstrated the use of guns given to him by the government. He opened fire in an open space as if he was targeting guerrillas. He claimed that no African could defeat white people and that the guerrillas were wasting their time.¹ The chief, whether real or pretended, had no respect or love for African nationalists. Those who attended this particular gathering had much to say afterwards. It was possible that some people were not exposed to events outside their local area, and being illiterate, believed in the chief. The more exposed and literate silently felt sorry for the chief or harboured their hatred for the chief.

On 25 June 1975, Mozambique became independent, and in September 1975 the Gaza Front was opened and ZANLA guerrillas penetrated Zimbabwe through the southeastern areas. ZANU opened the Voice of Zimbabwe Broadcasting Services in Maputo, Mozambique. In some of its bulletins it listed and announced its enemies and targets. The name of Paramount Chief Chitanga was often announced. Many young men and women and chiefs from Chief Chitanga's area left to join the guerrillas. It was public knowledge that it was a matter of time before the guerrillas pounced on the chief. The chief's proximity to the border with Mozambique, his record with the white settler government, his public pronouncement against the Liberation War and his leading position among the Hlengwe made him an obvious target of the guerrillas.

On a September night 1975, Paramount Chief Chitanga was whisked away by the government to the Nuanetsi District Commissioner Station where he had to live in exile until April 1980. Only the chief was removed from his residence, leaving behind his wife and family. This was the Chief's anti-climax of his rule. At Nuanetsi station he lived in a three-roomed small house under forced bachelorhood, his movements very restricted, surrounded by houses of district assistants (District Commissioner messengers) and a cook. In simple terms, the Paramount Chief lived as a refugee and under humiliating conditions. He was aware of those who created his adverse living conditions. The guerrillas and their supporters whom he had despised in the past had forced him to live under the humiliating conditions. He soon learnt that his own people and relatives were dining and wining with guerrillas.

¹ Interview with Mr. Daniel Gwalale Chauke, Mukachana Area, Nuanetsi District, December, 1975. Mr. D. G. Chauke was the Chief's maternal uncle.

In February 1978 the author and a friend, Mr. S. O. Sithole, visited Nuanetsi station to get metal national registration identity cards. The Paramount Chief was a paternal grandfather of the author; thus the author and friend visited the chief at his small refugee house. The chief's close and constant companion was a retired, District Commissioner Sergeant Police Messenger, Mpandle Nduma, who was in the same situation as the chief. Nduma was a Hlengwe from Chief Sengwe who had become unpopular with the local people during the days when he was a police messenger. When he retired and the Liberation War had started, there was no way he could go home. The two senior and retired Hlengwe gentlemen shared each other's company. They spent most of their time sitting and talking. Mpandle Nduma was very loquacious. Time and again they received information concerning the Liberation War from district assistants who returned from patrol. The effects of the war were brought closer to them when bodies of district assistants who died in action were brought in the camp and some military vehicles were pulled into the station having been attacked or blown up by land mines. For instance, one day a military truck was pulled into the station in a sorry state after it had been blown by a land mine. The chief remarked in Hlengwe '*Lava vanyapwe lava avalavi kulwa nyimpi' yeferefere ahitavahlula*' literally translated 'These cowards (the guerrillas) they do not want to fight fair or conventional battles otherwise we (the settler government) would defeat them.'² Yes, the chief still had no respect and love for guerrillas.

This was the background when the author and friend called at the chief's refugee house in the company of his colleague, Nduma, in February 1978. It was a simple social visit to see a grandfather, since one was in the vicinity. The visit was very much appreciated and the discussion centered much on the Liberation War.

The author and colleague were new teachers at Lundi Secondary School. The first question from the chief and colleague was the relationship between Lundi Mission and the guerrillas. The truth was that the guerrillas had not yet officially introduced themselves in the mission until June 1978. If the guerrillas had visited the mission between 1975 and February 1978 it was not official and possibly only a small number of people within the mission were aware. Therefore, the author and colleague honestly informed the chief that there was no relationship. However, the chief and colleague correctly predicted that it was only a question of time before the guerrillas publicly visited the mission. The chief and his colleague were also well informed about the war and pointed out that the mission was going to be the major material source for guerrillas, since the resources from the local masses were dwindling. Their prediction became true after June.

The chief and colleague were very bitter men and had not one grain of love for the guerrillas. They were very concerned about their families, but the government could not accommodate them as 'refugees'. A claim not verified by the author was that the chief's wife refused to go and live in exile with her husband. They had acquired a lot of material wealth and a very big residence which could not be simply abandoned. They also had children and grandchildren who could not be simply abandoned. Therefore, the wife had decided to remain and take care of the family. Some information was that the guerrillas had made it very clear that it was the Paramount Chief who was their target between 1975 and September 1978.

² Interview with Comrade Heleza, Mukachana Village Area, May, 1980. Heleza is a veteran of the Liberation War.

The Paramount Chief told the author and colleague a brief history of the founding of Lundi Mission and his own relation with the mission when he became Chief in 1960 until 1975. It was his elder brother, Paramount Chief Hlengani Ndongdo Chitanga, who gave permission to Rev. Ralph Jacobs of the American Free Methodist Church to open Lundi Mission in 1939. Chief Hlengani Chitanga had worked for the white settler colonial government as a district police messenger and attained the rank of sergeant when he retired to succeed his father, Paramount Chief Hanyani Chitanga, as chief. He was exposed to formal education and modern medical services to understand their advantages. However, his own formal education was very basic because when he was born and grew up there were no schools among the Hlengwe. He noticed that this was a great disadvantage for Hlengwe development and advancement compared to the Karangas who were earlier exposed to missionary formal schools and medical services such as the Dutch Reformed Church, Roman Catholics and Lutherans. Therefore, Paramount Chief Hlengani Chitanga welcomed missionaries although, unfortunately, he was against the education of girls because he believed they would become prostitutes.³ Paramount Chief Chimamise emphasized that Lundi Mission was an institution which belonged to the missionaries, the Chitanga dynasty and all the Hlengwe people. Hence, there was need to support the mission. The chief regretted that he had not personally benefited from the school because it was founded when he had already joined the police force. Most of his peers were illiterate because they were born and grew at a time when there were no schools among the Hlengwe. However, Joseph Mboweni's school at Rata of the Dutch Reformed Church was of little effect and remote from the Hlengwe. Thus, the opening of Lundi Mission was greatly welcomed by Chief Hlengani Chitanga and his people.

Chief Hlengani Chitanga did not repent or become a Christian, but he had good working relationship with the missionaries. By the time of his death in 1952 he had allowed the missionaries to open Chitanga Primary School and Masogwe Primary School. Although he did not directly control the areas where Chikombedzi Mission Hospital and school and Dumisa Mission were built by the Free Methodists, Chief Hlengani Chitanga was consulted by his junior chiefs, Mpapa and Sengwe. Chief Chitanga's explanation to the author and his colleague showed how the missionaries and their services were valued and welcomed by the Hlengwe from the start.

Paramount Chief Hlengani Chitanga was succeeded by his brother, Chief Chikovele Chitanga, who ruled from 1953 – 1960. He did not repent or become a Christian, but maintained good relationships with the missionaries because he, like his brother predecessor and subjects, valued very much the work of missionaries.

Paramount Peter Chimamise Chitanga was exposed to the benefits and advantages of formal education and modern medical services when he joined the British South Africa Police. He correctly observed that communities who had schools, clinics or hospitals largely introduced by missionaries, were more advanced and developed. The chief discussed this topic with great emotion. He pointed out that if he were formally educated he could have reached great heights of achievement. The Hlengwe, compared to their neighbours the Karanga, lagged behind in education, development and advancement. He argued that between 1960 and 1975 he had attempted to further the legacy of his predecessor brothers. He had collaborated with missionaries and Mr. Lysias Benias

³ Interview with Mrs Grace Manokore, Greendale, Harare, 2002. She was the first primary Hlengwe teacher to be trained by the Free Methodist Church in 1956.

Shumba, the headmaster; to expand Chitanga Primary School before the government took control of primary schools from missionaries in 1970. He had collaborated with missionaries in the opening and expansion of Lundi Secondary School from 1965 and the opening of the new Lundi Clinic in 1967. He claimed that as chief he could have prevented the opening and expansion of Lundi Mission. He had the power to do so and his record of being in good favour with the government could have enabled him to do so.

The chief explained that he personally benefited from the missionaries. The missionaries provided him with transport services in times of need and he cashed his government salary, which was paid in a form of a cheque, at the Mission bursars office or Mabuku Shop instead of traveling 110 kilometres to the nearest bank in Masvingo in those days. Lundi Mission or '*Xigonzo*', literally meaning an educational centre, was well known all over Nuanetsi, Belingwe and Masvingo Districts and beyond for its good hospitality and great care for the people, particularly the ordinary people. The missionaries and their services cared for the people's spiritual, social and health needs. Chief Chitanga was a man who naturally wanted honour, respect and glory. Therefore, it was great for him to be associated with Lundi Mission. The mission was also his and was in his area. Chikombedzi Mission Hospital was well known all over Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa. It was located in the area of his sub chief and relative, Chief Mpapa. The missionaries with their schools and hospitals, in a way gave glory to the Paramount Chief. Therefore these institutions were obliged to stay.

Chief Chitanga did not repent or become a Christian, but he often attended church Sunday services. The missionaries sometimes provided him with transport to and from church. Time and again he was invited to address secondary or primary school students on the values and importance of formal education. This was a topic very close to his bosom. His major theme was an analogy of the 'builder and bricks'. Parents were brick molders, students or children were the bricks, and the formal institutions such as missionary schools, religion and health services, were the builders who used or shaped the bricks into useful buildings. The author had the privilege of hearing this analogy from the horse's mouth in 1967 when he was in Form One at Lundi Secondary School.

The chief listed the names of some missionaries who had collaborated with him such as E. Sayre, T. Houser, P. Capp, H. Orrin, C. DeMille, R. Magee, Dr. P. Embree, Miss R. Smith, Dr. Hurd, Miss S. Hershberger, Miss R. Morris, Miss B. Russell, Miss Beckelhymer, Miss N. Detwiler, V. Strait and many others. He knew the '*vafundisi*', and their '*vakosikazi*' (wives) and '*makosizana*' (single women missionaries). These were mission superintendents, school principals or charges of the hospital or clinic. He had directly interrelated with them because of their positions of leadership. He had great praise and respect for the missionaries and their services.

Mpandle Nduma hailed from Sengwe where Dumisa Mission was located and he had close connections with Chikombedzi Mission Hospital. He had accompanied the District Commissioner as messenger sergeant all over Nuanetsi District. He echoed with first hand information the extraordinarily good work done at Chikombedzi Hospital. He vividly remembered and mentioned the names of doctors Pettengill, Embree and wife, L. Hurd and '*makosizana*'; nursing sisters such as R. Morris, V. Straight and L. Grandfield. Mpandle Nduma was one of the Hlengwes who referred to Rev. T. Houser as Mufundisi

Houser Chauke because of his down-to-earth relationship with the Hlengwe people.⁴

The conversation between the author, his colleague S. O. Sithole, Paramount Chief Chitanga and Mpandle Nduma took place in early 1978 when the missionaries had left in 1977 because of the Liberation War. It must be remembered that the missionaries had not abandoned ship, or did 'a Peter' when a small girl associated him later with Jesus, on the fateful Last Night.⁵ The missionaries were persuaded to leave by their American Missionary Board and some of their African friends, for safety's sake. Paramount Chief Chitanga and his colleague, retired Sergeant Mpandle Nduma, from the bottom of their hearts regretted and moaned the leaving of missionaries. Chikombedzi Mission had closed and turned into a Rhodesian military camp. The two gentlemen concluded that it was only a matter of time before Lundi Mission followed the same fate. Lundi Mission survived the Liberation War – Lest We Forget – the Miracle.

Paramount Chief Chitanga's parting words to the author and his colleague, after four hours of informal conversation, were '*byela Abineri*', (now Bishop Abner Chauke, who was then Deputy Headmaster), na Ndebele, (Andrew Ndebele then headmaster of Lundi mission) *eku vahlayisa ndaka ye Mission hinga siyeliwa hi mamishinari ele America*'. A literal translation is to say to inform Abner and Ndebele to take care of the Mission, which is an inheritance left to us by the American missionaries. This was a moving statement considering the humiliating and refugee status of these once-prominent members of the Hlengwe people. It was interesting to note their great respect for foreign missionaries and their wish that the mission be spared by the Liberation War. The mission was spared by the Liberation War – Lest We Forget – The Miracle.

The author's colleague, S. O. Sithole, reminded the author to convey the chief's message to the headmaster and his deputy when the two returned to the mission station. The message was informally conveyed. Remember that these events happened in February before the guerrillas had officially introduced themselves in the mission. The truth was that since the end of 1975 guerrillas had secretly visited some members in the mission who had lived within the vicinity of the Mission and passed through or on the edges of the mission station.

Guerrillas officially introduced themselves in Lundi Mission in June 1978 and then onwards it was a public secret that their material support came from the mission. The chief living in exile at Nuanetsi station constantly received information concerning the relationship between the mission and guerrillas. The guerrillas were responsible for his deplorable conditions at Nuanetsi and separation from his family. There were many students at the mission who were children of policemen and district messengers who lived at Nuanetsi Station. There were many patrols done by the police, army and district messengers in and out of the mission and back to Nuanetsi Station. Some captured guerrillas *mujibhas* or *chimbwidos*, young male and female guerrilla collaborators, were taken to Nuanetsi Station for questioning and keeping. Therefore, the chief was well informed of the Liberation War activities. The chief could have advised or even instructed the government authorities or security forces to close the mission as a way of cutting supplies to the guerrillas. This was what was happening in many parts of the

⁴ Interview with Mpandhle Nduma, Nuanetsi District Station, February, 1978. Mpandhle Nduma retired with a rank of District messenger sergeant.

⁵ The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version, Mark, 14: 66-72, Luke 22: 54-62, John 18: 15-18, 25-27, Thomas Nelson Nashville, 1989.

country. This was in line with the policy of 'protected villages' which turned into 'concentration camps'. The Paramount Chief did not decide otherwise – why? – The Miracle of Lundi Mission – Lest We Forget.

The official introduction of guerrillas into the mission was soon followed by the abduction of the Rev. Naison Chauke and the Nine-Band bombing, all public events, which also exposed the relationship between the Mission and the guerrillas. These events would be discussed later on. However, the mission continued to function.

It was a week, later on after the Nine-Band incident on 9 September 1978 that an incident, which directly affected the Chief, happened. After the bombing, the guerrillas embarked on a witchhunt. The guerrillas argued that 'The Nine-Band' bombing was a result of a 'sell-out' by some members of the local community. Businessmen at Lundi Township, Varumbi and Chikohora were accused, abducted, finally murdered and secretly buried. Vhiya narrowly escaped death. Paramount Chief Chitanga's second son, Fidiresi, a family man, who worked as a car mechanic for Super Bus Company in Masvingo and lived at his father's residence, was also accused. Fidiresi was in charge of the father's palatial homestead since the chief went to live in exile in 1975. Fidiresi with the help of his mother, the chief's wife, took care of the property. On that fateful night, Fidiresi together with Varumbi and Chikohora were accused of being sell-outs.

He was abducted and murdered. His mother, the chief's wife, was battered and left for dead. Property was plundered and looted. The next morning the Paramount Chief received news of his family's tragedy as a great shock and became dumbfounded. In his own words he was 'shocked beyond any words'.⁶ Some of the account was first-hand information given to the author by Paramount Chief Chitanga after the Liberation War in 1980. After independence in April 1980, in May 1980 the headmaster of Lundi Secondary, A. D. Ndebele, the author, and Mr. Daniel Gwalale Chauke, a maternal uncle of the chief, paid a courtesy call at the chief's residence to welcome the chief back from his exile at Nuanetsi Station. The conversation, which was free and relaxed, lasted for about four hours. After independence, the chief was appointed senator in the new ZANU government senate. The author, time and again, was invited by the chief, his paternal grandfather, to help him read and analyze 'Parliamentary Debates', before the chief attended Parliamentary sessions. It must be remembered that the chief's literate level was very basic. It was during these conversations between 1980 and 1982, before the chief's sudden death, that the author gathered a lot of various information on various topics from Paramount Chief Peter Chimamise Chitanga.

Sunday morning September 1978 after the night abduction of Fidiresi and the physical harassment of the chief's wife, the army, police, special branch and District messengers descended enmasse in Chitanga's area and the mission. This was natural because the chief's son was abducted and his wife beaten and left for dead. The air force, in the form of helicopters and Dakotas, accompanied the ground forces hovering all over in the air. The local community dispersed in all directions and hid wherever it was possible. The unlucky ones were subjected to all forms of physical abuse. '*Chimbwidos*' and *mujibhas* who were captured for questioning, when they stared at death, they spilled all the beans of guerrilla activities. There was no way they could return home. They were made to join the ranks of the security forces.⁷ The information was very clear that

⁶ Interview with Paramount Chief Peter C. Chitanga, Chitanga Residence, Chitanga Area, May, 1980.

⁷ R. Reid, Daly, Selous Scout Top Secret war, Galago, Alberton, 1982.

the guerrillas who harassed the chief's family were largely fed and clothed from the mission. 'The chief was being 'consumed' by his own mission'. According to the chief's account the security forces asked him if they could close down the mission or make an ambush. He was faced by a choice of his life, whether to give a go ahead for the army to close the mission or not. The chief said that the security forces could not understand why he hesitated when it appeared obvious that the mission in a way had contributed to the tragedy of his family.⁸ They expected him to hurriedly give a go-ahead decision. He was a bitter man since his eviction from his homestead and reign over his subjects and now he was more than a bitter person. He had nursed revenge against his enemies and now was the day and time 'to revenge'. The chief did not do what was expected by the security forces – The Miracle of Lundi Mission – Lest We Forget.

When the news of Fidiresi's death filtered into the Lundi Mission, residents had already concluded that the security forces were going to close the mission before they had even arrived. When the security forces moved into the mission, as far as the residents were concerned the army was coming to fulfill the obvious. The mission authorities, particularly the headmaster, frankly told them what he had told them before. The mission supported both the army and guerrillas because there was no choice. However, the guerrillas needed more material support than the security forces. The chief's son was abducted, his wife beaten and left for dead and his homestead looted. There was no way the mission could continue to function. The Miracle of Lundi Mission – Lest We Forget. After the army had left, mission residents thought it was only a question of time. The question of time turned into weeks, months and years – The Miracle – until the war came to an end, the mission was not closed.

A million-dollar question was why Paramount Chief Chitanga did not give an order for the mission to be closed considering what had happened? The chief explained his own reasons to the author and A. D. Ndebele when they visited him. Behind the human explanation there was a powerful explanation. The Hlengwe had been by-passed by various Missions, and it was after 45 years from 1890, that the Hlengwe had a Mission built for them. They had waited for schools and modern medical services for many years. The Hlengwe had lagged behind in advancement, modern civilization and development compared to other ethnic groups because no schools and clinics were built in their areas. The Chief understood this situation very clearly.

Then, the Free Methodist missionaries came in 1939. Since then the missionaries did a tremendous service with their religion, schools and health services. The foreign missionaries had done a sterling job and had sacrificed their lives for others. He pointed out that he concluded that it was high time some of the Hlengwe sacrificed to save the Mission. How long was it going to take to rebuild the Mission if it was closed?⁹ It was true and a trend that institutions closed during the war were immediately ransacked and looted.

Dumisa Mission was no longer functioning, Chikombedzi Mission and Hospital were closed and it was now a military camp. If Lundi Mission followed in the same way Hlengwe development would be stagnant. Lundi Mission, the pioneer Mission of the Free Methodist Church was the last hope of the Hlengwe people. Yes, the Chief felt

⁸ Interview with Paramount Chief Peter Chimamise Chitanga, Chitanga Residence, Chitanga Area, May, 1980.

⁹ Ibid.

bitter, but if he instructed the closure of the Mission the spirits of his living people, the dead and the still to be born would curse him. He had committed mistakes against his people during his reign and was against the Liberation War, but closing the Mission on these arguments was a non-starter for the Chief. Lundi Mission was greater than the wishes of the Chief, security forces and guerrillas. The Mission's service to the people was indiscriminate. The Mission though intended for the Hlengwe, in practice it did not know tribe, colour, race, creed, religion or sex. What gave these noble ideas to the Chief at this crucial point remains - The Miracle!

The veracity that Fidiresi was a sell-out remains an open debate. There were possibilities that he was a victim of revenge or hatred of his father's rule. However, the Chief's reasons to spare the Mission were a miracle. The miracle came from God. Lundi Mission was God's institution and founded by men and women of God. It is sometimes hard for people of the flesh to understand the work of God, particularly miracles. Miracles are a way in which God demonstrates his omnipotence and omnipresence.

The Chief's wife popularly known as '*VaMuchongweni*', now the late, went to join her husband at Nuanetsi Station as a refuge. The Chief's homestead was ravaged to the ground, only walls remained. His cattle, goats and sheep disappeared in the local community. Fidiresi's grave was never located even after independence. The Chief appealed to the community to be shown the grave so that he could give the remains of his son a decent burial, but nothing happened.

After independence in April 1980, Chief Chitanga returned home. His old magnificent residence was no more. It had been ransacked and looted, only walls remained. He built himself four traditional huts, about half a kilometre from his old home. The Chief's new life style personified the saying 'from riches to rags'. However, he was prepared to accept the situation and soldier on. His appointment by the ZANU Government as senator in the new government senate was a great morale booster for the Chief. He was able to purchase a Peugeot 404 station wagon to make him mobile.

He organized a celebration party to publicly announce to his subjects that he was back home after five years of living as a refugee in exile at Nuanetsi District Commissioner's Office. However, when he took this initiative some of his subjects including some of the Mission residents especially the headmaster and teachers chipped in with some food provisions. The Chief made an emotional speech emphasizing reconciliation, forgetting and forgiving atrocities of the Liberation War. The government had demonstrated the spirit of reconciliation by appointing the Chief, senator, a declared public opponent of the liberation war. The new government has also proved that it was fighting against a system not colour or individuals. The Chief once again appealed to the gathering for the remains of his son Fiderisi. However, by the time of his death in 1982 nobody had heeded to his appeal. It was a day of feasting and celebration, Hlengwe dancing and singing.

One Saturday night in 1982 the Mission bursar Mr. Davison Gambiza Moyo and the late Mission driver Mr. Samuel Ndlovu received an S.O.S. message that the chief had suddenly fallen sick. They picked him up by one of the Mission vehicles – VW Combi trying to rush him to Masvingo General Hospital. Unfortunately, about 20 kilometres from his home, on his way to hospital Paramount Chief Peter Chimamise Chitanga passed away inside the Mission vehicle, in the company of Mission employees. What a befitting death – his Mission, founded by Missionaries made the last attempt to keep him alive, but his hour had arrived! He was buried at a spot between his old and new

residence. The burial gathering was so massive that all the Chief's adult subjects attended. Many Hlengwe from various parts of the country and others from far and near gathered to pay their last respects to the Chief.

However, the miracle was why did Chief Chitanga, an avowed enemy of the Liberation War, who was humiliated, deprived of his family members and property by the guerrillas, resolved that the Mission was not going to be closed? The Miracle of Lundi Mission – Lest We Forget!

CHAPTER FOUR

ZANLA (ZIMBABWE AFRICAN NATIONAL LIBERATION (ARMY), FREEDOM FIGHTERS OFFICIALLY INTRODUCE THEMSELVES INTO LUNDI MISSION 1978.

The opening of the Gaza Front by Zanla forces in 1975 logically meant that one day they would arrive at Lundi Mission because of the geographical position of the Mission. (Refer to the information on the geographical position of Lundi Mission in Zimbabwe already discussed). Mr. Clarke DeMille, the headmaster of Lundi Mission in 1975, in an unpublished transcript of a tape recorded interview with Rev. Tillman Houser in July 1989 confirmed that after the independence of Mozambique they began to feel pressure.¹ The students were close mouthed, although sometimes he overheard them discussing about the guerrillas and the Liberation War. There was fear, concern, and tension among the students. The fear and tension increased when time and again Government security forces visited the Mission. He preferred not to “pump out” information from the students because he understood their awkward position, although he left his door open.

The fear and tension worsened when Lundi Mission accepted teachers and students from Mamvuradonha Mission after it was closed because of the war situation. These teachers and students gave accounts of war atrocities, the closure of their Mission, and the death of the boarding master who was beaten to death.

After the first term school vacation in 1975 a couple of students did not return, and this process continued after every vacation throughout the year. The headmaster said that through the “bush telegraph” he heard that they had gone with “the struggle”.² In his official school reports and records, the headmaster wrote, “They did not return to school for unknown reasons”.³ The headmaster advised the students to talk about the war within control. He referred to the fact that there was plenty to talk about against the government, and some were intimidated to join the guerrillas. On the whole the students were well behaved and disciplined.

In 1976 the tension increased with war rumours and activities were surrounding the Mission. The war situation worsened around Lundi Mission, but the Mission itself was not affected. In April 1976 a large group of guerrillas estimated at about 200 tramped through the Mission at night. According to the headmaster no one saw the guerrillas. Their footprints were the only evidence of their passing.⁴ The great possibility was that there were some who saw them, but nobody revealed it to the headmaster.

By the end of 1976 the headmaster, Clarke DeMille, and all the missionaries left Lundi Mission because of war activities. Mr. Andrew Ndebele took over as Acting Headmaster of Lundi Mission in 1977. The situation at the Mission was frightening, but nothing had happened within the Mission. The guerrillas had not publicly appeared, but the security forces were coming in and out. This situation carried on until the first Saturday of June 1978.

¹ T. A. Houser, Free Methodist and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

² Ibid.pg.80.

³ Ibid.pg.80.

⁴ Ibid.

Lundi Mission played net ball and soccer matches against Hippo Valley Secondary School at Lundi Mission. The playing grounds were located at Lundi Township on the Masvingo to Beitbridge highway. The matches came to an end at 5:00 p.m. and Hippo Valley went back to Chiredzi. Students, teachers and all Mission residents went to their respective dwelling places. The government 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. curfew existed in the area except within the Mission. R. Chipwanya, S. Sithole and the author, while at the Lundi Township, heard singing of War Liberation songs, and sloganeering. When they started to move into the Mission it became very clear that the singing came from the Lundi Mission dining hall. The gathering of students, boys and girls, and all Mission residents available, was at the dining hall. There were about fifteen guerrillas with the crowd and others posted at different positions surrounding the gathering. This was the first official *pungwe* (indoctrination meeting) at Lundi Mission. The singing, dancing and sloganeering proved that some of the students had gone through the experience somewhere. Comrade Collins was the leader of the guerrilla group. He took the stage to explain the purpose of the *pungwe* as follows:

1. This was the official and public introduction of their presence in the Mission. Hence, from this day until independence, the guerrillas were going to be coming in and out of the Mission as they pleased.
2. This meeting was to teach the Mission residents about the Liberation War and guerrilla warfare particularly by those who had experience.
3. The Mission residents were compelled from this time onwards to make material, financial and moral contributions to the Liberation War. It was made very clear that this meant maximum sacrifice. There were various types of punishment meted out on 'sell-outs', and the maximum penalty was death. At this point Comrade Collins dramatically changed the tone of his voice, language and contents of the speech.

The headmaster of the Mission Andrew Ndebele and the Principal of the Bible School, Rev. Naison Chauke, were paraded in front of the gathering. Comrade Collins pronounced that one of the two was a 'sell-out', and it was this reason that precipitated them to hold a *pungwe* in the Mission. This shocked the gathering. The two gentlemen denied the accusation. Comrade Collins then pointed out that the Bible School Principal was the 'sell-out' and once again it was like a bombshell to the majority of the crowd. He then narrated that the Principal of the Bible School was spreading evil information about the Liberation war and guerrillas. The Principal was informing people that he knew about guerrillas in his home area since 1975 after Mozambique guerrillas had passed through Chilonga before going on to Lundi Mission. He was telling people during his sermons and lectures that freedom fighters were well known rapists of women. They forced people to give them money, food, alcohol and clothes. They were born liars and communists who exploited people in the name of freedom.

The Secondary School headmaster was instructed to sit down. Comrade Collins directed all his energy and questions to the Bible School Principal, Rev. Naison Chauke. Fingers were pointed, he was spat at in the face, shoved, pushed and slapped on the face. Most of the people were gripped by fear as to what was going to happen next since the Comrade held his A.K. rifle in the other hand.

The headmaster gathered enough courage to try to persuade the Comrade to stop humiliating the Reverend in front of students. The headmaster and the author pleaded with the guerrillas to dismiss the gathering, and take the Reverend aside to interrogate him concerning the accusations. The Comrades argued that public humiliation was one of their methods to teach ‘sell-outs’ and others the consequences of being traitors. All along the Reverend vehemently denied the accusations. The headmaster argued that being the case, the Reverend was still being investigated. The punitive procedures they referred to could only be carried out on a convicted person. Reason at the end prevailed; the guerrillas dismissed the gathering to remain with the Reverend, the headmaster and the author.

The *pungwe* continued from 6:30 p.m. to 1:15 a.m. The headmaster was to remain because of his position. The author was the only bachelor among the senior teachers so it was easy to deal with him instead of family members to avoid many tell tale. The author was also a child of the local community. The Reverend was a highly respected man in the Mission community as he conducted most of the church services. He also presided over most of the Mission religious services. Students were compelled to attend church services on Sundays; hence they highly respected the Reverend. On this particular day he was humiliated.

The guerrilla commander ordered the headmaster to drive the school Volkswagen Combi to their base on the boundary between Mukachana Communal area and the White commercial ranching farms. The commander, the Reverend, the headmaster, five guerrillas, and the author boarded the Combi. The other guerrillas had to find their way to the base. The Reverend had to accompany them because they wanted to ‘discuss’ with him. The headmaster and the author protested that driving the Combi in a rugged path at a slow pace with its lights on at 1:30 a.m. in the night, was a security risk. Earlier on at the *pungwe* the headmaster had advised them that the singing and sloganeering were clearly heard by the security forces that were camped at the Lundi River Bridge, a kilometre away from the school-dining hall. In fact, since 1975 when the war intensified, a security forces’ camp was established on the Lundi River to protect the bridge. The bridge is the largest on the highway between Masvingo and Beitbridge, the major economic artery of Zimbabwe. The author and his colleagues had heard the singing and sloganeering from the township just close to the army camp by the bridge. There was no doubt that the army clearly heard the singing and sloganeering. Driving a Combi at that particular time of the night was exposing themselves to an ambush. The commander became adamant, and his argument was that an ambush would be part of the nature of the war.

The commander became stony and adamant. The headmaster was at the steering wheel and the author sat on the front passenger seat because he knew the poor roads. The six guerrillas plus the Reverend sat on the back seats. The Combi slowly negotiated its way towards the base. A kilometre before the base, there was an hour-long lecture directed to the Reverend, and he was strongly given a final warning. The headmaster and the author were strongly instructed to advise the Reverend. The Reverend, though he continued to deny the accusations, accepted that he must be cautious with his speech. By the time the headmaster, the Reverend and the author arrived back at the Mission, the journey was about twelve kilometres, it was about 4:00 a.m. on Sunday.

THE MIRACLE:

1. The army base at Lundi Bridge was a kilometre away, and the army had clearly heard all the singing and sloganeering. They confirmed this on Sunday when they moved into the Mission. They could have attacked the *pungwe*. The familiar army communiqué could have read “students and civilians caught in cross-fire, mingling with terrorists”, or as “collabourators”. For an unknown reason this did not happen. This remains a Miracle.
2. The army mentioned that they heard the sound of the Combi at an odd time at night, and they had seen the lights. The curfew was violated. They could have easily ambushed the car. This remains a Miracle. If the army had decided to take action on one of the measures, the Mission could have been closed. This had happened in many Mission schools and business centres throughout the country. Even if the army had not closed the Mission, students and dwellers of the Mission would have voluntarily left the Mission if people were shot, killed, or injured. This would have naturally led to the closure of the Mission. The miracle was that this did not happen.
3. The guerrillas could have killed the Principal of the Bible School or abducted him. This could have led to the closure of the Mission, or out of fear, some residents would have left the Mission before the army had officially closed it down. The miracle is that this did not happen.
In an event of an encounter between the guerrillas and security forces, the freedom fighters could also have shut down the Mission. This did not happen—the miracle. This had happened at many Missions throughout the country. Lundi Mission had accepted teachers and students from Mamvuradonha where a similar incident had happened.
4. After the *pungwe* the security forces moved into the Mission the next day to investigate. The headmaster did not beat around the bush. He gave the security forces the correct facts. He had also made it very clear to the guerrillas that if the security forces came he was going to tell the truth. He told both the security forces and guerrillas that it would be folly and unreasonable to lie. Both combating parties could have decided to close the Mission when the headmaster took this stance. The miracle—the Mission was not closed.
After their investigations the security forces left without much ado. The same day on Sunday evening the guerrillas returned to check what had expired since their *pungwe*. The headmaster was very clear about the visit by the security forces. The security forces were also knowledgeable about the *pungwe*. The headmaster explained to the guerrillas the dangers faced by the Mission residents—particularly the students. He asked them a direct question, whether to close the school or continue. He asked the security forces the same question. Both the security forces and guerrillas refused to close the school or allow the headmaster to do so.

After the *pungwe* everybody in the Mission was apprehensive concerning the future of the Mission. On Monday the headmaster had the hard task of calming the students following the events of the past Saturday. He held a staff meeting where he also gave an

account of what happened after the *pungwe* had been dismissed. The headmaster underlined that the new development called for maximum support, unity and cooperation if the Mission, and the residents of the Mission were to survive, and more importantly, if the lives of students were to be secure. A new era had begun in the history of Lundi Mission. He reminded everyone that the guerrilla commander had categorically mentioned that the Mission was to make financial, moral and material contributions to the Liberation War, and at the same time, be prepared to pay the maximum price—death.

The first *pungwe* in the Mission had all the ingredients that could have led to the closure of the Mission, but this did not happen. The Miracle of Lundi Mission – Lest We Forget.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ABDUCTION AND DISAPPEARANCE OF THE REVEREND NAISON CHAUKE - 1978

Rev. Naison Chauke was a pioneer student of the advanced training for pastors at Lundi Bible School in 1966. The Mission minutes of the Free Methodist missionaries of November 13, 1970, stated that, Rev. Naison Chauke was appointed Acting Principal of Lundi Bible School.¹ It was at the end of 1976 that he took over from Rev. Philip Capp as substantive principal when the missionaries left Rhodesia because of the Liberation War. The Rev. Naison Chauke was a very highly respected and good preacher.

After the first *pungwe* in the Mission, at which the Reverend was verbally and physically abused by the guerrillas, there was general belief that all was over with. The following weekend of the *pungwe* the Reverend and his students went to Chiredzi for a Christian revival meeting. They returned to the Mission on Sunday and everything was normal. The guerrillas had been coming to the Mission to collect provisions at night, and the security forces regularly visited the Mission during the day. The headmaster and colleagues informed both sides the truth about their movements in and out of the Mission. They always pleaded with both sides, that once they believed that the Mission was no longer serving any purpose, they must close without any incident. The week which started on that Monday, after the weekend revival meeting, there was nothing spectacular until Friday.

On Friday at about 4 p.m. Comrade Collins with three guerrilla companions came to Reverend Naison Chauke's residence at the Mission. They took him away in view of his wife and some of the children. They gun-marched him through the Mission, in the view of some of the students, towards the direction of their base at the confluence of the Lundi and Makwe (Runde and Mawi) Rivers. Rumour had it that when he was taken away from his family his last words were in Shangani, "*Mamani vaOtilia musala muhlayisa vana*". Literally translated into English, "Otilia's mother, remain to take care of the children". He must have read the situation well when the guerrillas arrived. Nothing was officially reported between Friday and Monday. Rumour started to circulate that the Reverend would not return. Some of the students who saw him being gun-marched concluded that he would not return, particularly when they related this incident to what had happened at the first '*pungwe*' two weeks before. Friday, Saturday, and then he was not at the Sunday service. This was not a good sign.

On Monday night a combined team of the army, police and criminal investigation department from their base at Ngundu arrived at the Mission at about 9.30 a.m. They instructed the headmaster, the deputy headmaster, and all the teachers and office workers to queue in front of the school administrative office. The white officer, who was the leader of the combined group, was in a bad mood. The students who were attending lessons became restless and apprehensive. The leader started by verbally assaulting the headmaster and his staff over the abduction of the Rev. Naison Chauke. For about twenty minutes, uninterrupted, he harangued and threatened the staff members with long

¹ Free Methodist Church Mission Minutes of November 13, 1970.

terms of jail sentences because of their failure to report the abduction of the Reverend, and collabourating with terrorists. When he had exhausted his anger, he asked each member of the staff his whereabouts from Friday 1:00 p.m. to Sunday 6:00 p.m. It was obvious that he started with the headmaster.

The headmaster left the Mission for his family commitments on Friday noon until Sunday. The deputy headmaster had left at the same time on Friday for Masvingo, also for family business. The senior teachers, R. Chipwanyanya, S. Sithole and the author had left at 1:00 p.m. for Ngundu Center, returning at 6:00 p.m. to beat the curfew. Then the next Saturday morning at 7:00 a.m. they left with students for Chiredzi to have a return net ball and soccer matches with Hippo Valley. The others returned to the Mission on Saturday evening the same day. S. Sithole and the author remained in Chiredzi to visit his young brother who worked at the General Hospital, only to return on Sunday.

At the end it was true that all the staff members were not available and did not see the Reverend when he was gun-marched. The security leader had no evidence to refute what the staff members said. On the other hand, in his cool manner and soft voice, the headmaster reminded the security leader of the relationship, which had existed between the Mission authorities, security forces and guerrillas. It appeared as if this group of security forces was abandoning the genesis of the agreement. The leader of the security forces was a new man in the area, and unfortunately his colleagues had not briefed him about their agreement and relationship with the Mission. However, the last words of the security man were, that he was continuing with his investigations and would return. The headmaster, echoed by his deputy, asked a simple question, whether to continue with the school or not, since there was high tension and the atmosphere was not conducive to learning. His answer was very simple, "Continue with the school until further notice!". Yes, that was easily said, but cooling down tension among the students was a hard task. The security forces left. The Miracle was that, they could have closed down the school, but they did not. The Reverend, who was the Principal of the Bible School, had been abducted in broad daylight, and it was now four days without any sign of his return. It was true that the authorities had not reported anything, but it was also true that the authorities were not sure as to the circumstances surrounding his abduction. The security forces, who camped at the bridge and visited the Mission daily, must have gathered the story earlier, and could have made an immediate follow up instead of waiting for four days to come and harass the staff members.

It was reliably learned that when they finished with the Mission staff they had another meeting with the Bible School staff and students. This was a small group under the deputy principal Mr. K. Nare. Once again the story was the same that none could give the security forces much positive information apart from the principal's wife, who was also a teacher at the Bible School. The security forces passed on without closing the Bible School, although circumstantial evidence showed a great possibility that some of the principal's students might have knowingly provided information to the guerrillas, which incriminated the principal.

On Monday evening Comrade Collins and three colleagues called at the headmaster's residence, who in turn invited the author. This was logical following the discussion after the first *pungwe*. The headmaster and the author, together with the Principal, had Driven the guerrillas to their base at night. Comrade Collins recapped what was discussed on that particular night and his last warning to the Reverend. He pointed out that the

Reverend had not taken heed of his warning and advice. The story was that when the Reverend and his students went to Chiredzi for the “Christian Revival”, the Reverend used this opportunity to report to the security forces at Chiredzi and the headquarters at Buffalo Range about guerrilla activities at Lundi Mission and its vicinity. He had gone further to speak ill and preach against the Liberation War and guerrillas. The Comrade concluded that they had taken the principal for re-education and insisted that he was safe, but the guerrillas needed to consult with their superiors before a decision was made over his fate.

The headmaster reminded the guerrillas that guerrilla activities in the Mission and surroundings were not a secret. It would not make sense for the Principal to report at Chiredzi since the security forces, who were neighbours at the Lundi Bridge and those camped at Ngundu and Rutenga knew about the situation. The District Assistants at Neshuro also knew. He reminded the freedom fighters, that at the first *pungwe* meeting it was agreed that for the Mission to survive, truth was going to be told to both the guerrillas and security forces. If this was the reason why the Reverend was forcibly taken, it made no sense, and the guerrillas were abandoning the agreement.

Comrade Collins avoided this line of argument. He instead insisted on the issue of the Reverend speaking ill against the Liberation War. Neither the headmaster nor the author could vouch for the Reverend on that matter. However, we pleaded with the guerrillas to make thorough investigations before they came to a conclusion, since there was a great possibility of bad blood between the Principal and whoever provided the guerrillas with the facts. Once again, the headmaster asked a simple question, whether to continue with the school or not. Interestingly Comrade Collin’s answer was similar to the one given by the security forces in the morning to “continue learning until further notice”. In fact, when the guerrillas arrived at night, they already had the information that security forces were around. The headmaster later informed the author that when the guerrillas knocked at his door, the first thing he thought was that they had come to announce that the school and Mission were closed. The author echoed the same feelings when he saw Comrade Collins. The Miracle is that both the security forces and guerrillas could have closed the school, but they did not. *Lest We Forget*.

The days following the visit by both security forces and guerrillas over the issue of Rev. Naison Chauke were full of tension, uncertainty and apprehension. The Mission survived to the end of the week. Days passed, weeks, months and years, yet the Mission was not closed even for a single day. The fate of Rev. Naison Chauke remained a mystery even after independence in 1980. Rumours were circulated and spread, but it is logical to conclude that, in one way or another, he is dead. The guerrillas had something to do with his death because of the evidence of his relationship with them, which was sour.

The question remains as to who gave the guerrillas damning facts about the Reverend. Was this information true? This is an academic debate. The truth is within these arguments. When the war started to heat up in 1975 in the areas around Lundi Mission the security forces moved around physically harassing young men and girls who were potential guerrillas, *chimbwidos* or *mujibhas*. This triggered an exodus of youth into Mozambique to join the ranks of freedom fighters. By 1978 the population of would-be guerrillas had swelled in Mozambique, and some were becoming refugees. The Liberation Movement was now discouraging people moving into Mozambique because

provisions, such as food and clothes, were failing to cope with numbers so, youth within the country had to find various means to be safe from the security forces. Rev. Tillman Houser, who remained in Rhodesia, but residing in Salisbury (Harare), was appointed to oversee the properties of the Free Methodist Church on behalf of the General Missionary Board in the United States. He had this to say on this issue:

“One day in 1979, I received a telephone call at our home. A man introduced himself as an agent from Criminal Investigation Department (CID). I immediately wondered why he wished to see me, an alien. Courteously he requested an interview in our home the next day. The first question he asked me was, “How can we get in touch with the guerrillas? We must stop the war.” The question shocked me. If any one knew the location of the guerrillas, it was treason and a very serious offense not to inform the government security forces. Now here was a member of the CID asking me to reveal their movements. I replied, “I have never seen one.” He went on to ask again, “What must we do to communicate with them?” I then related to him that the government security forces had alienated the African population by their cruel treatment of non-combatants in the rural areas. White soldiers were very insensitive to courtesies in African culture. They stormed into African homes demanding the whereabouts of guerrillas in the area. Beatings sometimes took the lives of innocent people, some of them my friends. He listened very carefully for at least an hour. After that he said he had interviewed about thirty other missionaries asking the same question. They all affirmed what I was saying.”²

Lundi Mission was the headquarters of the Free Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, and was one of the properties overseen by Rev. Tillman Houser during the Liberation War.

Some harassed youth who could not join the Liberation War joined the government security forces, or went to live in urban areas with relatives if they had any, where the situation was relatively peaceful. There were some that did not have any of those options. When the war started both security forces and guerrillas had respected the Mission and, particularly, the United States of America. Time and again there were conflicts between the white missionaries and government forces because missionaries protected Africans. Between 1975 and 1976 the Lundi Mission superintendent, Rev. Philip Capp, had many unpleasant encounters with government security forces over the issue of protecting Africans. Hence, the Mission had become a relatively safe place to stay. When matters became hot, Rev. Philip Capp did not hesitate to remind the security forces that the white missionaries were citizens of the United States, a world power.³

Youths who had completed school could come in as Lundi Bible School students. A good number of youths surrounding the Mission registered as Bible students between 1975–1978. Then they could live within the Mission where war atrocities by security forces were prevented. It was possible that some of the youth joined the Bible School for safety or out of frustration rather than answering God’s calling. There was concrete

² Tillman Houser, *Free Methodist and Other Missions in Zimbabwe*, Priority Projects, Harare, Zimbabwe.

³ Interview with Mr. Daniel Gwalale Chauke, Lundi Mission, February, 1978. He and a group of three church elders were detained for 5 days at the army camp at Lundi Rhino, 1976. Rev. Capp managed to get them released after an exchange of hard words with the camp commander.

evidence after the white missionaries left in 1976 that the Mission became open to guerrillas and security forces. Some of the Bible School students voluntarily abandoned their Bible studies to join the security forces, or to become full-time guerrillas, *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas*. This mostly happened when Rev. Naison Chauke was the Principal of the Bible School. Yes, there were some that were called and remained to follow the calling. Others were tempted and succumbed to the temptation. It was a known fact that in 1978 there were Bible School students, mostly girls, who were part-time students and part-time *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas*. Others became full-time government soldiers, ZANLA guerrillas, *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas*. These were former students of Rev. Naison Chauke. They were in a position to compare and contrast his teachings with the teachings at the *pungwes*.

All those who knew Rev. Naison Chauke would not hesitate to confirm that he was a pious Christian. He was a devoted and dedicated Christian and preacher. He was a believer in high morality and good discipline. On the other hand before 1985, ZANU PF and ZANLA had adopted the Marxist–Leninist Doctrine of socialism and communism. One characteristic of the doctrine was that it was anti-Christian. Marx and Lenin believed that Christianity was an instrument of imperialism, colonialism and exploitation. Lenin had referred to Christianity as “the opium of the people”. Hence, this doctrine was taught at the *pungwes* that some of the Bible School students attended. Then they contrasted the teachings of the guerrillas and their principal. There was no doubt that the Reverend criticized socialism and communism as systems because they were against Christianity. There was no doubt that the Reverend attacked systems rather than individuals. The possibility was that some of the Bible students unintentionally misrepresented the Principal’s teachings and beliefs to the guerrillas, hence he became a “sell-out”. There was a possibility that intentionally some former Bible School students, because of previous differences with the Principal, used the guerrillas to settle old scores.

It was a well-known fact that the Reverend in his sermons and services heavily castigated immorality and lack of discipline, targeting foremost Bible School students, teachers, clinic staff and students. Though he never picked out individuals, definitely there were those who felt they were publicly vilified, to the probability of slandering him to the Comrades. They wanted to settle their score with him. The Reverend was a senior church member who presided or sat on various disciplinary committees. He was a strong believer in church discipline, so that in the course of trying some of the cases he had incurred the wrath of some people. Then came the war, and through the Comrades they had an opportunity for revenge. Whatever the case might have been, Rev. Naison Chauke was a victim of the Liberation War in 1978. His death was a recipe for the Mission to be closed by either the guerrillas or the government security forces. This did not happen. The Miracle of Lundi Mission’s survival. Lest We Forget!

After independence in 1980, his nephew, Rev. L. Klemo, and family relatives made an attempt to discover his fate, place of death, or his grave without success.

CHAPTER SIX

THE GUERRILLA SUPPLY ORDER LIST 1978

On Saturday, the week after the abduction of Rev. Naison Chauke at about 8:00 a.m., two *mujibhas* called at the headmaster's residence with a note from the guerrillas demanding to see him and the author immediately. One Commander Goromyko signed the letter. The meeting place was a post on the banks of Makwi River near the confluence with its tributary Chivulubwe. This was on the boundary between the communal area and commercial ranching farms. The headmaster and the author knew the *mujibhas* very well, but were hesitant because we were not sure if these were genuine guerrillas. It was no longer Comrade Collins with whom we had been dealing with the past three weeks. There were stories of Selous Scouts (special security forces) who pretended to be guerrillas in order to lure their victims. The *mujibhas* assured the headmaster and the author that these were true guerrillas on their route from Mberengwa back to Mozambique for briefing, replenishing of military supplies and resources. The *mujibhas* also emphasised that this was a command, not a request, for the headmaster and author to go to see them.

The headmaster was chosen because of his position and authority as the head of the largest of the three pillars of the institutions at Lundi Mission, which comprised the Lundi Secondary School, the Lundi Clinic and the Lundi Bible School. The author was the only senior teacher who was a bachelor and a son of the local community. There were certain times when guerrillas wanted to hide their activities or presence from many people. In a normal family situation wives and children are always aware of the movements or activities of the head of the family. It was an eight-kilometre journey from the Mission to the guerrilla post. In broad daylight the headmaster, the author and two *mujibhas* moved through the communal villages, although they tried to avoid being noticed. But time and again we accidentally met villagers. Every meeting with villagers aroused curiosity.

The greatest and most worrying incident was when the group came across the author's mother fetching water in Chivilugwe stream. She was shocked, and very well known by the *mujibhas*. Being accompanied by the headmaster and me simply meant one thing, a meeting with the guerrillas. When the author made an attempt to greet his mother, the only words she uttered were "*Kukahle*"? In Shangani meaning, "Is it well?" She was assured that everything was well, although it appeared she was not convinced. The abduction of Rev. Naison Chauke was still fresh in the minds of many local people who had seen or heard about it. At about 10:30 a.m. the group arrived at the guerrilla post. This was not a base, but a post because it was temporary.

We were introduced to the group commander by the name of Comrade Goromyko, a reserved gentleman, who calculated his words before speaking. He confirmed that he was the signatory of the note. Since the first *pungwe*, guerrillas had been coming in the Mission to collect provisions such as food and clothes. He mentioned that he knew Comrade Collins, who was his junior. He mentioned that his specific role was the welfare of the guerrillas operating in a given war section according to ZANLA divisions, and the Lundi Mission area was in his zone. He explained that from then onwards all

Mission working staff were going to receive formal order lists, but through the headmaster or deputy headmaster, or anybody senior if the two were not available. He quickly pointed out that it was possible to receive informal or individual supply order lists, but these had to be cautiously treated. The Mission delegation queried the authenticity of order lists. In other words the means and methods of verifying if order lists were genuinely from guerrillas, or fakes from pseudo-guerrillas, or greedy people were very hard. On this question he confessed that he did not have a specific answer, but the recipients had to use their own discretion.

The commander instructed one of his two subordinates who attended the discussion to hand the order list to the headmaster. We were given ten minutes to read through the list. In simple words this was a very long and heavy list. The list included items, such as, pairs of boots, denim trousers, khaki or denim shirts, denim jackets, heavy duty socks, packets of sweets, biscuits, pain killing medicine, Dettol, bandages, methylated spirits, liquor, spirits and brandy. The headmaster made a rough calculation of the cost of the goods on the list. The author vividly remembers that it was about ten thousand dollars. Mind you this was in 1978—this was a lot of money when the dollar was very powerful. Salaries and wages were still in tens and hundred units. This was in spite of the fact that a very small number in the Mission was gainfully employed. It was a shock.

The commander and his colleagues returned to state facts before we could give our opinions. His facts were:

1. The order list could not be changed or altered by anybody except himself. He had spent his valuable time making calculations on the needs and quantities of food for his group.
2. This was on a Saturday, but these goods were wanted by the latest on Tuesday.
3. The reason he wanted this long list, and within a short time, was that his group was en route to Mozambique. They were looking forward to a journey of about 500 kilometres marked with uncertainties. A month could be spent before crossing the border into Mozambique. Between Lundi Mission and the Mozambique border, the land was occupied by white commercial ranching farms. In the few communal areas which existed, people had been put into so-called protected villages. Their chances of replenishing before the border were almost zero. Lundi Mission was their last meaningful source of their material needs.
4. The order list was the contribution and sacrifice residents of Lundi Mission had to make for the Liberation War. People had to play different roles in the war. He was quick to mention that the highest role was the one played by the guerrillas who were sacrificing their lives.
5. He mentioned that the local community had been feeding the guerrillas for the past three years since 1975. Their resources had been severely depleted particularly chicken and goats since guerrillas fed only on meat, especially of chicken and goats. The local people did not have much money. Therefore the Mission dining facility was to be prepared to share its meat, bread, tea, sadza and rice with guerrillas.

After stating his five points he dismissed us to go without giving us a chance to ask questions or give opinions. The commander was aware of the heavy burden he had placed on our shoulders. He and his companions pretended to have other urgent matters and quickly moved away to avoid questions.

We remained pinned down on the spot. We debated between us as to the wise decision to go as instructed without asking questions and making opinions, or to insist on asking questions which could be dangerous. Other aspects of the four points were impossible to meet, and if we failed the blame would be squarely placed on us. The headmaster and the author decided to face the risk immediately. We were not going to go away before making our opinions lest our consciences would torment us for a long time. It was true when Charles Dickens wrote; “Conscience is a dreadful thing when it accuses man or boy.”¹ In our case, it could have been a great punishment. The guilty knowledge that we were leaving the post without seeking clarifications on issues which were going to affect, even adversely, colleagues and students. We decided to take the bull by the horns to set our consciences free. We were not going to leave before we were heard, come what may. The bottom line of the whole matter was that we had to explain the order list to our colleagues and to implement its demands.

After some fifteen minutes the commander noticed that we were still stuck at the spot he had left us. A *chimbwido* was sent to find out why we were still seated. Ours was a simple reply—we wanted the commander to clarify certain issues on the order list. The *chimbwido* went back with the message, and after ten minutes a junior was sent to discuss with us since the commander was too busy to see us. The headmaster’s reply was that he and the author were prepared to wait until eternity when the commander was free to meet us. He reminded the junior Comrade that it was for their own good since they had earlier said that they wanted to be in Mozambique as soon as possible. This was a brave undertaking by the headmaster. This could have angered the Comrades. The junior left to report to his senior. When the commander finally returned we were apprehensive, but surprisingly enough he was cool and demanded to hear our questions quickly.

The headmaster did not waste time and followed his points one by one.

1. Though the list could not be changed, goods would be unavailable and money was in short supply.
2. The time given was very short and most supplies were purchased in Fort Victoria (Masvingo) 100 kilometres away. This trip was going to be on Monday, meaning that missing work and the journey could be disturbed, prevented, or delayed by activities of security forces.
3. Their problem of failing to replenish the Comrade’s supplies between Lundi Mission and the border with Mozambique was well understood, and the Mission was prepared to do its best.
4. It was true that the order list was the means through which the Mission contributed to the armed struggle and the Liberation War. However, this did not mean that the Mission would always make their contribution in total though their spirit was willing, resources might be hard to come by.
5. Point five was pregnant with risks. Supplies for the dining hall, that is food, meat, tea and bread, were bought by the school fees paid by the students. If the students missed supper, lunch or breakfast, because supplies were given to

the guerrillas, or there was not enough because of the same reason, what explanation was the headmaster going to give? The student enrollment area of Lundi Mission had grown far and wide. There were students whose parents or guardians were security forces, soldiers, police, District assistants and staunch supporters of the government. There was no way parents or guardians would accept that fees which were intended to feed their sons and daughters be diverted to feed their enemies. Their children were going to miss meals or have small meals, because of feeding guerrillas, this was a non-starter.

This was a direct challenge to the government and an invitation to close the Mission. The headmaster and his colleagues would be placing their heads on the block. If they let such a situation proceed they would be heading for long jail terms charged with misappropriation and misuse of public funds.

All along Comrade Goromyko was listening without any interruption. When the headmaster had finished, the commander's answer was straightforward and simple. The order list and points he made were unalterable and not subject to debate. We had either to take it or leave. The consequences or results of our decision still remained personally with him.

We stood up to leave. Our consciences were set free. We had made our points. It was about 4:00 p.m. when Comrade Goromyko, on a light note, invited us for a delayed lunch. We were genuinely hungry, and accepted the lunch of sadza and meat with gusto. No reference was made to the order list and its points. The parting was a normal exercise.

The order list and what had expired at the guerrilla post was the subject of discussion and review by the headmaster and the author on their way back to the Mission. What were the chances of our survival and the survival of the Mission if we did not meet the demands of the guerrillas? How successful were we going to be to convince our colleagues, students and security forces? It was a dilemma because all options led to hell. Goromyko's character was hard to penetrate. He was capable of doing anything, or the unexpected.

However, by the time we arrived at the Mission we had made our resolution. We had the order list with us. We had resolved to show the order list to our colleagues and inform them what had been discussed with the guerrillas. We went straight to the township where obviously some of the senior colleagues were anxiously waiting for us. They were very much relieved to witness our arrival at about 6:00 p.m. still in one piece. We had resolved that we were going to do our best to fulfill the demands of the guerrillas while thinking of the security of the Mission and in particular the students. Anything that happened, history would absolve us.

The colleagues at the business center were very anxious to hear what happened because it definitely affected them, but details could be related on Monday. In the course of discussions bits and pieces of what had happened were referred to, at least it eased the anxiety and curiosity. Deep in our hearts, and at the back of our minds as the Mission envoys to Comrade Goromyko's post, there was fear that something nasty could happen. The incident of the Bible School Principal was still close to memory. Goromyko and company could make a follow up to punish us or close the Mission because we had argued and expressed reservations to help the guerrillas all the way. We were willing to

travel some distance together with the guerrillas, but not to the end of the journey.

There was tension and fear in the Mission as rumour had circulated that the headmaster and the author were seen in the company of two senior *mujibhas* marching in the direction of the guerrilla camp. Our presence in the Mission on Sunday was a great relief to the students. Come Monday morning the headmaster held a meeting with his staff members to discuss the meeting with Comrade Goromyko. The real issue was the order list and its attached conditions.

Then the next move came. It so happened that all of the teachers were men and the Mission treasurer, who had to attend this meeting because of the nature of his job, was also a man. The staff members were dumbfounded when they saw the list and total cost of the goods. The attached demands that the headmaster explained made the situation tense. The headmaster demanded open and frank debate on the whole issue. The staff members raised the same questions that were asked the commander by the headmaster at the post. He told them that no answers were received from the Comrades, and that the final instruction was to follow the order list in letter and spirit. Finally they agreed with the headmaster and the author that effort was going to be made to do what was possible without endangering the Mission and the students. Once again the headmaster called and appealed for maximum cooperation and unity among the staff members because the forces of destruction were very powerful. Frantic efforts were made to raise money and the Mission treasurer with the Driver left for Masvingo using one of the school Combis 'on school business'.

Before 6:00 p.m. the Mission bursar and Driver were back from town. Some of the articles were not available and finances were in short supply. The *mujibhas* were already hovering around in the Mission. They were advised to go and inform the guerrillas to come and collect the items.

At about 8:00 p.m. four guerrillas accompanied by *mujibhas* arrived in the Mission to collect the items. The headmaster explained to them the reasons why it was impossible to purchase all the items on the list. The response from the guerrillas was surprising. They were overwhelmed by happiness. The headmaster had expected rejection or strong reservations considering the instructions made by Comrade Goromyko. The guerrillas and *mujibhas* with broad smiles vanished with the goods into darkness of the night. The headmaster and the author were still apprehensive as to how Comrade Goromyko was going to respond considering our discussion with him on Saturday. He had insisted that the order list must be taken in toto.

However, the disappearance of the guerrillas and goods on Monday night was the last time Goromyko was heard of or seen in the area. Once again "The Miracle of Lundi Mission". The order list incident could have led to the closure of the Mission. Comrade Goromyko had knowingly sent an impossible order list. The goods, which he accepted, must have been above, or on the real mark of his order list. By the notes attached to the order list he was aware that they were open to debate. The stand taken by the headmaster and the author in not leaving before presenting our arguments against his instructions must have convinced him that we were men of honour and courage. This was the kind of courage needed in the war situation. The goods and along with the attempt to beat his deadline proved that the Mission was doing its best to contribute in the Liberation War. Lest We Forget!

After Goromyko's formal order list, until December 29, 1979, various types of order

lists from different guerrilla groups were presented to the Mission at a rate of once a week. False order lists were presented. Fortunately, in most cases, they were noticed. It was a concrete historical fact that anyone who worked at Lundi Mission between 1978 and 1980, firstly teachers, then clinic staff and others gave three quarters of their monthly salaries as contributions to order lists for the Liberation War. However, this situation applied to many workers in the rural areas and others in urban areas throughout the country. Lest We Forget!

THE LUNDI MISSION DINING HALL

Comrade Goromyko raised the issue of the dining hall. His argument was that the dining hall must serve the needs of the guerrillas since the local community was no longer able to feed the guerrillas adequately and regularly because they had done so for a long time. In particular, the villagers could no longer supply meat, bread, sugar and rice. The war had also disturbed the normal way of living for the villagers. The headmaster had found this hard to accept since supplies to the dining hall were bought by money from school fees paid by the parents. Parents and guardians of students were an assortment of government security forces, police, District assistants, supporters and sympathizers. It would be hard, and even impossible, for the headmaster to explain that students were missing or having few meals because some food was used to feed guerrillas. This was inviting trouble from parents, guardians, students and government authorities. The Comrades had insisted that this was to happen. The headmaster had also insisted that he could only do what was possible. The issue was left unsettled.

Comrade Goromyko and his group had collected their order list on a Monday and disappeared. On Saturday the same week an order list signed by one Comrade Tendai Zuva was delivered to the headmaster instructing that two *mujibhas* and six *chimbwidos* would come to the dining hall at supper to collect cooked sadza (corn meal porridge), meat and bread. This was the first follow up of Comrade Goromyko's order list and notes. What the headmaster had feared was now a reality. The headmaster consulted his Deputy A. D. Chauke, the author, and the senior cook S.B. Chauke. The senior cook knew Comrade Tendai Zuva as he held office in the community committee which liaised with the Comrades. It was resolved that before the headmaster could give "a go ahead" there was a need to meet Comrade Zuva in person. The *mujibhas* went back to inform the Comrade who quickly arrived proving that he was not very far away from the Mission. The headmaster explained to him the intricacies and dangers of supplying food from the dining hall. He gave the same reasons he had given to Comrade Goromyko.

The Comrade's argument was that these were sacrifices of the Liberation War. From that particular day until the war came to an end they would be collecting supplies and cooked food from the dining hall. Tendai Zuva, who was the political commissar for ZANLA in the zone, in voice and language, displayed that he was not prepared to accept anything except that which he wanted. His last words were that his *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* were coming at supper to collect his needs. This was to be a regular contribution of the Mission until war came to an end. He was the first Comrade to indicate that if the Mission was not serving the interests of the Liberation War in this need, he was prepared to close the Mission, particularly the School.

The headmaster and his team were faced by a dilemma that to refuse to supply the guerrillas from the dining hall the Mission would be closed. The other choice was to

supply the guerrillas with provisions from the dining hall and face the wrath of the government. In fact, before Comrade Zuva had left, they made it very clear that if food were to be supplied from the dining hall, it would be known that this was not a secret. There were many stakeholders in the dining hall provisions. Comrade Zuva had agreed to this point. The group resolved that since Comrade Zuva had accepted this point, it was worth making an attempt to help, but there was a need to diplomatically explain to the other stakeholders. The teachers, dining hall workers and students were informed that any war brought about uncomfortable life styles, and ours was not different. It was clearly stated that dining hall provisions would be shared involuntarily, which might lead to shortages or missing certain meals. The headmaster and his deputy made it very clear to the students that it was no secret whenever they missed meals, or were not satisfied; they had the right to inform their parents or guardians. They were to be aware of possible consequences.

The leadership in consultation with the mission bursar agreed that some funds from mission donors which were used to buy certain niceties, could be channeled into funds used for the war to offset the balance. Fortunately there were good Samaritans, particularly foreign missionaries. This made it possible for the bursar to balance his financial books without any deficit.

Whenever students missed their meals, or did not have enough, they were compensated in some other way without demanding anything else from the students. From then onwards the mission dining hall became a major source of food provisions until December 1979 when the war came to an end. There were incidents when students complained about missing meals, little or poor quality of food, because of sharing with guerrillas. The situation remained controlled and nothing explosive happened because the students had been informed and they knew where some of their provisions went. The authorities compensated them every time when a mishap happened. Some naughty guerrillas sometimes came to share food with students in the dining hall. Therefore the dining hall affair from the beginning, and throughout the war, was a very explosive situation. This was a time bomb that could have caused the mission to close.

There were many stakeholders in the issue and the matter of food by its nature is a sensitive issue. The history of student riots and strikes even in peaceful times were, and are largely caused by food. However, students at Lundi Mission between 1978 – 80 must be saluted because of how they handled the dining hall crisis. They were tolerant and understanding when their normal meals were disrupted.

The security forces camping at Lundi Bridge who regularly came into the Mission, became aware of what was happening. They sometimes asked for a bite from the dining hall. Security forces at Mwenezi Office, Rutenga, Ngundu, Masvingo, Triangle and Chiredzi were aware, since some of the students came from these places. It was impossible that all of them could become close-mouthed on the issue of food. The parents and guardians of these students must be saluted for their tolerance, when their children were deprived of regular meals after paying for it. If one, or some of the parents or guardians had acted in an emotional manner, this could have sparked a scene, and the mission closed. It was a Miracle that the dining hall could be used to serve the needs of both students and guerrillas until the war came to an end. There were many factors conducive for its closure rather than for its survival. Lest We Forget!

The kitchen staff, which consisted of S.B. Chauke who was the head cook, his deputy,

Eliphas Muhlekwanzi Sithole, the late Kenneth Madhlome, the late Chekani Manguku, and Amos Chibaya, must be saluted. The boarding master, Cephas Chuma, and his deputy, Stephen Ndalega, must also be saluted. The above men who were directly associated with the school dining hall had sleepless nights, and juggled with food provisions to feed students and guerrillas.² They managed to control the potential explosive “dining hall situation” and food shortages that could have sparked an incident leading to the closure of the mission. The Miracle is that nothing happened until the war came to an end in 1980. Lest We Forget!

² Interviews with Samson B. Chauke, Lundi Mission, 1980 – 2001.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ARREST OF LUNDI SECONDARY SCHOOL TOP BRASS – 1978

After the closure of Lundi Business Center, the nearest shopping center to Lundi Mission was Ngundu Halt. Ngundu Halt is 80 kilometres from Masvingo on the highway to Beitbridge. It is at the junction of the Masvingo–Beitbridge highway and Chiredzi highway. The security forces' base, including the police, criminal investigation department and District assistant offices were located adjacent to the shopping center. Lundi Mission purchased some of its daily necessities or urgent items from Ngundu. Workers from the mission called at Ngundu on a daily basis. The headmaster, deputy head, teachers and other workers from the mission were familiar faces at the centre. The teachers frequently had social contact with the security forces. There was a mutual understanding. The security forces were aware that the mission residents were friendly to them, as they were friendly to the guerrillas. There was established evidence that teachers collaborated with guerrillas voluntarily or involuntarily. The guerrillas were aware that teachers socialized with security forces. Thus this situation was mutually understood. The teachers in particular took it for granted.

On a Thursday morning a combined security operation of soldiers, police, C.I.D.'s (Criminal Investigation Department) and District assistants from Ngundu descended on the mission in an uncompromising mood. They took with them the headmaster, A. Ndebele, the deputy headmaster A. D. Chauke, and the senior teacher, the late J. Harinengoni. Some of the familiar faces of security forces were present, but very unfriendly. The teachers were taken by surprise. At times some of the junior security men passed unfriendly or vulgar comments against the teachers. Such comments were regarded as over-excitement, drunkenness or bad times after encounters with guerrillas.

Nothing of this nature was expected. The security forces gun-forced the three teachers into a van en route to Ngundu for investigations. This was done in the view of most students, teachers and general workers. The word of the arrest was relayed to the clinic and Bible school. This was a bombshell as far as the functioning of the school was concerned. Lessons immediately ceased, students and teachers naturally moved out of their rooms. There was excitement and pandemonium.

The arrest of the school top brass meant one thing, closure of the school by the security forces. The senior teacher, S. Mutambara, R. Chipwanya, assisted by myself, and other teachers managed to cool the excitement down. The only alternative was to assure the students to wait and see. If the school was going to be closed, we were going to be officially informed. The students cooled down, but it was hard to create conditions conducive for learning. There was hope that the three were going to be returned the same day, but nothing happened. On Friday morning the senior teachers made all efforts to make the day like any other normal day, filling in gaps left open by the arrested gentlemen. Things were cool, but gaps were clearly felt. The whole Friday and Saturday did not bring back the three gentlemen. The delay confirmed only one thing; the security forces were going to close the school. The other teachers were going to follow their colleagues.

The same day the school authorities were arrested, the prominent businessman at

Ngundu, the late Mr. Mandebvu, was also picked up. The businessman, day and night, had assisted the security forces in times of need. It was true that he had also assisted guerrillas, voluntarily or involuntarily. Now his neighbours, the security forces, had picked him up for interrogation. This simultaneous event created a bad picture. The security forces had decided on a final crackdown on all those who collabourated with guerrillas whether voluntarily or involuntarily. This was like darkness at sunset at Lundi Mission. It seemed that it was only a question of time before the security forces closed the mission. On Friday the senior teachers had sent a message to Rev. Tillman Houser in Chiredzi informing him about the arrest of the school authorities. Whatever happened, there was no direct feedback from him to the senior teachers. This was one of the darkest moments in the history for the future of the mission.

It was on Sunday afternoon that the three gentlemen were released to find their way back to the mission. They were behind bars for four days. They went through hard times, being accused of collabourating with the guerrillas. Yet for more than two years it was known as a public secret that the teachers mainly, and other mission residents, supported guerrillas voluntarily or involuntarily. The headmaster and deputy headmaster had on several times discussed and consulted with the security forces. This right about turn by the security forces was surprising. The arrested gentlemen did not tell much of what happened except to say that they were accused of being collabourators between the Mission and the guerrillas. Their attitude was one of “the less said, the better”.¹

On the evening the school authorities were arrested, the guerrillas visited the Mission to get first-hand information. Their mission was mainly to find ‘sell-outs’. However, the arrest had come as a bombshell, although it was known that guerrillas appeared to be anxious about the future of the mission. They greatly benefited from the mission for food and other material items. Until the release of the three gentlemen, the guerrillas had kept close track of events. They strongly believed that there was a “sell-out”. If there was one, the truth was that he or she could have only added to what was known before.

On a lighter note, rumour had it that the businessman, Mr. Mandebvu, was father-in-law to the headmaster. The old man had a long list of daughters and sisters. Some of the young men in the security forces had their proposals turned down or were jilted by the ladies, hence they decided to bring revenge on the senior gentleman and his son-in-law. However, they used the security situation to carry out their revenge, and also included other innocent people. The reality was that the businessman sometimes cooperated with the mission to feed and clothe the guerrillas.

The release of the mission top brass was highly welcomed by the mission residents. Monday resumed like any other normal day with the authorities assuming their roles and appropriate positions. However, students and other mission residents were very curious to know what had happened at Ngundu. The public statement issued by the headmaster was that the security forces interrogated them on guerrilla activities in the mission. Then they had informed them what they had told them before, and what every person knew. The war was frustrating the security forces, causing them to take any measures. The bottom-line was that they had said nothing committing themselves to the future of the school. The mission and the school had to function as usual until further notice.

Therefore the arrest of the headmaster, deputy headmaster and senior teacher was believed to be a step closer to the closing down of the Mission and Secondary School.

¹ Interview with A. D. Ndebele, headmaster, Lundi Secondary School, 1979.

The Miracle of Lundi Mission – it was not closed. Lest We Forget! The guerrillas were also persuaded by the mission authorities to cease looking for ‘sell-outs’. The whole saga of the mission supporting guerrillas was a clear and punitive action on ‘sell-outs’. Whether true or not, it would complicate the situation. The guerrillas took heed of the advice. Things were back to normal at the mission though apprehension and uncertainty about the future remained.

The areas around the mission and in many parts of the country witnessed intensified military activities. The sound of machine guns, A.K. rifles, N. F. rifles, grenades, NATO guns, helicopters and Dakotas were daily events. Reports of casualties, death and injuries as results of crossfire and direct conflict came out of the radio, newspapers, security forces communiqués, survivors, government officials and *povo*. Land mines and attacks on convoys claimed many victims. The war was raging in all directions, but the mission station remained an island of non-confrontation or direct combat. As the days passed, the focus began to be that if the school was going to be officially closed, it could close well at the second term vacation in August. There was also the issue of mid-year examinations that are very important for public-examination students, because they are used as a gauge to forecast the final public examination results. All these events were hidden in the dark future.

Form two and four students were very anxious about mid-year examinations. Mid-year examination performances are used as references for job and further education vacancy applications. The last two weeks of July 1979 were used for mid-year examinations. The examinations were conducted smoothly. The war sounds were heard daily all over and around, but never heard emanating within the mission. It was a Miracle that examinations went through without any disturbances and against all odds.

The closing day finally became a reality. The second term had officially come to an end. The students were very much excited, but the term was full of unpredictable events. The social and political environment was full of risks and dangers, yet they had survived.

Many schools were closed, but Lundi Secondary School survived. The students were instructed to take with them all their belongings, since opening of the next term was uncertain. The students and their teachers were now used to living on daily expectations since dark clouds covered the future. Students were also instructed to tell parents and guardians the truth. They were not supposed to tell lies or exaggerate events. The hope was that the school was going to open in September for third term. The school closed, and students left for their homes. Some of the teachers left for their homes or to visit friends. Unfortunately, the headmaster and the deputy had to be around in case anything amiss happened in the mission. They could not be away for a long time or very far from the mission. The mission bursar was another person who could not be away for a long time or very far away from the mission. The headmaster, deputy and bursar had to carry the burden of order lists. The dining hall was closed so food was not easy to come by for the guerrillas.

The vacation ended, and September schools opened for third term. All students returned, as well as all the teachers and workers. Once again there were also new students from some closed schools or those which failed to open. A few were accommodated, and as usual, the new students related horrible stories of how their respective missions and schools were closed. The school-dining hall was in service, meaning more meat, bread and rice for the guerrillas. The teachers were back and order

lists were going to be largely fulfilled. There was once again more company for the guerrillas because there were more students attending the school. The headmaster took the normal initiative to remind the students and colleagues that the war had intensified. There was a need for maximum cooperation. The future was anybody's guess. It was even more uncertain and unpredictable than before. The positive attitude was to accept each day as it dawned, do the best and utilize it.

The headmaster reminded the guerrillas about the safety of the pupils in their operations. The guerrillas did not make any commitments, but reiterated the old argument that this was a war situation where casualties were to be expected. He also reminded them about students sitting for Z.J.C. and O Level Cambridge examinations. The reaction was the same; it was a war situation. Whatever happened was to be expected.

The headmaster did not forget to consult the security forces, lest they arrest him again. He was very frank with them concerning the situation. There was no way he could prevent the guerrillas from coming into the mission demanding order lists and food from the dining hall. He also explained to them his concern for student security. If they felt it was better to close the school, rather than risk lives, he would do so. Once again the security forces were not prepared to make any commitment, like their opponents. Their answer was also similar. The country was at war, and in a war situation no promises of safety could be made. Thus, under these circumstances the school opened and started to function to the end of the third term of 1979. Such was the life at Lundi Mission. The Miracle—Survival Against Great Odds. Lest We Forget!

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE NINE-BAND BASE MASSACRE – 1978

The base was located on the confluence of the Runde and its tributary Mawi River. It was on the boundary between Chitanga communal area and the Mwenezi ranching farms. It was a meeting point between Chitanga and Chivi communal areas. It was also a meeting point between the Chivi communal ranching farms and Mwenezi commercial ranching farms. From this point it was about 400 kilometres to the Mozambique border and three quarters of this distance was occupied by white commercial ranching farms. From this point one penetrated into Chitanga area in Mwenezi District towards Mberengwa and Matebeleland south. One left this point into Chivi District towards the Midlands.

The base was in Chief Chitanga's area and Lundi Mission was in the same area. Lundi Mission was about 8 kilometres from Nine-Band Base. The environment characterized by hills, thick river forests on the banks of the Lundi and Mawi Rivers, plenty of water from the rivers and kopjes (small granite hills), created an ideal place for a guerrilla base. It was named Nine-Band Base in honour of pioneer guerrillas in Chitanga area in 1975. It was this group that opened the base, which became headquarters in a ZANLA operation zone.

From the Mozambique border, guerrillas traveled about 400 kilometres before they arrived at Nine-Band Base close to Lundi Mission. More than three-quarters of the area they travelled was covered by white commercial ranches. The few communal areas they passed through, such as Chilonga and Mpapa, people had been caged into 'protected villages' to make it impossible for them to support the guerrillas. ZANLA forces had studied and understood Mao's principle which states that guerrillas 'be as fish in the sea'—that is to move in harmony with peasants among whom they lived.¹ The government had created 'protected villages' to counter this move. It meant that from Mozambique to Lundi Mission, guerrillas could not receive any meaningful help or support. The villagers that could have helped them were in camps. White commercial farmers were their enemies, either as reserve soldiers or supporters of the government. Lundi Mission was their Canaan. The lack of evident support were the guerrillas who looked shabby, uncombed, hungry and exhausted on their first day of arrival at Nine-Band Base. From this base some went to Chivi, Masvingo and Midlands. The other group marched through Mwenezi, Mberengwa and Matabeleland South province. Lundi Mission became one major source of provisions for Nine-Band Base.

The same situation applied when guerrillas were returning to Mozambique for report back and replenishment, particularly military ware. Guerrillas from Matebeleland South through Mberengwa and Mwenezi converged with those from the Midlands, Masvingo and Chivi at Nine-Band Base. The guerrillas had to embark on a 400-kilometre journey to the Mozambique boarder. They had to equip themselves with the necessary provisions before they started on their journey. Once again Lundi Mission was called upon to play its role of supplying the necessary provisions for the long trip. This was what

¹ S. Warshaw, *China Emerges: A concise history of China from its origin to the present*, Diablo Press, 1989, San Francisco, 1989.

Goromyko's first order list exemplified.

The first *pungwe* in the Mission was in June and by August Nine-Band Base was popular in Chivi and Mwenezi then as far as Midlands and Matebeleland South provinces. Lundi Mission had become the major kitchen of the base. The security forces at Rutenga, Mwenezi Station, Lundi Bridge, Ngundu, Masvingo and Buffalo Range were aware of the base. The security forces that happened to come in the mission referred to the base many times. In April 1976 many able-bodied men in Chitanga area around Lundi Mission were arrested for supporting guerrillas and sentenced to long jail sentences. During cruel interrogation by the security forces they had revealed the existence of the base. Since then, time and again the security forces made a swoop on those who were believed to be more active in supporting the guerrillas. There was no way under torture that they would fail to reveal the activities at Nine-Band Base. After the first *pungwe* at the mission, and with the first supply order list, along with the demand that the school dining hall must provide food to the guerrillas, students came to know about the Nine-Band Base. Guerrillas sometimes came into the mission to hold mini '*pungwes*' or 're-education lessons' with certain groups of students. After these exercises they returned to the base. *Chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* from the base visited the Mission to collect provisions several times. The headmaster, deputy and author once warned Comrade Davey that Nine-Band Base was a public secret. He brushed off the warning. Some of the *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* were arrested, changed allegiance, and joined the security forces. They moved into the Mission led by an ex '*mujibha*' who was also an ex-Bible school student. He covered his face with a woolen mask while pointing out spots where guerrillas assembled, and gave lectures to the students and staff. Although he tried to change his voice, there was no way that those who had dealt with him could not fail to recognize him, and unfortunately he forgot to change his step. The point here was that Nine-Band Base by August was no longer a hideout. The guerrillas, with all their military teachings, knew that their hideout was no longer safe. The reason why they continued to use it as a base for a long time was perplexing. Possibly they believed that its environment was a good defense in the event of an attack by the security forces. For the security forces, it was a question of time before they launched an attack.

August 9th to 10th, 1978 was doomsday for Nine-Band Base. On this particular memorable day teachers and students at Lundi Secondary School were busy learning. At the Bible School, learning was proceeding well. The clinic staff was busy attending to the patients. The dining hall cooks were busy preparing for a break and lunch, and general workers were busy attending to various tasks in the mission. It was a normal day. At about 9 a.m. piercing and ear deafening sounds were heard. Students and teachers spontaneously ran out of classes to see what was happening. Those who were in offices, clinic, dining hall, Bible School and residential houses in the mission did the same. Six jet fighters were flying low at a lightning speed over the mission towards the direction of the Nine-Band Base. For all those who knew about the base, there was no doubt that this was the day. The jet fighters were going to launch an aerial bombardment of the base. Their expectations were fulfilled within less than 10 minutes after the jets had passed the mission. There was deafening sound and eye-stabbing light from the bombs which were dropped by the jet fighters. It was fire, lightning, heavy sounds of bombs and sound of guns. After 10 minutes, the six jet fighters were over the mission at a terrific speed heading in the direction they had come from. At almost the same time there was the

heavy sound and rattling of 10 helicopters and 5 Dakotas carrying soldiers and heading toward the Nine-Band Base. Once again the sound of heavy gunfire, machine guns, grenades and N.F. rifles were heard being discharged by security forces. Sometimes simultaneously, or at intervals, guerrillas retaliated with bazookas, grenades, A.K. rifles and two or more ground to air missiles. For two to three hours there was constant fire. The sporadic shooting lasted until about 1.30 p.m. All hell had broken loose at Nine-Band Base.

When the bombardment started there was panic in the school. The headmaster and subordinates ordered students to go back to rooms. If anything happened it would be easy for those who survived to give an account. There was a lot of screaming by some girls and young boys. The whole school was gripped by tangible fear. No learning took place because of fear, tension and apprehension. When the shooting and bombing died down, many had visited the toilets several times. At about 1.30 p.m. everybody was convinced that the battle was over and moved to the dining hall, dormitories and houses. All over the mission people began to share their experiences of what had happened and what they had intended to do at the time when the fighting was going on. Many had funny and peculiar stories they told as a way of escaping death. However, a very heavy dark cloud of sadness hovered over Lundi Mission on this day.

From about 2 p.m. until 5 p.m. helicopters and Dakotas began an exercise of flying back and forth between Lundi Bridge and Nine-Band Base. This meant only one thing—ferrying of the dead and seriously injured from Nine-Band Base. Fifteen military puma trucks full of ground soldiers had also negotiated their way towards Nine-Band Base. Around 3.30 p.m. the author, head cook S.B. Chauke, and colleague S. Sithole passed through Lundi Bridge going to the other side of the business center. The security forces invited them to come and see their friends. They saw a pile of charred bodies burnt beyond recognition. One could only look at the sight for not more than a minute. The burnt corpses were carried to Ngundu where they were dumped into one common grave, burnt, using chemicals, and covered with soil.

During and after the bombardment, large numbers of villagers, women and men, *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas*, some injured, began to move into the mission for safety. After the jet bombing and exchange of gunfire, the ground forces had gone all over hunting *chimbwidos*, *mujibhas* and villagers. Those who moved into the mission, particularly the injured, narrated first hand information of what had happened. It was a daily routine that between 6:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. only guerrillas, *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* were present at the base. The jet fighters had stormed the base like a thunder bolt of lightning. They were caught unaware when bombs dropped. The guerrillas attempted to return fire, but without success as far as the jets were concerned. Then the helicopters and Dakotas dropped ground soldiers. Some of the helicopters discharged fire from the air. The guerrillas were able to successfully return fire against ground soldiers. There was a claim that two helicopters were gunned down. However, odds proved heavy against the guerrillas and they dispersed into thin air, using guerrilla tactics. It was the *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* who suffered heavily.

The ground soldiers had moved all over and in the villages shooting, beating up, interrogating and gun-marching suspects. By 5 p.m. the ground forces had moved into the mission. They moved all over in houses and rooms, searching. Some suspects claimed to be Secondary or Bible School students. Many non-mission people claimed to

be residents. People had moved into the mission for safety and this was a correct move. Only those who were injured were taken away by the soldiers. At the author's residence, three *mujibhas* were collected by the security forces. On that night many villagers from the Mukachana area, where Nine-Band Base was located, slept all over at the mission. Those who did not come to the Mission trekked distances of more than 15 kilometres away from Nine-Band Base. They were afraid of night reprisals by security forces. The security forces had also thoroughly searched the Clinic and found a good number of the injured that they took away. That night the once bubbling and busy Nine-Band Base was a ghost base, deserted and littered with blood, torn pieces of cloth, scattered and battered utensils, spent gun bullets and remains of bombs. Lest We Forget!

The next morning ground forces returned for mop-up operations. Together with the police, the C.I.D and forensic experts came and collected whatever they believed would give them more information about the Liberation War and collabourators. They used some of the remnants for follow-up operations. Many plates, cups, spoons, forks, dishes and bowls, marked Lundi Secondary School, were found. The security forces brought them to the mission with broad smiles, which announced that 'Here is concrete evidence to show that the mission is a great collaborator'. It was not a secret that the mission was a great collaborator. When the headmaster was directly confronted by this physical evidence, he did not beat around the bush. He accepted the evidence and what it symbolised. He advised the security forces to go and check his record from all the security forces that had operated in the area before them. His record was clear and simple—he had constantly informed the security forces of the presence of the guerrillas. He had also done the same thing with the guerrillas concerning the security forces. The mission was caught in a dilemma. He had time and again requested the security forces, guerrillas and parents to make a wise decision, which first and foremost benefited students. On that note, the security forces left the mission without a scene. What a Miracle! A record of straightforward frankness and honesty saved the headmaster and the Mission. The Miracle of Lundi Mission – Lest We Forget!

An army communiqué was announced on the third day after the attack of the base. "In the south-east corner of the country near Lundi Mission 60 people were killed including guerrillas, collaborators and civilians caught in cross-fire." The number of guerrillas killed could not be verified, but according to first hand information, only two were killed. The majority were *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* mostly from Mwenezi, a good number from Chivi, and a few from Mberengwa. The communiqué also announced that it was a combined operation of ground forces and air force. The air force from Thornhill Airforce Base in Gweru had taken the first initiative to strike the base. This was a very successful operation of the security forces.

After the Nine-Band operations the future of Lundi Mission was very uncertain and bleak. All that had happened either way meant closure of the mission, particularly the Lundi Secondary School.

1. The physical evidence such as plates, cups and spoons which belonged to Lundi Secondary School collected at the base displayed clearly the link between the mission and the guerrillas, voluntarily or involuntarily. This did not go well with the security forces. The government's policy was to cut aid to the guerrillas and this was the reason why 'protected villages' were

established. Therefore it was necessary to close the mission or the secondary school and its dining hall.

2. *Mujibhas* and chimbwidos who were injured at the camp confirmed the physical evidence of the link between the mission and guerrillas. They were taken by the security forces for interrogation. There was no way they could not spill the beans in order to live.
3. When the headmaster and his colleagues were confronted by physical evidence and information they did not deny the relationship between the mission and the guerrillas. The next logical move by the security forces, in order to break the voluntary or involuntary relationship was to close the mission.
4. The popularity of Nine-Band Base and its link with Lundi Mission had spread all over as far as Matebeleland South and Midlands provinces. Many people had come and passed through it because of its strategic position. The base had largely existed because of the regular food and material support it received from the mission. The logical step to stop this exercise was to close the mission.
5. Some parents and guardians who were members of the security forces, government officials and sympathizers had heard much from their children about the link between the mission and guerrillas. They could have voluntarily withdrawn their children or pressurized the government to close the school. Surprisingly, not a single child was withdrawn from the school.
6. After the destruction of the base and experiences that the students went through, some might have fled voluntarily or involuntarily withdrawn from the school. It was true that many were shocked beyond description. They panicked and were frightened, but not a single student left or attempted to go. The next four or five days after the raid of the base, no meaningful learning took place. However, students and teachers endured the uncertainty, and finally settled down. A voluntary exodus out of the mission by students, teachers and other workers could have happened and that could have crippled the functioning of the mission leading to its natural closure. Not a single resident of the mission left. The Miracle of Lundi Mission.
7. There was great anticipation that if the security forces did not close the mission, the Comrades were going to do so. The link between the mission and the base had been exposed. There was no way the mission could continue, particularly the dining hall, to give provisions to the guerrillas. If the mission was no longer going to serve them, it was better to close it down. After every conflict between the guerrillas and security forces, it was a known procedure that both carried out a witch-hunt. The Comrades were known to seek for sell-outs, and the security forces looked for collaborators. The security forces had come and gone. Thus the guerrillas were expected anytime. After four days when Nine-Band Base was raided, Comrade Tendai Zuva and a group of five called in the mission for food and information concerning the raid. The headmaster and colleagues grimly explained to them what they had seen and gathered from others. He reminded them that he had once hinted as to the possibility of the raid, but he was ignored. The Comrades listened attentively,

but whenever they interjected they alluded to some sell-outs. After they had left the mission, authorities were worried and concerned as to the reference of sell-outs. The idea of sell-outs would be made a reality as a way of covering up their mistakes and negligence. The reality and truth was that the base had become a public hideout for a long time. The activities at the base had exposed it to the security forces and it was only a question of time before they pounced on it. Therefore, the mission authorities were worried as to whom were the sell-outs. The probability was either they were in the mission business center or the local *povo*. However, the guerrillas left the mission. The survival of the mission was a Miracle.

THE WITCH HUNT AFTER THE RAID OF NINE-BAND BASE

After the Nine-Band Base was raided, the guerrillas no longer had a permanent base in the area. There was no way they could abandon using the area because of its strategic position in the guerrilla war operations. However, their new strategy was to shift bases frequently within the same areas to avoid the folly of Nine-Band Base. Later on, five decomposed bodies beyond recognition were discovered around the base.

The guerrillas resumed their visits and order lists to the mission. The only difference was that they were more cautious and careful in their movements and holding of *pungwes*. The mission was finding it more difficult, since the aftermath of the base raid had exposed them. However, the headmaster and his deputy categorically appealed to both the guerrillas and security forces to decide clearly on the future of the Mission. Their major concern was the safety of students first and foremost. Interestingly enough both sides did not want to take a decision. In other parts of the country, Missions, business centres, clinics, and schools, were being closed either by the security forces or the guerrillas. The Miracle was, this did not happen when it could have happened long before. According to events, which had happened, the closure of the Mission was overdue.

Three weeks after the Nine-Band Base raid, on a Friday afternoon, the author and friend S. Sithole were relaxing at one of the general store dealers on the Chivi part of the Lundi Business center when two well known *mujibhas* arrived. The friend had seen the two businessmen, Mr. Murungu and Mr. Vhiya, who operated general dealer stores at the business center. The two were professionals and government agricultural extension officers who only came during the weekend. They owned vehicles so they drove in and out for work and business duties. When the *mujibhas* inquired, the author and friend assumed it was a follow up or submission of order lists, since the businessmen were great financial and material contributors to the guerrillas' warfare. The author and friend had not seen the two gentlemen and referred them to fellow businessmen. The Lundi Business center on both sides of the river had eleven African general dealers in 1978 and the once popular white-owned Rhino Hotel had closed in 1976.

Saturday morning the 'bush' telegraph reported that Murungu, Chikohora, another businessman on the Lundi Mission side of the township and Fideris Chitanga, son of the Paramount Chief had been forced out of their homes. They were gun-marched to a guerrilla *pungwe* somewhere on the banks of the Mawi River bordering the Chitanga communal area and white commercial ranching farms. Chikohora was a primary school teacher at Chivi District who also came to the township during weekends. When war

started to heat up in 1975 Paramount Chief Chitanga left his homestead to go and live in exile at Nuanetsi District Office. This was discussed earlier. Chief Chimamise Chitanga retired as a British South African Police sergeant to become Chief in 1960, taking over after his deceased brother. At one time he was chairperson of the Chiefs council. The chief having been a government servant, he was a well-known staunch supporter of the white settler government. He was a public self-confessed enemy of the guerrillas. Thus when the war heated up, he knew he could not survive, so he had abandoned his home, leaving behind his wife and son Fideris in charge. Fideris worked as an engine mechanic for Super Bus Company in Masvingo. He also came home during weekends. On the night when Murungu, Chikohora and Fideris were gun-marched, the chief's wife was severely assaulted and left to die. However, she was rescued by the security forces and taken to Masvingo General Hospital. After recovering, she joined her husband in Nuanetsi District Office. They only returned to their homestead after independence in 1980.

After the three had been gun-marched on Friday night, by Monday it was confirmed that they had been murdered at a *pungwe* and some of the *povo* had participated in the brutal murder. They were accused of having provided information, which led to the raid of the Nine-Band Base. On that Monday, the security forces came as usual came into the mission to investigate the case. There was not a single person in the mission who had first hand information apart from the rumour that was circulating around. The evidence was that the guerrillas were coming in and out, but as far as this incident was concerned, it was not directly connected to the mission. The security forces moved in the villages and picked up four *mujibhas* and eight villagers for interrogation. Nothing much came out of the investigation, though the arrested people did not return until after two weeks. The security forces deliberately avoided going to the spot where the incident happened. On that same Monday evening the guerrillas arrived at the mission. They inquired about the visit of the security forces and were told that they were investigating the disappearance of the two businessmen and the chief's son. The guerrillas' report was very brief. They confirmed that they had taken them for re-education since they were responsible for giving detailed information, which led to the massacre at Nine-Band Base.

The question still remains; did Chikohora, Murungu and Fideris provide the information which led to the air and ground forces raid of Nine-Band raid? It was true that they worked away from Lundi Mission and the business center, only to be present during weekends. They were aware of guerrilla activity and Nine-Band Base like most of the people. All businessmen made financial and material contributions to the guerrillas. The guerrillas argued that the businessmen were disillusioned and frustrated because the little profit which they made was all consumed by contributions to the Liberation War. The businessmen's contributions were second to those made by the mission. There were reports that the accused businessmen had passed negative reports when *mujibhas* came with order lists. True or not—the concerned *mujibhas* and victims knew the truth. The businessmen found themselves in a dilemma because sometimes the security forces also demanded goods and were always around in the shops since their camp was in the township. It was natural that the businessmen must have felt frustrated if they were purchasing goods by credit and the profits made them unable to pay their loans or debts. However, the fact that they sold-out when the activities of Nine-Band Base were a public

secret remains a mystery to many people.

The chief's son was accused of having given information to his father who was in exile at Nuanetsi District Office. During the course of the war, the chief's property, such as goats and cattle, were looted under the pretext of feeding guerrillas. His property was confiscated because he was a sell-out, hence a great supporter of the government. Therefore it was argued that his son and mother could no longer stomach it. They had reason to collabourate with businessmen and security forces to destroy Nine-Band Base. The chief had gone into exile in 1975 and the family had remained to stick it out with others. It was now mid-1978 and they had decided to shift allegiance to become sell-outs. This was hard to believe. Probably they were fed up and decided to bring this to an end.

There was a great possibility of bad blood between the businessmen, the chief's family and some local people. Their enemies took advantage of guerrillas and the raid of Nine-Band Base for revenge. On the other hand the guerrillas needed a scapegoat to cover up for the negligence and security complacency which had prevailed at Nine-Band Base. Possibly the three were sacrificial lambs for the war. Possibly they had financial frustrations and were lured by security forces only, to pay heavily with their lives.

The murder of Murungu, Chikohora and Fideris had serious implications on the mission. Though the incident was not directly connected to the mission it was true that the mission was largely responsible for the welfare of guerrillas. The guerrillas were able to operate because of the food and material support they received from the mission. The chief had lost his son, and his wife was heavily assaulted. The mission was founded by persuasion from the chief's brother Hlengani Chitanga. He had the power to close the mission. The mission was in Chief Chitanga's area and guerrillas had now killed his son. It was more probable and made sense if the chief advocated for the closure of the mission. In fact, the security forces asked for his advice. The chief made it clear that the mission must remain open. He was aware of its other benefits to his subjects and the area. This was the Miracle of Lundi Mission. Lest We Forget!

The murder of the businessmen had a devastating effect on the other business people. Their operations began to dwindle. They were very apprehensive and not sure about their future. Whatever was in stock in their shops became depleted without any replenishment. It also meant that those who were left were going to carry a heavier burden of supplies than before. This would worsen their debts and loans, without any possibilities of being able to repay. The creditors would be breathing heavily on them to repay their debts.

One mid-morning the security forces descended on Lundi Business Center and instructed all the stores and shops to close, then and there. The shop owners were instructed to remove whatever goods were in the shop or to make arrangements to come and collect goods later. The security forces were there to ensure that all the stores and shops were locked. Within an hour, Lundi Business Centre was no more. When the news filtered into the mission everybody was agog, and were certain that the security forces were going to close the mission. All eyes were looking towards the township. After all, the township was not at the forefront of supporting the guerrillas as compared to the mission. The township had also given company to the security forces base at the bridge. The closure of the township exposed them to guerrilla attacks. However, they had decided it was the better option. What about the mission?

The Masvingo–Beitbridge highway separated the mission and the business center.

After closing the township, security forces did not do the expected. This would be to move into the mission. Instead they went back to Ngundu. The question “why?” remained in the minds of all mission residents. This was a miracle that the mission was not closed when its neighboring institution sharing the first name was closed. Nothing happened to the mission until independence came in 1980.

When Lundi Business Center was closed the nearest shopping center to the Mission was Ngundu Business Center, 10 kilometres away and the security forces’ headquarters. The other alternative was Rutenga 50 kilometres away, Chiredzi 80 kilometres away, or Masvingo 100 kilometres away. The existence of Lundi Township had sometimes made the burden of order lists lighter, but its closure meant a heavier burden on the mission. It was not easy purchasing goods at Ngundu because it was infested by soldiers, police, C.I.D’s and District assistants. They were already on the lookout as to the types of goods and quantities purchased. Mission residents were known to support the guerrillas. Therefore, it became imperative for the mission to travel long distances to buy goods. The guerrillas placed the order lists they used to give to Lundi businessmen on the mission order list. This was really hard going to be able to carry the burden. This could force professionals, particularly teachers and nurses, to move to urban or semi-urban areas. An exodus of professionals would mean a natural and logical closure of the major institutions of the mission. That was the Lundi Secondary School and the Clinic. The Lundi Secondary School dining hall would cease to exist, with its provisions for the guerrillas and order lists. The Miracle of Lundi Mission – this did not come to pass until independence in 1980. Lest we forget!

CONVOY ATTACKS

The Masvingo-Beitbridge highway was the economic lifeline of Rhodesia during the Liberation War. The economic, political, social, and security life of Rhodesia was closely tied to South Africa. The Masvingo-Beitbridge highway was the umbilical cord of relationship between the two countries. One of the major methods used by guerrillas to fight the white regime was economic sabotage. The aim was to cripple and finally bring to its knees the economy of the country. This would lead to mass discontent and trigger urban riots or strikes to compliment the political revolution. Thus there was a need to cut the economic lifeline between Rhodesia and South Africa, including other highways such as Bulawayo to Plumtree through Botswana to South Africa, Bulawayo to Victoria Falls across to Zambia, Harare to Chirundu across to Zambia, Harare to Nyamapanda into Mozambique and Malawi, and Harare to Mutare through into Mozambique. The railways linking Bulawayo via Rutenga to Malvernia (Sango) into Mozambique and its offshoot from Rutenga to Beitbridge into South Africa were targets. Highways linking cities, mines, and major cities, and mines and major commercial farms within the country were also targets. The Masvingo-Beitbridge highway from the Lundi River stretched six kilometres through Chitanga communal area, then through white commercial ranches for about 160 kilometres before reaching Beitbridge. North of the Lundi River at Ngundu Halt, there is a major junction to the lowveld – Triangle Sugar Estates, Hippo Valley Estate, and the town of Chiredzi. From Ngundu the highway passed 5 kilometres of Madzivire and Gororo communal areas, then 75 kilometres of white commercial ranches before reaching the sugar estates. Lundi Mission was within close range to the Masvingo-Beitbridge highway and the Ngundu-Chiredzi highway.

These were very busy highways day and night. South Africa was Rhodesia's economic and political mainstay. Triangle and Hippo Valley produced the country's sugar, citrus fruits and wheat. These highways became major targets of the guerrillas. If these highways were made impassable, this would have a great impact on the economy.

When the guerrillas started to operate in the area in 1975, they embarked on various methods to make the highways unusable. The first major incident was at Nuanetsi River, about 70 kilometres from Lundi Mission on the Beitbridge–Masvingo highway, when guerrillas gunned down a group of white tourists on motor bikes. The same year on the Ngundu–Chiredzi highway guerrillas used the Malaysian type strategy. They cut trees and logs and blocked the road. When motorists made attempts to remove the trees, the guerrillas opened fire. The government, in order to protect motorists and highways, introduced convoys on all major highways, railways and critical roads. White security soldiers, armed with automatic N.F. rifles and machine guns, commanded the convoys. Drivers were ordered to drive on ahead as fast as possible. If the convoy was attacked and a stop was unavoidable, everyone was to get out of the car and dive into the ditch until given directions. Rev. Tillman Houser gave an account of his experiences when he made several trips to Lundi Mission throughout the war. It was essentially to attend Free Methodist Church Board of Administration meetings involving relations with the General Missionary Board and the mother church in the United States of America.

“During the drive, I shoved the accelerator down to the floor of my slow Volkswagen van to try to keep up with the other vehicles. We were never in a convoy that was ambushed. At different times, the convoy before us was struck. Sometimes we passed burnt-out buses and huge transport trucks.”²

Motorists who traveled outside convoys did so at their own risk. If they did so and were safe, security forces argued that they collabourated with guerrillas. Their argument was correct in most cases. African motorists, including those at Lundi Mission, were advised by guerrillas not to travel in convoys to avoid being caught in crossfire. On the other hand, security forces being aware of this case, forced African motorists to join convoys. Sometimes when guerrillas identified cars of their supporters in a convoy, they would let it pass. There were incidents when they failed to identify cars of their supporters in time. Hence there were unfortunate incidents when Africans were caught in a convoy crossfire.

THE HEADMASTER AND THE DEATH OF AMOS MAZANA

Early in 1979 the headmaster A. D. Ndebele, the author and Amos Mazana drove to Masvingo town on a Saturday for shopping. Amos was a school leaver, having completed his Form 4 – O Level at Lundi Secondary School in 1978. The headmaster was responsible for his school fees and took care of him like a son or brother although not directly related. Amos was a cheerful, humble and responsible youth. Hence, the headmaster had offered care and financial assistance.

When business closed in town, the author decided to remain for the weekend with relatives and friends while the headmaster and Amos drove back to the mission. It was at

² T. Houser, Free Methodist and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.pg.83.

about 5 p.m. when the headmaster was driving behind a convoy approaching Old Mandebvu Store, about 20 kilometres from Lundi Mission, 5 kilometres from Ngundu Centre, along Masvingo – Beitbridge highway, when tragedy struck.

A man dressed in combat and carrying a gun suddenly appeared in front of Mr. Ndebele's car waving him to slow down. When the car slowed down, there was a sudden burst of fire hitting Amos who was sitting on the front passenger seat. The hitman suddenly disappeared into the bushes and rocks by the side of the highway. Ndebele dashed out of the car and pursued the culprit, but soon returned to check on Amos. The bullet had hit the seat, then lodged in his spinal cord. He was groaning and bleeding profusely. Whatever the case, Mr. Ndebele had to report the incident to the nearest police or army camp at Ngundu before taking him to the nearest medical centre at Lundi Clinic. By the time he arrived at Ngundu Amos died and the body was left in the custody of the police.³ The seat on which the late Amos was sitting when he was shot was the same seat where the author was sitting on their way to town, and the one the author could have sat on if he had returned with the headmaster. Absent minded, confused and shocked Mr. Ndebele drove into the mission.

When the headmaster gave an account of the incident to the police and army, some of them made comments to the effect that the mission was being bitten by the hands of those whom they were feeding, referring to the guerrillas. As far as the security forces were concerned, Amos was shot by guerrillas.

That same evening guerrillas arrived at the headmaster's residence. They engaged him in a discussion centered on Amos' death. According to the headmaster, their reference to the case was very evasive. His assessment of the shooting scene and discussion made him to be inclined to the idea that one of them was the culprit.⁴ The mission *mujibhas* who lived with the author were very evasive when we discussed the incident.

The great question of the day was, "Who killed Amos and why?" If the execution was carried out by security forces or Scouts – '*Sikuzo Apo*' or pseudo guerrillas as some would like to believe, it was easy to find the motive. The security forces regarded the headmaster and his mission as great collaborators with guerrillas. But why did they shoot Amos instead of the headmaster? Possibly to instill fear into the headmaster and avoid possible inquiries after shooting a popular public figure.

If the hitman was a guerrilla, then why did they target their 'goose which lay the eggs' for them day and night. Possibly the marksman must have been highly intoxicated by mbanje (marijuana), alcohol, brandy, spirits or a combination of all. His vision must have been distorted, blurred and he was mentally confused. The stuff was commonly used by both guerrillas and security forces. The culprit must have been excited and on cloud nine.

Amos' death greatly shocked the mission community. He was well known by the majority of students and most of the mission residents. Many concluded that his death was only a step before the same tragedy happened within the mission. Fortunately and miraculously nothing of this nature happened in the mission until the war came to an end in 1980. The Miracle of Lundi Mission – Lest we Forget!

Convoys traveled at specified times. Africans, in order to avoid convoys, gave

³ Interview with Mr. A. D. Ndebele, Lundi Mission, April, 1979.

⁴ Ibid.

excuses of being unable to be at the leaving point at the correct time. The major excuse was that their jalopies were not fit to travel at breakneck speed with the convoys. This was to a large extent true. Hence, few African motorists traveled in convoys. Therefore, the guerrillas were in most cases at liberty to attack convoys.

When the war became hot, guerrillas intensified their attacks on convoys. By 1978 there was an average of three attacks per week on either the Masvingo to Beitbridge highway or Ngundu–Chiredzi highway. The guerrillas who operated in the Lundi Mission area on the Masvingo–Beitbridge highway, launched their attacks on the stretch between the Lundi River and Rutenga. On the Ngundu–Chiredzi highway it was the stretch between the edge of Dare communal area and Mtirikwi River that convoys were attacked and between Ngundu and Museva business centres along the Masvingo–Beitbridge highway was an ideal guerrilla ambush area on convoys.

The points from which the guerrillas ambushed convoys were very strategic. These were mainly stretches along the highways in the white commercial ranches away from the villages. The terrain was mountainous with thick heavy forests, valleys and streams. There were cases when some over-excited guerrillas attacked convoys in the communal area. If this happened the *povo* paid for it. The security forces revenged on the *povo*. It was true that the *povo* collabourated voluntarily or involuntarily. The guerrillas used bazookas, A.K. rifles and machine guns to attack convoys such as the ones which included heavy trucks, tankers, haulages and overloads. They used ground to ground missiles. At the climax of the Liberation War in 1979, attacks on convoys became common and sometimes with disastrous consequences. The guerrillas had more advantages since they waited to ambush the convoy. The security forces mounted telescopes on vehicles and were sometimes accompanied by helicopters and Dakotas. In spite of the aid from the air force, the guerrillas had better advantage hiding behind thick bushes or holed up in small streams. After launching an attack on the convoy, their next move was to run as fast as lightning from the scene. Guerrilla warfare was to ambush the targets and disappear, avoiding direct combat as much as possible.

There were many cases when guerrillas passed through the mission or hid in the mission after they had launched an attack on the convoy. They were putting the mission to high risk. The headmaster had a frank discussion in 1978 with Comrades Pedzisai Mabhunu and Tendai Zuva concerning the idea of passing through the mission or hiding in the mission after launching an attack on the convoy. They were placing the mission, particularly school students, in great danger of being caught in crossfire. The guerrilla commanders did not give any commitment to avoid the mission since this was a war situation and there were bound to be war victims, even innocent victims. He asked if it was not better to close the mission, specifically the Secondary School, before a major disaster happened. These incidents were happening in many missions in other parts of the country. The guerrillas refused that the mission be closed until further notice.

The headmaster on the same note of frankness related his fears concerning student security to the security forces. Like their opponents they refused to make any commitment concerning the safety of students or to close the mission as a precaution against any disaster. This was a dilemma for the mission authorities. The security forces were also aware that the guerrillas who attacked the convoys in these areas were largely fed and clothed from the mission. The closure of the mission might have reduced convoy attacks on these parts on the highways, and would give an advantage to the security

forces. Interestingly enough, the security forces were reluctant to close the mission.

In parts of the highways where it passed through communal areas, the guerrillas sometimes gathered the *povo* at night with picks and shovels to dig trenches across the tarred highway. This was hard labour, but it was possible because of the 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. curfew, which prohibited movement. The guerrillas and *povo* took advantage of the curfew to make the highway impassable. Whenever rocks and boulders were abundant close to the highway, the *povo* used them to make roadblocks. When trenches or heavy rocks blocked convoys, the guerrillas pounced upon them. Villagers close to the highway would distance themselves from the roads. Those who happened to be caught by the security forces were forced to cover the trenches or remove the boulders. The worst thing was that villages were burnt, people tortured or incarcerated. The tortured villagers always pointed to the mission as a source of food and clothes for the guerrillas before their operations. The security forces always came to confirm, and the mission authorities were always positive. It could have been a folly for them to deny what everybody knew. The miracle was that amidst the various reports the security forces did not bother to close the mission.

MUSEVA ROAD-BLOCK

This is one of the many incidents illustrating what happened on security road-blocks. One Saturday morning on a May month end in 1979, headmaster A. D. Ndebele and the author drove to Masvingo town for shopping. When we approached Museva Business Centre about 25 kilometres from Lundi Mission along the Masvingo – Beitbridge highway there was a heavy security road-block. It was about 7 o'clock in the morning. It was a combined security operation comprising the army, police and district assistants. They were supervising a group of about forty men and women of the local *povo* carrying soil, boulders, stones and all types of rubble to cover a trench of about 10 metres deep dug across the highway the previous night. Some men were using shovels, spades, and hoes to level the trench. Nearby huts were on fire, burnt by security forces to punish the villagers. Most of the *povo* were those who were unaware of what had happened the previous night. The guerrillas, under the cover of darkness and curfew 6 p.m. at dusk and 6 a.m. at dawn, had gathered the *povo* to dig the trench as a way of trapping the convoy and other victims. In most cases those who had worked with guerrillas during the night would abandon their villages to go very far distances the same night because they knew that the wrath of the security forces was going to be vetted on them once it was daylight. When the security forces discovered the scene, they forcibly collected all those who were near and civilians who were passers-by to cover the trench. In most cases they correctly assumed that the *povo* directly or indirectly had something to do with the creation of the trenches.

When we were flagged down to stop at the road-block, some of the security forces immediately recognized the headmaster's vehicle, a Peugeot 404 blue sedan, the headmaster in person and the author. The deputy commander on the spot and others knew us and we knew them. They greeted us by referring to us 'as friends of the terrorists'. We were ordered to come out of the car and join the *povo* in the great exercise. The headmaster stated that we were in a hurry to get into town to find the banks and shops open because they were closing early on a Saturday. We could easily use a rough detour made on the scene. The next thing he saw were stars in his eyes in daylight

from a humiliating clap inflicted at his face by the deputy commander. The butt of the gun landed on my left hip. We were literally pushed and shoved to join others in filling up the trench dug by 'our friends', as the security men said. The headmaster mumbled something to the effect that our attire was not suitable for the type of job they wanted us to do. He earned himself more claps and several butts from the guns. A deluge of scornful and vulgar words were delivered on us in front of the *povo*. It was humiliating because the *povo* knew the headmaster of their secondary school and mission very well. The security forces repeatedly said that they were punishing us because the Mission and we were the major material suppliers of the guerrillas. In fact, we were rushing to town to purchase goods for the 'terrorists'. This was partly true.

After an hour of heavy, donkey and dirty work the commander released us to carry on with our journey. We were muddy and dusty all over. The headmaster's head and face were swollen and his left eye was black. The author had a lot of lumps all over and was limping on his side. In that state we decided to continue into town and we were a spectacle. Some people asked questions, others knew and others correctly guessed. Our reply to questions was very simple, 'road-block', nothing more and nothing less.

There was no way we could go back without some of the order lists and expect the guerrillas to be happy, unless we were dead. The commander promised that on our way back they would heavily descend on the mission like the lamagayer eagle. They would arrest, ambush or close the mission.

It is a historical fact that many became victims of road-blocks. They were killed on the spot, were arrested or later on died as a result of injuries inflicted.

After completing our business in town, the journey back was left in God's hands. There was a possibility that even if it was not on the way, the security forces could easily come into the mission. Some of the merchandise we purchased and carried was positively for the guerrillas.

The trip back to the mission, although we were apprehensive, had no hitches. The trench had been completely covered and patched by tar. Once again we were back in the mission by 6 p.m. to beat the curfew, and began to nurse our wounds. Most of what the security forces said concerning relationship between the mission and guerrillas was correct. The Miracle was that we survived and the mission did not close until 1980. Lest We Forget!

After the ceasefire in December 1979 we encountered the commander, his deputy and most of their men relaxing at Ngundu Business Centre. We recognized them and greeted them by offering cool drinks. They were perplexed and shocked by our gesture because they vividly remembered the 'road-block' incident. The commander and deputy frankly apologized to us for their behaviour, referring to 'events of the war which must be forgiven and forgotten.' We took note of their apologies.

The above-discussed events were the general characteristics at many road-blocks, but the aftermath of the road-block were peculiar to few places like Lundi Mission.

Sometimes when the ambushes had been heavy on the convoys the security forces roughly treated the mission residents. On the first Friday of December 1978, the headmaster, in the company of S. Sithole and the author, was driving from Rutenga, just on the boundary of the white commercial ranches and communal area. About 5.30 p.m. they came across a security forces' roadblock. A convoy had been ambushed and the security forces were in a very bad mood. They identified the headmaster's car, the

headmaster and his colleagues. The security men had seen them in the mission several times. They were in no compromising mood; the vehicle was searched and the three made to stand leaning on the boot, raising their hands. The most important thing was that the security forces made it very clear that they had all the evidence that the mission, particularly the headmaster and his staff members, fed and clothed the guerrillas. The guerrillas were able to operate because their stomachs were full with food from the mission dining hall. It was only a matter of time before the Secondary School would be closed, and teachers thrown behind bars for many years. The security forces used vulgar words in English and broken Shona. On a lighter note, when the standing and raising hands position became unbearable, the author asked permission 'to leak'. The leader of the security forces giggled and allowed them to do so. The security forces believed that the feeling 'to leak' was a result of fear. However, the group was given passage to proceed.

Whatever had happened at this incident, the thing that worried the three gentlemen was the reference by the security forces to the closure of the mission and jail terms. Possibly this time the security forces were going to close the school. The next day the three gentlemen expected a move from the security forces. However, two and three more days passed without the security forces fulfilling their promise. Yet, it could still happen because the war had not yet come to an end.

The convoy attacks and incidents had all the indications for the mission to be closed, most likely by the security forces. The miracle was this never happened until the Liberation War came to an end in 1980. Lest We forget!

PUBLIC EXAMINATION CLASSES

It was in June 1978, that the guerrillas officially introduced themselves in the mission. Since then their activities and visits in the mission had increased. They had become part of the mission residents, particularly under the cover of darkness. The mission dining hall was also theirs. Many mini *pungwes* or group lectures with students took place. Sometimes senior students were given errands to carry out. Major terrible events, such as abduction of Bible School Principal Reverend N. Chauke, the air force bombardment of Nine-Band Base and closing of Lundi Township, affected the students. The students were always apprehensive and uncertain if the year 1978 was going to end well. Schools, missions, hospitals and business centres in many parts of the country were getting closed. Some of them were closing under disastrous conditions. Students were caught in crossfire, injured, or killed. Staff members were also killed, injured or arrested. An example of this was in 1975 after Mamvuradonha Mission was invaded by guerrillas. Unfortunately the boarding master was killed, others assaulted and some students voluntarily or involuntarily went away with the guerrillas. The Mission and Secondary School were closed. Similar tragic incidents close to Lundi Mission happened at Pamushana, Gokomere and Berejena Missions. Therefore this could easily happen to Lundi Mission, and current events were pointing to the Mamvuradonha and other mentioned missions.

The uncertain conditions and military activities intensified as the year proceeded. After September, public examination students, that is those who were sitting for the Zimbabwe Junior Certificate and Cambridge Ordinary Level, became very anxious and worried if they were going to be able to write their examinations. Conditions as they

were and promising to be in the near future were absolutely not conducive for study and preparations for the writing of examinations. This meant either two or four years wasted. The headmaster, the deputy and their teachers were also very worried. Time had been spent teaching and preparing the students for examinations. Was this not energy and effort wasted? The staff and students were desperately worried as the clock continued to tick towards the October–December examination period. The anxiety and worry became palpable when they felt helpless to introduce measures to make certain that the students were going to write their examinations.

It was natural that some parents began to inquire from the headmaster and his staff if their children were going to sit for their examinations. The headmaster had to be honest and frank in his reply. He was uncertain and as concerned as they. However, he hoped that God would take care of the situation since Lundi Mission was basically founded as a Christian institution. This was not an assuring answer for non-Christian parents or guardians. The students themselves were restless, but fell short of behaving in an irrational way. They continued to drift on towards the examination period like passengers in a ship lost in high seas. However, teachers and students did their best to prepare for the examinations.

The headmaster and his deputy decided to confront both guerrillas and security forces frankly on the issue of public examinations. The guerrilla leaders, Tendai Zuva and Pedzisai Mabhunu, who appeared to be permanent in the area around Lundi Mission, were informed about the crucial period of examinations which confronted the students. There was a great need to stop disrupting the public examinations by the guerrillas. The guerrillas argued that it was part of the war and they could not commit themselves to anything. The relations with the security forces based at Lundi Bridge and Ngundu were formal, but thoroughly informed about public examinations. They also did not make any commitment.

The first Saturday of October 1978, a week before public examinations started, Comrades Zuva and Mabhunu, in one of their nocturnal visits to the mission, had a vivid debate with S. Sithole and the author. The topic was public examinations, which were just around the corner. Comrade Tendai Zuva in particular was adamant whether the students wrote their public examinations or not. It was part of the war. His argument was that there were many students who had abandoned school to join the armed struggle. There were many that had sacrificed and even paid the maximum sacrifice to help the armed struggle. Therefore, the idea of exemption because of public examinations was a non-starter. On the other hand, the author and his colleague argued that it was for those who volunteered to abandon school and join the armed struggle. It was also a known fact that there were those who abandoned school because it was heavy going for them, not that they were committed nationalists. Consider also the case that there were many students who were forced to abandon school to join the armed struggle.

One important factor was that by 1978 ZANLA was discouraging large numbers of recruits because of the big numbers in Mozambique. In fact, people were encouraged to be active in other roles to promote the struggle. ZANLA also had foresight that it would need educated professionals in the liberated Zimbabwe. Hence, schools or education institutions were not to be randomly disturbed. Even after this particular heated debate, Comrade Tendai Zuva in particular was not prepared to give an undertaking not to disturb public examinations. This was not encouraging, yet examinations were close at hand.

The students were becoming more and more apprehensive as the examinations were drawing nigh. This was very evident in their prayers during morning assemblies, church services, religious meetings such as Scripture Union and “*Vatswa Va Jesu*” (Youth of Jesus). The students appealed to the Mighty One to intervene so that they could successfully write their public examinations. During informal discussions, students did not stop asking for reassurance from their teachers and authorities if they were going to write examinations.

The day of reckoning finally arrived. Cambridge Ordinary Level and Zimbabwe Junior Examination candidates began their examinations. The examination went through the official ending. There was not a single examination paper—repeat not a single paper—which was disturbed or not written. There was not a single student who missed a single paper. It was true that sometimes when candidates were writing, sounds of A.K. rifles, N.F. rifles, machine guns, grenades and bazookas were heard from the vicinity. It was when guerrillas and security forces exchanged fire. Sometimes helicopters and Dakotas hovered within sight. This had become a common sound even before the examinations. The truth was that these sounds and sights, though unpleasant, did not disturb the running of the examinations. The greatest relief for the headmaster, deputy, teachers and students was when the final paper was written. The Miracle of Lundi Mission – against all odds public examinations were smoothly conducted and written to the end. Lest We Forget!

After the public examination candidates had finished, they left for their homes. The next worry was whether the school was going to close in a normal way for the other students. The interesting fact was that after the public examinations, appearance of guerrillas and security forces in the mission once again became more common. Contacts near the mission had drastically gone down very much during the examination period, yet both sides had refused to make any commitment of keeping away from the school. Finally, the official closing of the school became a reality in December 1978. All the students packed and left for their respective homes. Once again a great relief. The correct record was that Lundi Mission and all its institutions were not closed against all odds. There was not a single mission resident who was killed except the Bible School principal, who was abducted. Not a single resident was injured, not a single resident was in jail, and not a single student absconded. This was the Miracle of Lundi Mission. Lest We Forget!

The coming year of 1979 appeared bleak indeed. The Liberation War was reaching its climax, according to events happening throughout the country. The war was intensifying. Missions, schools, hospitals, clinics and business centres were closing voluntarily and involuntarily throughout the country. The war was penetrating urban centres, even big cities such as Harare and Bulawayo. The highways and roads, in spite of convoys, were becoming more dangerous to use. Gravel and dusty roads were even becoming more uncertain to use because of land mines. In simple terms, 1979 looked very bleak and gloomy. Lundi Mission had its share of dark events in 1978. Opening school in 1979 was a stretch of one’s imagination. Events on the ground would not permit it. The headmaster, teachers, students and general staff had experienced hard times. Their tolerance had been stretched to the limit. The logical conclusion was that the headmaster and teachers would transfer or resign; students would not return because parents and guardians were unwilling. The general staff had nobody to work for. Thus the school would not open for 1979.

The Bible School had the greatest dent when the principal was abducted and many of its students became *chimbwidos*, *mujibhas*, or joined the security forces. Mr. K. Nare had kept the institution going against all odds. There was a great possibility of the Bible School not opening in 1979 because it had also had enough hard times.

The second largest mission institution was Lundi Clinic. The clinic had become a source of medicine, such as a variety of painkillers, bandages, wound medicines, spirits, and injections. The injured or wounded on both sides sometimes came to be treated at the clinic. However, the security forces frowned against treatment of guerrillas, and their collaborators. There was abundant evidence from the raided bases of guerrillas of spent contents of medicine, which came from Lundi Clinic. *Chimbwidos*, *mujibhas*, and villagers arrested under torture confessed that the clinic provided medicine. The clinic staff was confronted several times and there was no way they could hide the truth. The Secondary School and clinic staff consulted each other on war matters, and acted in unison. All the clinic staff like the Secondary School staff contributed as much as they could to the war. Mrs. Harinangoni, Mr. T. Mahanya, Mr. S. Gwalale Chauke and Mr. J. Malalani Chauke, because of the positions they held at the clinic, were always in the forefront as far as dispensing medicine and going out to treat the injured. By the end of 1978 their supplies were dwindling and erratic. Government suppliers were reluctant because they were aware that some of the medicine was passed over to the guerrillas. The General Missionary Board gave aid, but this was no longer adequate since the number of patients had trebled. The Secondary School, because of the dining hall and large number of professionals, was more convenient for the guerrillas than for the security forces. The clinic was very convenient for both, if not more for the soldiers who could have easy access. However, in 1979 it was also uncertain and bleak for the clinic. The clinic, like the Secondary School, had miraculously survived to the end of 1978.

During the Christmas and New Year festivities and school vacation, guerrilla activities in the mission decreased. The dining hall, the major source of food, was closed. Most of the teachers and other staff members had gone to their homes or visited relatives in urban areas where war activities were very low. The students, who in most cases provided company were absent. Order lists had a very small catchment group that was genuinely unable to meet all the demands. It was then that most order lists were directed to the mission bursar, D. Gambiza. There was a strong belief that the bursar had a lot of money which came from the missionaries in the United States. The reality was that whatever money the bursar possessed was already tied to other issues which made the mission function. On the other hand, if the bursar released money without permission from the authorities, in the end he would be charged of misuse of public funds. It would also be hard for the authorities to believe that he had used all the money to help the guerrillas. The bursar, throughout the year, had sometimes under pressure released money to help the guerrillas. When the year came to an end, he was operating under tight strings and his financial books were hard to balance. The guerrillas were focusing their order lists at him. How could he begin 1979 under such trying and uncertain conditions? The Free Methodist Missionary General Board in the United States had enough common sense, and had received information that some of their resources were used to support guerrillas. Take note that not all missionaries, members, or donors sympathized with the armed struggle, particularly one backed by communists. Some of the missionaries had left Lundi Mission because of the pressure of the war, hence they had misgivings. Therefore

the missionaries could help the mission to a certain point, not to the end. Mr. Gambiza faced an unenviable task of balancing financial books to please the suppliers without incurring the wrath of the guerrillas. The year 1979 was very dark for the mission bursar. He controlled all of the money, which sponsored the Secondary School Clinic, and Bible School.

The festive season and vacation were drawing to an end. Once again more attention was put on the opening of the school in January. The headmaster and deputy put out feelers to the guerrillas, security forces and government education officials, and all were positive that the school must open. The General Missionary Board, represented in Rhodesia by Rev. T. Houser, placed the decision on the Africans who were running the Secondary School, the Bible School and the clinic. His advice was that they were the people on the spot, hence their decisions carried more weight. The guerrillas were excited when the days of opening were drawing close. Parents and guardians had also inquired if the school was going to open. The headmaster and his deputy adopted a wait and see attitude on the opening day.

THE MIRACLE OF LUNDI MISSION - 1979

In January 1979 when the school opened its doors on the first day, more than three-quarters of the returning pupils were present and all new Form Ones turned up. All former teachers returned, except Mr. S. Sithole who had transferred to his home in the Chipinge area, including four new teachers. The staff complement was complete. After three days, all the returning students were back. There were also six new students who had transferred from other schools which had closed as a result of the war. The opening of the school was a miracle. Everyone associated with the Secondary School except one teacher was back and the expected new ones were present. The guerrillas turned up the same evening school opened to show that they were eagerly waiting for this particular day. Their presence spelt last year's problems. It was not that the guerrillas were hated, because there were many genuine supporters of the armed struggle. The complications and dangers of their presence, in particular to the students, was what worried the authorities and students. There were many factors that could have prevented the Secondary School from opening. Everything was unpredictable, but the Secondary School had opened. The year ahead was uncertain and bleak. All the forces of darkness were around. The dining hall was open, meaning a reliable source of food, rice, meat and bread. The staff members were all present, meaning that order lists were going to be fulfilled. The next morning the security forces toured the mission, and without any doubt knew that the guerrillas were present the previous night.

The great task remained with the headmaster and his teachers to devise survival policies. The war was intensifying more than the previous year, 1978. In the first staff meeting, the headmaster and deputy dwelt much on the war situation, which was even worse than the previous year. They hammered, emphasized and underscored maximum unity, cooperation, frankness, honesty and unity of purpose. This was also for the benefit of new teachers such, as the late Mr. Manyeruke, Mr. Shumba and Mr. Marimbire. There were also some young temporary male teachers. However, all the teachers had already brushed shoulders with guerrillas and security forces somewhere and somehow. This indicated the intensity of the war.

The next step for the headmaster and his deputy was to address the student body. He

reminded all the returning students what had made the school survive the previous year. For the new students, particularly the young Form Ones, he strongly advised them to be careful of their speech and whatever they did. He stated that it was no secret that both guerrillas and security forces visited the mission at odd times. There were going to be a lot of inconveniences such as being disturbed during lessons or at sleeping times, inadequate or poor food, since sometimes they shared it with the guerrillas. The headmaster did not mince his words that the year ahead was definitely uncertain and bleak. He told them not to hide what they felt their parents or guardians and school authorities must know. They had to be very cautious as far as their relationship was concerned. In a random survey, the school authorities discovered that more than three-quarters of the new students had already come in contact with guerrillas and security forces.

The headmaster sought audience with guerrillas. It was a mature Comrade Munyanyi who turned up when the author and senior cook were present. The headmaster clearly spelt his concerns and fears for the students. He made an emotional appeal to the guerrillas to make sure that, whatever they did, they should consider the safety of the students. He also reminded the guerrillas that there was no way he and his staff would lie to the security forces concerning their activities. The mission would do their best to support them, but sometimes conditions were beyond their control. Whenever the guerrillas felt that the school was no longer serving any purpose, it was better to officially close it rather than wait for disaster. Comrade Munyanyi was a mature and experienced guerrilla. He listened and accepted the headmaster's appeal, but commented that in any war situation there were casualties, even innocent casualties. The school authorities were glad that they had made their point, and that the Comrades had listened attentively. The guerrillas would continue to seek the service of the dining hall and the fulfillment of their order lists.

The security forces, the neighbours at Lundi Bridge, and the headquarters at Ngundu were also consulted as to the new year and what lay ahead. Once again the headmaster explained about the security of the students. Whenever they felt like closing down the school, it would be better to close it rather than initiate cross fire, arrests, torture and interrogation. It was a well-known fact that, voluntarily or involuntarily, the Mission supported guerrillas. They listened to the appeal, but they also referred to possible unfortunate war casualties.

The next move was to start on the core business of the school—teaching and learning. There was no hide and seek. The environment was not conducive to learning. The signs and activities of the war were all around. News from all over the country was that many rural schools had not re-opened for the new year, and others, which had opened, were closed. The closing of schools and missions in particular, was associated with both guerrillas and security forces. Before the end of the first term in 1979 all the mission secondary schools except three and some mission institutions in Masvingo Province, were closed. Gokomere, Zimuto, Pamushana, Silveria, Gutu, Serima, Mukaro, Alheit, Mashoko, and St Antony Missions were closed, except Chibi and Lundi. Most of these mission secondary schools closed after casualties among staff and students from crossfire. For example, Pamushana, Gokomere, Mashoko and Berejena Missions. The reason that Lundi and Chibi became the odd ones in this trend remains a miracle. It was not only schools in Masvingo Province, but in all Provinces. It was the same in the

neighbouring Midlands Province, particularly in Mberengwa District whose mission schools were neighbours of Lundi Mission. Munene, Musume, Masase and Manama Missions were also closed with disasters. In Manicaland Province schools such as Mt. Selinda, Biriviri, Mutambara and Chikore suffered the same fate. Schools in Mashonaland West, Matabeleland North and South were not spared.

The historical fact was that mission rural secondary schools were closed before the end of the first school term in 1979. Some of the mission stations had their duties disrupted, or they were also closed. Sometimes only a skeleton staff remained. Hospitals, clinics, and training institutions at these missions suffered the same fate. But Lundi Mission survived until the day of closing schools officially for the first term vacation. Some of the schools which closed re-located into urban areas to try and cater mainly for the public examination students. In Masvingo Province there was a combined school in Masvingo town for students who had been displaced. Chiredzi took care of students from Mashoko Secondary School.

Day and night information of mission secondary schools being closed by security forces or guerrillas filtered to Lundi Mission. Some parents or guardians from closed schools arrived looking for vacancies for their children. Daily newspapers covered the stories, radios, guerrillas and security forces that came to the mission brought the information. These were not simply stories of schools being closed, but nasty and horrible disasters before schools closed. There were cases of casualties because of crossfire, allegations of sell-outs, torture and arrests. How could Lundi survive? All over the country missions and secondary schools were closing down.

The war had reached a climax, and it was fought with an attitude of desperation. The Liberation movements ZANU and ZAPU, through their military wings, ZANLA and ZIPRA respectively, had the aim of making the country ungovernable. Both sides were using all possible methods and strategies to score a point. The missions and schools were caught in the middle like the old saying! "When two elephants fight, grass is trampled." There were also fake guerrillas or security forces that took advantage of the situation. For one reason or another they had old scores to settle with mission heads, headmasters or teachers. Looting followed when most of the schools or missions were closed. Thus there were those who benefited from the closure of the schools or missions. For example, Lundi's sister mission, Chikombedzi Mission, where the Church's hospital was located, was looted in 1976 when it was closed because of the war. Reverend T. Houser confirmed that,

"The Conference Board of Administration requested the government Health Department to operate Chikombedzi Hospital. Dr. Elizabeth Granger, Provincial Medical Health Officer based in Fort Victoria, made repeated air flights to Chikombedzi, Matibi No. 2 Reserve, and Sengwe areas. I accompanied her on several of these flights. African nurses worked sacrificially under very trying circumstances to treat the ill and the war wounded. Eventually they were threatened by the military situation and had to be brought to Lundi Mission by security forces. Later the hospital was looted of medicines and much valuable equipment. We never found out who did the looting. The military blamed the guerrillas and the guerrillas blamed the military. Dr. Granger said "Whoever did

it took the very best equipment, books and supplies”.⁵

This example applied to more than three-quarters of the mission schools, hospitals, clinics and institutions closed, particularly in 1979.

COMRADE CHAMINUKA CLOSES THE SCHOOL

On the next day before the last day of the first term, April 1979, what had been expected or feared happened. At about 7.30 a.m. during school assembly two well-known *mujibhas*, the late Boas and Ling, delivered a letter signed by Comrade Chaminuka instructing that Lundi Secondary School had been closed forthwith. The headmaster quietly informed the staff members and advised them to keep their mouths closed lest the students panic. Unfortunately, the *mujibhas* had started to spread the news, which aroused panic and pandemonium among the students. The headmaster addressed the students to the effect that there was no need to panic since the term was officially ending the next day. There was no need for lessons, they could go back to their dormitories to pack and prepare to leave the next morning. Before they left the next day, he would make an official announcement on whether the school would open or not.

As for this second term according to events which had happened and had been happening throughout the country, this was the end of Lundi Mission, particularly Lundi Secondary School. After consultations among the headmaster and the staff members, it was agreed that the headmaster and the author must go and verify the contents with the signatory. The *mujibhas* were asked to lead the way to the guerrillas' hideout, but they were reluctant until the author and the deputy headmaster, who were blood relatives of the two *mujibhas* and sons of the local community, threatened to take stern measures against them. The *mujibhas* noticed that they could not win the argument and finally agreed to lead the way. Comrade Chaminuka and his group, in the company of *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas*, were camped under a heavy thicket on the banks of the Lundi River, a spot known as Mbemba by the local people. The hideout was about five kilometres away from the mission. The deputy headmaster and senior teachers had remained to prevent any pandemonium and over excitement among students.

The headmaster and author were advised to stop at a distance, while the *mujibhas* went ahead to inform the guerrillas. After ten minutes, the *mujibhas* returned with an order from Comrade Chaminuka that he had officially closed the school and he was not prepared to see them. The *mujibhas* appeared to be enjoying the episode, while the headmaster and the author felt humiliated and annoyed. The two gentlemen remained at a standstill while the *mujibhas* went back to join the group. The two gentlemen consulted each other and concluded that their mission was logical; if Chaminuka and company were genuine guerrillas they would simply verify their signature and give reasons why they were closing the school. The two took the chance that Chaminuka and company were true guerrillas, otherwise the two popular *mujibhas* would not have hung around with them. They re-visited the incident of Comrade Goromyko and the risk and proceeded to meet the guerrillas. When one of the guerrillas caught sight of the two gentlemen approaching them, he shouted at the top of his voice, threatening to shoot unless they retreated. The two gentlemen stood still. He went ahead to shout abusive language,

⁵ Ibid.pg.86.

receiving no reply from his targets. His threats meant business. The two lost count of time because of fear. Then they were led to a secluded spot under a big tree where Comrade Chaminuka was lying on his stomach. His first utterances were that the school authorities should have taken his instructions without delay and questions. Then without showing him the note, it was clear that it was he who had written the note. The point was that the two had come to verify his signature, since it was known that there were many pseudo or fake guerrillas. Secondly, they wanted to know the reason why the school was closed so as to explain to all the stakeholders such as students, parents, teachers, workers, mission authorities and government officials. Comrade Chaminuka meanwhile was fidgeting with his A.K. rifle. His reaction was that he had received information that the mission was no longer supporting the armed struggle. The mission gentlemen were taken aback. He refused to name those who had given him the information. By chance Felani Kayela, a mature young man who was a member of the local community which liasoned between the guerrillas and the *povo*, happened to overhear the discussion between the mission gentlemen and Comrade Chaminuka. He was one of the few local people among the full time *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* who were in the company of the guerrillas. He automatically interrupted the discussion and sided with the mission gentlemen that it was pure lies that the mission was no longer supporting the armed struggle. He cited recent specific examples, since he was sometimes used as a *mujibha*. He went further that he was prepared to summon members of his liaison committee with the *povo* community to testify how much the mission contributed to the armed struggle. He argued that the *povo* no longer had enough meat other than that which came from the school dining hall, and lacked money to purchase items on order lists, which the teachers paid. Comrade Chaminuka found his reason failing to hold, so he changed. He stated that failing to hold, he had changed. He stated that he had been specifically instructed by ZANLA to close all missions, schools, hospitals or clinics in his operational zone. By now he had closed all missions and schools in Mberengwa. It was true that Munene, Musume and Masase had closed. However, there were conflicting reports to the effect that some of the institutions were closed by security forces. According to the Comrade, the new ZANU policy of 1979 Gukurawindi (Storm of the People) was to render the country ungovernable. All institutions were to be grounded, including secondary schools. The mission gentlemen pointed out that if that was the official policy, there was no need for further arguments. They bade farewell and stood to leave. Comrade Chaminuka made a dramatic turn and announced that for the meanwhile the mission must be open until further notice. The two mission gentlemen were puzzled and could not believe what they heard. At first it was with relief that the school had been officially closed by guerrillas, because since the first '*pungwe*' in 1978 life was marked by uncertainty and apprehension. This had been settled. On the other hand it was not pleasing to close the school, considering the future of young girls and boys who had their education involuntarily terminated.

Comrade Chaminuka's change of mind might have been influenced by a number of reasons.

1. He might have realized, particularly after Felani's arguments that the mission was no longer supporting the armed struggle, as fabrications.
2. The mission gentlemen and Felani had given him an account of how much the mission had supported the war. He was aware of the position of Lundi

Mission vis-a-vis the empty distance to and from Mozambique border. It became clear to him that sometimes people do not feed and clothe on policies or principles. Policies and principles are sometimes bent to meet practical realities.

3. The mission served also the interests of the *povo*. The Mao principle of the ‘fish and water’ was true. If the mission was closed, this could incur the wrath of people against guerrillas. Even more so in times of severe droughts local *povo* had survived from remnants of food left in the Secondary School dining hall. The *povo* had sold their local produce such as beans, maize and cattle to the mission. The mission was a ready market for the local people. The mission had largely taken off the burden of supplying food and clothes to the guerrillas from the *povo*. In the light of Felani’s arguments and his willingness to call testimony from other elders, this made Comrade Chaminuka change his mind. mission vehicles such as Combis (Volkswagen vans) were used as ambulances to carry the sick *povo*.

The mission gentlemen then demanded a note with Comrade Chaminuka’s signature officially revoking the earlier instructions of closing the mission and the school. The mission gentlemen drafted exactly the words they wanted written. The Comrade wrote and signed it. It was to the effect that for the time being he was officially re-opening Lundi Mission and Secondary School until further notice. The school was to open for the second term. This was the document, which the two gentlemen took back with them after four hours of absence from the mission. The two gentlemen had left the mission at about 8:00 am. Now it was about 12:00 noon. As usual, the staff members back at the mission were curious and anxious to know what had happened.

Back at the mission the headmaster explained the situation to his colleagues, but told them to keep silent until the next morning when the school was being officially closed for the vacation. Students continued to pack all their properties. Nobody could give a time frame of what the Comrade said because he called it ‘until further notice’. In normal situations, during vacations for Terms 1 and 2, students collected only necessities for the vacation. It was only for the Term 3 vacation that they carried all their properties with them. It was interesting that on the evening of that particular day, there were many familiar and strange faces of *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos* lingering in the mission. The mission *mujibhas* were also around and mixing up with students packing their goods. Probably the *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* were hovering around the mission like vultures over an almost-dying animal. It was a historical record that whenever a mission station closed down, the *chimbwidos*, *mujibhas*, and local *povo* descended to loot. Hence the presence of these characters when word circulated that Lundi Mission had been closed.

For everybody in the mission that night was a night of curiosity and anxiety. Some were excited and others not pleased. For students who were keen to learn, this was a great blow to their future. To those students who did not like school, this was an easy way out. For most of the general workers it meant automatic retrenchment. For professionals it meant starting a new life somewhere else. The two gentlemen who held the discussion with Comrade Chaminuka were not sure if he were going to keep his word, and “until further notice” ranged from a minute to years.

The school closing assembly of first term in 1979 was absolutely different from the

past. It was generally a somber one, because the future was very uncertain. The headmaster broke the news that the term was closing for vacation, but the latest news was that the mission and school were open until further notice. The students must inform their parents and guardians that those who wanted clarification could contact him or his deputy. However, students had to collect all their goods since 'until further notice' meant anytime. There was a spontaneous outbreak of joy from most of the students showing that they wanted the Secondary School and mission open. The headmaster officially closed the school and dismissed the students. School Combis were used to facilitate student movement to the main station on the Masvingo-Beitbridge highway. The locals moved to their homes. The *mujibhas* who looked dejected confronted the headmaster to inquire what had happened. He showed them the note signed by Comrade Chaminuka, and for more information he referred them to him. They disappeared from the premises. The security forces had in one way or another received information of the permanent closure of the mission and school. On that morning they had visited the mission before students departed. The school authorities explained to them all that had happened since the previous day. The headmaster did not mention about the *mujibhas* and the spot where he had met the guerrillas. His version was that the guerrillas had delivered the first note in the morning and the second one in the evening at the mission station. The security forces left the mission without making any comment concerning the opening or closure of the mission.

The event demonstrated one of the Miracles related to the survival of Lundi Mission. The mission was closed and opened within less than 24 hours. The natural process and outcome of this event, according to the trend of events throughout the country, should have been closure. This did not happen in April 1979. The Miracle of Lundi Mission – Lest We Forget!

The vacation witnessed the departure of students, the teachers on vacation, and the closure of the Secondary School dining hall. The guerrilla activities in the mission scaled down. They came in and out of the mission. The order lists were mostly directed to the mission bursar, who found it very hard to fulfill since the money he took care of belonged to the public. He managed to do his best in consultation with the headmaster. The guerrillas understood and appreciated the complex situation.

During the vacation, reports were rampant that most mission schools had closed and many were not going to open for second term. The mission and school authorities consulted each other concerning the opening of the school. There was need to introduce precautions because Comrade Chaminuka's 'until further notice' meant anything. What the security forces had up their sleeves was also unknown because they were responsible for closing missions. The headmaster and deputy headmaster consulted with Rev. T. Houser, the missionary representative of the Free Methodist General Missionary Board in Zimbabwe. The trio agreed that Rev. T. Houser must consult the commander of the security forces based at Buffalo Range.

Buffalo Range Air Base controlled operations in the southeastern lowveld part of Zimbabwe. The reverend had a frank discussion with military chiefs. The whole issue was to get committed assurance from the security officers that their military operations would avoid casualties at Lundi Mission, particularly students. If they found it necessary to close the mission, then they would do it to avoid loss of human life. The reverend reported that he received an assurance, although the military chief pointed out to him that

unforeseen or unplanned calamities could happen in a war situation.⁶ Rev. Tillman Houser, the headmaster, and deputy also agreed that if the mission were closed, the school with the public examination classes was going to be re-located to Chiredzi urban area.⁷ This was a logical secret among the mission authorities, otherwise too many participants could have spoiled the broth. The vacation dragged on until schools opened in May.

The opening day continued to reveal the Miracle. All the registered students, teachers and general staff workers returned. There were not less than fifty new students who turned up looking for vacancies, mostly Form 4's because of the unavailability of accommodation. All the students were coming from closed schools with many horrible stories to tell. All expected to see the poor conditions under which the school had closed for the vacation. The possibility was that some parents and guardians could have withheld or transferred their children. However, school vacancies were very few since more than three-quarters of the Mission Secondary Schools throughout the country had closed down. Some of the students could have refused to return because of the uncertainty which surrounded the mission. School fees had to be paid beforehand since this was a boarding school and there was need to pay for services to run the school. Some of the students were on vacation in operational areas, but all returned. The intensification of the war claimed victims daily in various ways such as crossfire and land mines, but at Lundi Secondary School the students returned. What a Miracle!

The opening of the school, as usual, witnessed an increase in guerrilla activities in the mission. They needed the company of the students, and the opening of the dining hall meant a reliable supply of meat, rice and bread. The presence of teachers meant that most order lists were going to be fulfilled. However, the headmaster reminded guerrilla leaders Mabhunu and Zuva that the war situation was becoming worse. They were to be more considerate of the safety of the students though the war risks were known. The guerrillas were informed about Comrade Chaminuka's instruction to close the school in April and opening until further notice. The guerrillas accepted that schools were closed under certain conditions. The Comrades were asked a blank question on the future of the school since more than three-quarters of the missions at large had by then been closed. The school had already experienced a few hours of closure. The guerrillas did not make a commitment, but only to echo what their fellow Comrade Chaminuka had said. The school was open until further notice. On the issue of placing students under risky conditions, the guerrillas, like their opponents the security forces, replied that war situations could not be predicted. The security forces were reminded of the commitment made between the commander and Rev. Tillman Houser at Buffalo Range base. Thus the school opened for the second term in 1979 under real war conditions. The survival of the mission hinged on uncertainties and Miracles. Lest We Forget!

⁶ Interview with Rev. T. Houser, 12 Dunstable Circle, Avonlea, Harare, 1999.

⁷ Interview with A. D. Ndebele, Lundi Mission, May, 1979.

CHAPTER NINE

THE DIMBITI HILL MASSACRE - 1979

Dimbiti Chinyama Cheganda (meat on a dried skin), as it was popularly known, is geographically located on a strategic point. It is about five kilometres east of Lundi Mission. The hill is located on the north bank of the Runde River at the meeting point of Chivi communal areas and Chivi commercial ranching farms of Manyanga section. On the other side of the bank is the meeting point of the Mwenezi commercial ranching farms and Mwenezi communal areas. From the summit of the hill, a distance of about 20 kilometres in diameter can be viewed. All activities, both human and animal, in Shindi, Madzivire and Gororo areas of Chivi District can be seen, as well as the Chitanga area and Lundi Mission in the Mwenezi District. It is the same with the Chivi and Mwenezi Lundi commercial ranching farms. On the other side of the river was the famous Nine-Band Base, which was destroyed in 1978.

Forests of thick tall ironwood trees, known as *simbiri* in Hlengwe, covered the hill and *musumbiti* in Karanga. The hill was thickly covered by large trees and creepers from the summit down to its base along the banks of the Runde River. There were also other species of trees, such as cactus, mitondo, *marula* and mahogany. On top of the hill there was a large rock or boulder jutting out. Ten adults could stand on the rock at the same time and view the surroundings. As a herd boy, the author climbed on this rock several times to check the whereabouts of our cattle during the winter and spring seasons.

During the Liberation War, the security forces and guerrillas, had taken turns using the hill to survey the movements of the enemy in the surrounding areas. It had become more useful for the security forces because their operations were largely done during the day. The guerrilla activities were mostly done under the cover of darkness. When the war escalated in 1979, Dimbiti Hill became a strategic viewing point for the security forces. This really threatened movements of the guerrillas, *chimbwidos*, and *mujibhas* during the day.

With the war pressing to the surrounding areas, it was believed that some days the security forces hid or slept in the caves and under the boulders on the hill. Day and night guerrillas looked at the hill with great anger and hatred. That hill had to be rendered useless to the security forces, but how could this be accomplished? Leaving conditions as they were, did not serve a good purpose for the guerrillas.

The guerrillas finally decided that there was no way that they could take over the hill. The alternative was to clear forest off the hill from top to the bottom. The hill would then be bare and hard for the security forces to take cover. Comrade Tendai Zuva, and his four colleagues, mobilized all able-bodied men from the areas surrounding the hill. On a night of 9-10 August in 1997 most able-bodied men of middle age were mobilized from Mukachana and Helani villages in Chitanga in the Mwenezi District, as well as Shindi and Madzivire, mostly from Zangure of Chivi District. Armed with axes and machetes, the able-bodied and family men under the supervision of Tendai Zuva and four Comrades, climbed up Dimbiti Hill.

The full bright moon made it easy to identify the trees. The sound of axes and

machetes from a group of about eighty strong men echoed all over the hill. This was followed by heavy thudding sounds of the falling tall ironwood and other trees that had grown here for many years. An ironwood tree is as hard and strong as its name implies. Most of the trees were ironwood on Dimbiti Hill. It was difficult work for the men to clear the hill. Five guerrillas assumed the role of supervising and protecting the men who were cutting the trees. After midnight the men had done their best and could no longer continue cutting. They had done justice in clearing the mountain, especially the summit area.

Before they dispersed, the guerrillas assembled the group to review the proceedings of what had happened and why it was necessary. Comrade Tendai Zuva was a political commissar for his group. He needed to explain the whole exercise in political and military terms as it related to the armed struggle. A *pungwe* was held before the group could be dispersed. The men had to take a break before leaving for their homes. The movement had to take place before dawn and daylight, otherwise the security forces would be at their strategic viewing point. The men could not go around during the day carrying axes and machetes, without attracting the attention of many people. Not everyone supported the guerrillas. There were many against them, and those who had no choice, who, given the chance, would definitely “sell-out”. Fathers returning home at dawn with machetes or axes would also arouse the curiosity of their children. Children, being innocent children, sometimes do not know the limitations of sharing information.

In the course of the *pungwe*, just after midnight, bolts of deadly lightning struck the group from all angles and directions. The bolts of lightning, with deafening sound, were heard as far as ten kilometres. In the night air the sound travelled far. The late and restless sleepers heard the noise. Some were awakened by the noise. The war had been raging in the area for more than two years, and people could clearly identify the noise of the guns, especially the A.K and NF rifles.

By now they could easily guess correctly from the sound as to who was taking the initiative, who was on the receiving end, and who had the upper hand in the exchange of gunfire. Those who came out of their houses saw the sparks of light on Dimbiti hill. There were bright searchlights in the sky, and exchange of gunfire accompanied the sparks of light. This was war between guerrillas and security forces, crossfire for the *povo*.

What happened at Dimbiti Hill was told on Saturday, the next day, and the following days, weeks, months and years. The details varied depending on who related them, the security forces and their communiqué, the guerrillas, and the survivors. In fact, the security forces ambushed the guerrillas and the *povo* at the *pungwe*. The guerrillas could not effectively return fire, although they tried. Taken by surprise, and very much outnumbered, they dashed away and dived into the darkness. All of them survived.

There was no way the *povo* could retaliate using only axes and machetes. They had no military training. Those who escaped, or survived, used simple survival methods more of instinct, or were missed by bullets from the soldiers. The majority were ripped, cut into pieces, severely injured or heads smashed. The author had an interview with Rev. Meki Hlungwani three days after the incident. The reverend’s eldest son, Silas Hlungwani, was among the group which had gone to clear the hill, and he was one of the unfortunate ones. He died on the spot. The reverend went to collect the body of his eldest son, and others the next morning. He wept when he told of what he saw at the

scene. He was a mature man, more than sixty years of age. The fact that he could not hold back his tears, even three days after the horrible incident, spoke volumes of that horrible sight. He said there was blood, scattered brains, and human limbs of all sizes, intestines and casings. Bodies were strewn all over the place. Some of the bodies could no longer be identified, or were beyond recognition, because some parts were missing. Fortunately, Meki Hlungwani was able to identify the body of his son. This was “hell on earth”.¹ Relatives probably buried non-relatives. People living in the areas agreed to bury the limbs, and those who could not be recognized, in a common grave. This is one of the true accounts of the Dimbiti Hill Massacre and of the Liberation War. After the ambush, those who escaped spread the story. The security forces that had perpetrated the massacre went to the nearest villages telling relatives to go and collect the bodies. A group of six machine-gun carrying white security men came to Lundi Mission in the morning. When relatives and neighbours were told, they hurried to the spot. The place was inaccessible to cars. The corpses had to be ferried by scotch carts, sledges and homemade stretchers.

The security men who visited the mission had two tasks to perform. Since it was a weekend, they went to the headmaster's residence. They told the headmaster to go and identify the bodies. There might be some of his students among the victims. The security forces wanted him to know that they were aware of the support the mission had given to the guerrillas. The headmaster was dumbfounded and shocked. He summoned the boarding master, boarding mistress, and their assistants. There was a physical head count of the students. What a relief! All the students were physically present and fit. After all, the sound of guns had been heard at the mission, and flashes of light had been seen in the dark sky.

The white security forces passed through my residence. They told of the massacre with a pompous and mocking attitude. During the discussion we learnt that they were a group of Israeli mercenaries who had led the massacre at Dimbiti Hill.

The direct impact of the Dimbiti Hill massacre on Lundi Mission was revealed by a second group who came to the mission at about 8:00 a.m., two hours after the first group. The group went to the school dining hall carrying heavy loads of plates, dishes, cups, spoons, bowls and tins. These were clearly marked L.S.S (Lundi Secondary School). The chief cook, S.B. Chauke, sent word to the headmaster who joined the security forces, the dining staff and other onlookers. The headmaster immediately and frankly admitted ownership of the utensils. He said that he was aware of such support, and even on that particular evening. In fact, on that particular evening he was not aware, but he did not want to shift the responsibility. He reminded the security forces to check with their headquarters because this had been happening since 1978, and he had informed the security forces at Ngundu and Lundi Bridge. The war temperatures were now very much higher than before. The warring parties were heading for a final slaughter. The evidence of the school's support to the guerrillas smelt of danger and disaster. This heralded the end of the mission and failure for its authorities. The concrete evidence at Dimbiti Hill seemed to mark the closure of the mission, the School and the dining hall.

The security forces demanded explanation of how the dining hall utensils could have travelled the five-kilometre distance from Lundi Mission to Dimbiti Hill. The chief cook explained that Comrade Tendai Zuva and his group, aware of the great task ahead,

¹ Interview with Reverend Meki Muchipisi, Lundi Mission, August 13, 1979.

wanted to make sure that the men had full stomachs. The guerrillas also wanted food as usual. The only source of adequate food for a large group of men going to fell heavy trees was the school dining hall. On that particular evening Comrade Zuva, his colleagues, *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* had come to collect the food, which they took to Dimbiti Hill. They had demanded, only not requested.²

This explained how the utensils ended up at Dimbiti Hill. The ulterior motive of the security forces' seeming kindness bringing in the utensils was to directly confront the mission authorities with evidence that they were active collabourators. Those who were around expected the security forces to announce the closure of the school, and to gun-march the school authorities to Ngundu. It was a moment of uncertainty. However, the security forces dumped the utensils and proceeded on their journey to Ngundu without saying much more. The headmaster, and chief cook in particular, were very much worried and apprehensive about the situation. The students and all mission residents who learnt about this event strongly believed that at last the end of the school had come. Only less than three months remained before public examinations started. Most schools had closed under lesser degrees of collabouration. Students saw their chances of writing examinations to be doomed. The general assumption at the mission was that although the security forces had left without saying a word about closing the mission, it would be only a question of time. They had probably consulted with their seniors about the closure of the school. The miracle was that the mission was not closed then and there.

Comrade Tendai Zuva and his colleagues disappeared for a week. Definitely they were avoiding security forces. The mercenaries were more determined to hunt down their prey than the local soldiers. The Comrades might have kept away to avoid answering questions from relatives, wives and children of the deceased who began to ask about the wisdom of clearing the mountain. Whenever there were great casualties; the guerrillas set up a witch-hunt for 'sell-outs'. The 'sell-outs' were there, but witch-hunts were also done to cover up the negligence and complacency of the Comrades. After a week, Comrade Zuva and his friends re-appeared. Yes, there was great mourning and grief in the local community.

The Comrades always quickly justified themselves by referring to unavoidable war casualties and sacrifices. When they started to go on about 'sell-outs', unlike in the past, the *povo* was generally not interested. The *povo* was aware that the strategy of clearing Dimbiti Hill was folly, and moreover, the guerrillas escaped at the expense of the *povo*. The witch hunt exercise was a non-starter without support of the *povo*. The Comrades were clever enough to stop pushing this issue. This incident made them unpopular.

The Comrades came to the mission. The students were not friendly. There was a cool reception by students. They were very busy preparing for their examinations. True to expectations of the mission authorities, the Comrades pressed the idea of 'sell-outs' who were not happy because of the support from the mission. They strongly believed that there were many that were against their receiving provisions from the dining hall. The mission authorities reminded the Comrades that their activities in the mission were a public secret since their first *pungwe* in June 1998. The student population, with whom they interacted, came from various places and backgrounds. There were sons and daughters of government officials, soldiers, C.I.O.'s, District assistants and policemen. Their argument on "sell-outs," though genuine, received a cold reception. It was wise of

² Interview with head cook, S.B.M. Chauke, Lundi Mission, 1979.

them to let it go. Mission authorities were still not sure if they were going to close the mission as a desperate move. The Comrades decided to let events take their usual course.

The Dimbiti Hill massacre had all the components that could have led to the closure of the school, probably by the security forces rather than by the Comrades. The precision with which the security forces executed their exercise in that particular incident indicated that they had correct information. The idea of clearing the hill, unlike the established Nine-Band Base, appeared not to have been a long-term plan that would give the security forces enough time for a counter measure. If this was not the case, then how were the security forces able to carry out their ambush with such precision? Someone then, probably an insider, must have given the security forces information. The security forces' reaction capacity was great. This group was made up of "dogs of war" whose business was war. After all, the security forces had been using this place as their surveillance point during the day, and this was the reason why the guerrillas had ordered that it be cleared. The hill had caves and boulders which could be used as cover during the night.

The mercenaries, because of their methods on that particular evening, probably were planning to spend the night at the hill. The next morning they wanted to quickly take their positions on the hill and surroundings. While approaching the hill, they may have been attracted by the noise made by axes and machetes cutting down trees.

They cautiously approached the hill, took cover and positions until the appropriate time to move upon the enemy. The Comrades and their *povo*, because of the sound made by the axes and machetes, could not have heard the approaching security forces. An attitude of negligence, complacency, and no expectation of danger had gripped the Comrades. This gave their enemies an advantage. If the enemies were around at about 9:00 p.m., after midnight seeing and hearing what was happening, they had the opportunity to carry out their plan with precision and efficiency. This was more likely what happened than the explanation of 'sell-outs.' One of the mercenaries who visited the mission briefly, said that they had laid the ambush at about 9:00 p.m. after unexpectedly finding out what was happening on the hill. Their intention was to spend the night on the hill, but they found it had already been occupied by their enemies. The Miracle of Lundi Mission. Lest We Forget!

CHAPTER TEN

THE LAST THREE MONTHS OF 1979

After the anxiety, uncertainty and apprehension of the Dimbiti Hill massacre, matters were back to normal at the mission. Once again it appeared as if the mission and the school were open “until further notice”. The Z.J.C. (Zimbabwe Junior Certificate) and O Level Cambridge examinations started in the second week of October. During the course of the year, more than 95 percent of all mission schools, hospitals and clinics had closed throughout the country. Lundi Mission had miraculously survived so far, and the idea of ever writing public examinations seemed very remote. It was a miracle that examinations started without interruption. The war activities were fiercely raging all around the mission. The candidates wrote their examinations without any interruption. The war sounds coming from guns, grenades, and air force had become part and parcel of normal life. It was under such pressure that students wrote their examinations, completed them, and left for their homes.

PEACE TALKS

In November 1979, the Lancaster House Conference in London, England started. This was the conference chaired by Britain, the colonial master. The Liberation movements ZANU and ZAPU jointly participated as the Patriotic Front, with their opponents, the Rhodesian Front, together with an internal group. All Zimbabweans who were mature enough to understand the consequences of the war, religiously followed the proceedings of the conference in the radio, television, newspapers, and magazines. During the course of the conference, the war had intensified further with each group intending to gain the upper hand at the negotiation table. The residents of Lundi Mission, like all other Zimbabweans, zealously followed the events. The announcement of the cease-fire was welcomed by ululation and hope that the war was on the eve of coming to an end. When the cease-fire was followed by details of rendezvous, assembly points and a Commonwealth monitoring force, it was hard to believe. The people of Lundi Mission who had gone through hard times, thought it was all a dream. The government security forces and the guerrillas were very silent over these issues lest they make pre-mature statements. On the other hand, they were also not sure since the war had taken a great toll on them. Reports and announcements were issued from a distance of 6,000 kilometres in London. People who were not, or had never been, in the battleground issued them. The last days of the Lancaster House Conference witnessed horrible scenes of the war. The war was fought in desperation and frustration on both sides. It was a frightening situation at Lundi Mission. The slightest sound at night outside the bedroom window warned of possible guerrillas or security forces in the mission. The physical appearance of guerrillas or security forces did not encourage peace.

The internal examinations for Forms 1 and 3 started and finished smoothly. The war was raging, but nothing happened in the mission. The official school closing-day finally became a reality. It was definitely a miracle beyond any human explanation that the mission and the school had survived to the end. The year 1979 was an eventful year, characterized by closure of more than three-quarters of missions and schools in the

country. Only two rural secondary schools in Masvingo Province, Lundi Mission and Chibi, survived. This was a miracle, considering the odds. The war had reached its climax, but not a single battle took place in the mission; no student was killed or injured as a result of the war. Guerrillas and soldiers always avoided direct contact within the mission, though their visit in the mission had become daily routine. The army operated during the day and the guerrillas in the evening and night. What a miracle! Now school had officially closed and students had gone to their homes. This was a great relief to the mission authorities. It was unbelievable that so much military activity had happened around the mission, and sometimes within, but not a single casualty. It was inconceivable that so much war activity had adversely affected the country, but Lundi Mission was one of the least affected compared to other institutions. The Miracle of Lundi Mission. Lest We Forget!

The O Level group that wrote Cambridge Examination in 1979 achieved some of the best results in the country. They wrote their examination under siege of the war. There were constant gun-sounds on all sides, and the general atmosphere was not conducive for writing examinations. What a Miracle! Yet they achieved some of the best results in the whole country.

THE CEASE FIRE AND LUNDI MISSION

In December 1979, three days before schools officially closed, a combined group of Rhodesian security forces, representatives of ZANLA, ZIPRA, and the Commonwealth arrived at Lundi Mission. All the available residents and students were gathered to be informed about the cease-fire. All along, residents had heard about the Lancaster House Conference and the cease-fire message. Whenever they came across guerrillas or security forces, they had to inform them about the cease-fire, the creation of rendezvous, and assembly points. The nearest guerrilla rendezvous for the guerrillas who operated in the Lundi Mission zone, or happened to pass by, was Dare. The headmaster was advised to facilitate the movement of guerrillas to Dare by ferrying them with Combis (Volkswagens) that belonged to the mission. The combined group had made Lundi mission their first target because they were aware of the relationship that existed between the mission and both the guerrillas and security forces. They were also aware that the students, because of their numbers and various places from which they came, could easily spread the news of the cease-fire. The students and everyone else accepted the cease-fire with great joy. This was what the mission residents, like the majority of the people in the country, had been waiting for, for a long time. This was a dream almost realized. True, the combined group had delivered the cease-fire message, but the implementation was a different story. The news was one of the greatest miracles for Lundi Mission because current military activities around the mission did not indicate any chances of the war coming to an end. This obvious conclusion, according to military activities, pointed towards a holocaust. Now this, a cease-fire! This was unbelievable, and a miracle. When the students left for the festive vacation, the future of the school was theoretically assured by the news of the cease-fire. This was a Christmas gift for the mission residents since 1976 when their seasons had been marked by war activities. Before they left, the combined group emphasised the need to inform the guerrillas about the cease-fire and facilitating their movement to the Dare rendezvous. The order lists, or any other demands from guerrillas or soldiers, were illegal. The *povo* could only help when they

believed that their needs were genuine, but the final end was to lead, bring, and advise them to go to the rendezvous at Dare.

The Mission residents sent the message about the cease-fire and the instructions given by the Commanders. Guerrillas started to emerge from all directions to verify the information. On the following days, mission Combis, the headmaster and A. D. Chauke, the deputy, using their personal vehicles, ferried guerrillas to the Dare rendezvous time and again. There were some pathetic figures, in terms of clothing, of those who emerged from the bush. In such cases, the mission residents provided decent clothing whenever possible before sending them on to Dare. When the mission could not carry them, they phoned or sent messages to Ngundu. In such cases, the army and guerrilla representatives came to collect them. The cease-fire exercise started on a very promising and pleasing note. There was great hope that at last the war had come to an end.

THE MUJIBHAS AND COMRADE TIRIGIDI

The cease-fire exercise and movement of guerrillas to Dare rendezvous went on smoothly until 31st December 1979. The well-known mission *mujibhas*, the late Boas and Ling, brought a very long order list signed by Comrade Tirigidi. The order list was handed to the mission bursar, D. Gambiza Moyo, who in turn passed the list to the deputy headmaster, A. D. Chauke. The headmaster, A. D. Ndebele, had gone to his home at Chikombedzi for the Christmas vacation. Thus, the deputy was the final authority in the mission. The deputy and bursar were flabbergasted and shocked to receive an order list when it was not expected. The long list of items included one thousand dollars of cash! Remember a thousand dollars in 1979 was still a great amount of money. The deputy and bursar reminded the *mujibhas* concerning the instructions of the cease-fire group.

They told the *mujibhas* to go back and bring the Comrades to the mission. The deputy even offered to use his personal car to take them to Dare rendezvous. He had done this job for several guerrillas when the mission vehicles were not available. The *mujibhas* became arrogant and reluctant to go back to the Comrades unless they had the items on the order list. The deputy and bursar made it very clear that they were not going to budge from their stance. When the cease-fire group came, they had given them instructions, and even warned of guerrillas or soldiers who might take advantage of the last minute to exploit the *povo*.¹

The deputy and bursar “smelt a rat” over this order list signed by Comrade Tirigidi. It was true that Comrade Tirigidi had operated in the area. The question was “Was he the same person making unrealistic demands at the wrong time?” When the *mujibhas* noticed that the deputy and bursar were not going to give in, they left. The deputy and bursar had explained to them that releasing money, and buying items, was a violation of the cease-fire instructions. It was also going to be construed by others that the deputy and bursar had connived with guerrillas and *mujibhas* to misuse mission funds.

A big question mark remained for the deputy headmaster and the bursar to answer. Was this a genuine order list coming from a genuine Comrade Tirigidi? The other question which crossed their minds was their safety and the safety of the mission after they had refused to meet the demands. There were many reports all over the country of rogue guerrillas, *mujibhas* and soldiers. There were some that could not see a bright future after the war. They were so much conditioned in the war that peace, for them,

¹ Interview with A. D. Chauke and D. G. Moyo, Lundi Mission, 31, December, 1979.

meant disaster. There were some criminal elements that took advantage of the cease-fire.

The two *mujibhas* returned with another note at about 2:30 p.m. the same day. The contents and tone of the note, signed by Comrade Tirigidi, threatened to close the mission, and death if the order list in toto was not fulfilled. The deputy headmaster and the bursar were unmoved from their original decision. The *mujibhas* by word of mouth emphasized the threats of the note and then left. At about 4:00 p.m. the author's fiancée and the author drove into the mission from Bulawayo. They had intended to have a peaceful New Year, 1980. The deputy and bursar were still in the office debating their next move concerning the note. They learnt that the author had arrived. The three of us consulted with each other, and read the contents of the two notes several times. The threats in the second letter sounded real.

The three finally agreed that the deputy and bursar must drive immediately to Masvingo to consult with the ZANLA and ZANU hierarchy over the issue. However, they were to return the next day very early with the feedback from the higher authorities. If the guerrillas and *mujibhas* returned that evening, which was obvious, the author, as the most senior man, would claim very little knowledge of what had happened, since the author was very far away in Bulawayo. As for the bursar and deputy, they would claim that they had been taken to Dare rendezvous by some other Comrades who needed transportation. Let it be recorded that the two *mujibhas*, if they were not with the Comrades, ate and lived at my residence. The author was still a senior bachelor.

On a lighter note, the war had delayed our marriage. After the cease-fire, prospects of peace were very bright. No wonder the author brought his fiancée to celebrate the New Year, and to make serious marriage plans. The deputy and bursar were to return to the mission as early as there was daylight in the mission. This was a time of great anxiety for the author and his secret partner to which the author did not mention the ongoing events.

As expected, at about 7.30 p.m. there was a knock at the author's door. At the door were the two *mujibhas* and two Comrades, but not Tirigidi. They asked for the deputy and the bursar. The author explained briefly reserving much of what the author knew about the events in the mission. One of the guerrillas expressed their disappointment because the mission had failed to meet their demands. The author explained to them about the cease-fire, instructions given, and how successful the cease-fire had been so far. The author also mentioned about the good relationships that existed between the mission and guerrillas throughout the war years. The author persuaded them to wait until tomorrow. It was possible that the deputy and bursar had gone to purchase the items on their order list, since they could not be found in the mission.

This point cooled them down. Before they left, one guerrilla swore that if their demands were not met, it was not too late to close the mission and murder some people. These were worrisome words because frustration and desperation could drive some people to commit horrible acts. The author informed the group about his secret partner. They never demanded to see the real person. It assured them that the author would be still around the next day.

After the *mujibhas* and Comrades had left, out of curiosity my secret partner wanted to know about the strangers. The author waffled over the incident apart from saying that they were guerrillas who wanted help to go to Dare rendezvous, and this was going to be done the next morning.

The author had a restless night on the last night of 1979. There were many questions

which crossed his mind, “It was not too late to close the mission and kill some people,” kept on banging in my mind. The author pretended to his fiancée that all was fine, apart from the fact that the guerrillas wanted to be taken to Dare the next day. This was not true. The truth was what had happened and been heard of, since the two of us arrived at the mission on that afternoon. We had expected a peaceful 1980 New Year that now looked very uncertain indeed.

At sunrise on 1st January 1980, true to their word, the deputy and bursar drove to my residence. Their first question was whether the situation was normal or not. When they learnt that everything was still normal, they were greatly relieved. They said that they had spent a very restless night thinking what could have happened at the mission. The author explained what had happened during their absence; the follow-up of the order lists by the guerrillas and *mujibhas* during the evening. The guerrillas had repeated their threats that sounded true, and that finally, the guerrillas expected their items on that morning.

The deputy and bursar explained their hasty trip to Masvingo. They had seen the ZANU and ZANLA authorities. The highest chief whom they had consulted, was the late Comrade Nolan Makombe. After independence in 1980 he became the President of the Senate and later on Speaker of Parliament. The authorities accepted the measures taken by the mission authorities, but instructed them to meet the guerrillas in person. When the deputy and bursar expressed fear for their lives, The ZANU authorities assured them that their safety was going to be taken care of by the ZANU and ZANLA way. The deputy and bursar had no choice, but were still very anxious and apprehensive about what was going to happen. The fact that the guerrillas had insisted on their demands made the situation not very easy.

The deputy, bursar, and the author agreed to meet the guerrillas in person. We were very apprehensive and anxious. The author was going to leave his fiancée behind, after driving many kilometres to celebrate a peaceful New Year. The outcome of the meeting, if it ever took place, was anybody’s guess. Communication between the mission authorities and guerrillas was not pleasant up to now. Everything which happened since the delivery of the first note, signed by the Comrade at 9.30 a.m. on 31st December 1979, was negative. A negative outcome after the meeting, if one group did not give up, was expected. The meeting had to take place, one way or another.

The next question was where to meet the Comrades? It was obvious that the *mujibhas* were going to turn up that morning, as agreed with me the previous night. The only wise thing for the three of us was to wait and see. Meanwhile we engaged ourselves in a debate on the “pros and cons” and consequences of these developments. Things looked bleak and not encouraging. The mission had gone through “thick and thin” during the war. At the last moment it appeared as if doom was obvious.

The cease-fire exercise had been going on smoothly, and elections set for March, and independence for April 18, 1980. The Tirigidi affair spelled danger and doom for the mission and some of its residents. It was disheartening to imagine how the mission had survived throughout the days of danger, and now it was going to collapse during the days of relative peace. We prayed and hoped that the miracle, which had saved Lundi Mission throughout the war years, once again, would happen at this last dark hour.

As expected, the two *mujibhas* arrived at about 8.30 a.m. They found the deputy headmaster, the bursar, and the author together at the Mission office. Their spirits were

very high and they expected to collect the items which were on the order list. The behaviour and attitude of the *mujibhas*, since they delivered the first note from Comrade Tirigidi, indicated that they were stakeholders in the order list. The *mujibhas* were shocked when the deputy headmaster said that he wanted a direct conversation with Comrade Tirigidi. The *mujibhas* warned us that the Comrade was not interested in a conversation without his items, and that the Comrades would destroy the mission and punish the authorities. The deputy headmaster showed great courage.

He asked the *mujibhas* where he could meet the Comrades. The *mujibhas* refused to disclose the place, and left mumbling that the mission and its authorities were going to suffer. We three men noticed the direction taken by the *mujibhas*, and from past experiences, we could guess the guerrilla hideouts, for the deputy headmaster and the author were sons of the local community.

The deputy and his colleagues did not want the *mujibhas* to see that they were followed. After an hour, we drove one of the school Combis towards Chitanga area. After five kilometres from the mission there was no road for the Combi, so we parked and walked. We inquired among the villagers about the *mujibhas* and Comrades. Some of the villagers confessed having seen the *mujibhas* moving in a northerly direction. As far as seeing guerrillas were concerned, they confessed ignorance. One villager referred the three of us to one popular and highly respected man in the communal area, called Mabadhi Hlungwani. He happened to be a maternal uncle of the Deputy and the author. He had been a wealthy man in terms of cattle, goats, and chickens. By 1979 his wealth had been greatly depleted as a result of supporting the guerrillas. There was no way the old man could not have known the presence of Comrade Tirigidi and his colleagues who were in his vicinity.

We called at the old man's village and found him in the shade of one of his houses. He recognized his nephews, and immediately inquired if things were normal. It was New Year's Day, but the old man could see that his nephews were on an urgent mission, not a formal visit. The deputy inquired where the Comrades were hiding. It was obvious that the *mujibhas* had been sent to his homestead because he was the only capable person to provide food. The old man was not sure of the spot, but "somewhere on the banks of the Runde River by Xilote Hippo Pool." This was roughly a distance of three kilometres of uninhabited area from his home. The deputy and the author were born in families of traditional hunters, and were hunters on their own right.

We were soon on the track, checking footprints, turned-up grass or sticks, branches pushed out of paths, and all other clues which are noticed only by a professional hunter. All clues of human activities pointed to Xilote Hippo Pool. Hills and thick forests covered the area around the pool. This was an ideal hideout for the guerrillas. When near, we cautiously approached the base. A *mujibha* and one of the armed guerrillas stationed at the outpost noticed us approaching, and advanced to meet us. The guerrilla was one of those who came to the mission the previous night. He cocked his gun and shouted at the top of his voice that the guerrillas were not prepared to see us if we did not have the goods. We calmly stood still and made it very clear that we wanted to see Comrade Tirigidi.

The guerrillas were stunned by our bravery, and probably thought that we had an undercover agent behind us. The guerrilla also inquired as to how we had located their base. The deputy answered that we wanted to discuss all the issues with the commander

of the group. The guerrilla and his *mujibha* cooled down, and promised to take the message to his commander. After some few minutes, Comrade Tirigidi appeared, raging and shouting vulgar words, saying that he wanted the items on the order list. It was the real Comrade Tirigidi whom we previously knew as a true guerrilla of the Chimurenga War. He continued to shout, threaten, scold and cock his gun. He was very restless, moving back and forth. The deputy's only words were, "to discuss with him matters of life and death for all of us." These were calculated words of wisdom and courage from the deputy headmaster. The Comrade was taken aback, and stared at the deputy head. There was deafening silence, and the worst was expected. It was surprising that the Comrade cooled down, and said that he would discuss it with us later. Then he disappeared, leaving behind one of his juniors. The courage of the deputy might have taken him by surprise, and he, too, probably thought that there was an undercover agent nearby. The combined teams of the cease-fire process were moving around to facilitate the exercise.

The deputy told the junior guerrilla that he and his colleagues were going to take their time in a nearby small pool in the river. Whenever the commander was ready to see, us he could call us. This was about 10.30 a.m. We whiled away time in the pool. It was a very hot January day in 1980. At least the pool was very comfortable. We removed our clothes, plunged into the pool, played games reviving memories of the past, and made attempts to catch fish. The other two were always referring to their beloved families, and I to my fiancée left behind. We had planned a Happy New Year, 1980, but here we were at Xilote Hippo Pool. Our lives were hanging in the balance. We constantly joked that our deaths would be easy to remember since it was on New Year day of the New Year of 1980, and the year Zimbabwe became independent. The Comrade Tirigidi of that day was different from the one of the past. Our activities at the pool became exhausting, and hunger pangs began to bite.

About 3:00 p.m. we were greatly surprised when Tirigidi changed his attitude. He was the old Tirigidi whom we had known. He invited us to a lunch of sadza and meat. The lunch was highly welcomed. During lunch jokes, were exchanged which finally led into serious discussions over the core business. The deputy head, who was our spokesman, gave a clear and precise narration of the relationship between the guerrillas and the mission since the first *pungwe* in June 1978. He also gave a detailed account of some of the events of the war, and the role of the mission up to the cease-fire, and instructions that were given by the Combined team. He explained the role played by the mission facilitating the cease-fire. It had used its vehicles to carry the combatants to the rendezvous at Dare. The mission had provided goods and clothes to some guerrillas who came out of the bush before going to Dare. The deputy head, in person, used his personal Datsun 120Y to ferry guerrillas and goods. Then, where was the problem?

He explained why we could not fulfill his demands on the order list for it was a violation of the cease-fire instructions given by the Combined cease-fire team. The cease-fire instructions were made public in December 1979. These instructions were continuously reported on radio, television, newspapers and posters posted all over the country. The deputy head's closing remarks were that the mission was only prepared to give genuine aid, but the order list was not legal.

All along, the Comrade, surrounded by his juniors and *mujibhas*, attentively listened. Instead of abrupt interjections or shouting, his answer was an unexpected reply. He

understood the situation. Some misunderstandings had taken place, and he was prepared to receive any form of help from the mission, particularly clothes, before heading to the rendezvous. He had some business to iron out in the area before leaving for the rendezvous. The operations of the Comrades had nothing to do with the mission. We were aware of the ZANLA strategy, that guerrillas were not all going to move to the rendezvous and assembly points at the same time. We agreed to go back to the mission to see what we could afford, and also inform some of the senior mission residents. The guerrillas, not the *mujibhas*, would follow in the evening to check on any developments. The Commander took the deputy aside and advised him not to give details of this incident to his ZANLA authorities and to let bygones be bygones. The deputy communicated this information to us on our way back to the mission. This very explosive incident had surprisingly cooled down, and had an amicable conclusion.

We made our way back, not believing what had happened. When we arrived at the spot where we had left the Combi, a lot of villagers were milling around wondering what had happened to the owners. Back at the mission, the families were very much worried. My fiancée was angry and disturbed until she understood the situation. The cease-fire was in progress, but in reality, the war was still on in other aspects. There were many reports all over the country of rogue guerrillas, rogue soldiers and criminals taking advantage of the cease-fire, and perpetrating crimes. Lundi Mission and its residents could not be an exception, and were potential victims. As agreed, at about 7:00 p.m., Comrade Tirigidi and his company arrived at the mission. The deputy had gathered all of the senior residents, church pastors and reverends at the school hall. The Comrades emphasized that they were ZANLA cadres “toeing the line” of the party. They were honestly appealing for any support and nothing else. The mission residents donated clothes and money. They did what they could as a way of helping, not as fulfilling an order. The guerrillas appreciated this, and advised the residents to vote wisely in the elections. At this juncture, the mission and its residents had survived. The New Year day had come to an end on this note. This was a good climax for the mission and its residents. Why the mission had survived under such a threat was a miracle.

An analysis of the events still leaves questions unanswered. It was very probable that desperation and frustration, because of the cease-fire, was taking a toll of the Comrades and *mujibhas*. The future, beyond the cease-fire, was bleak and uncertain. The *mujibhas* appeared to have played an important role in influencing the behaviour of the Comrades. The manner in which we handled the situation, and our bravery, played a very important role in saving the situation. Fortunately, at the end the Comrades saw the reason. After collecting their gifts on the evening of the New Year, 1980, Comrade Tirigidi and his group were never heard of or seen again at Lundi Mission. The Miracle of Lundi Mission. Lest We Forget!

The Lundi Mission residents prayed that the Tirigidi incident would be the last war-related event before independence. The situation was quiet, and the cease-fire exercise went on smoothly until two weeks after the schools had opened in January 1980. The returning students found a new Lundi Mission. There were no more guerrillas, *mujibhas*, or *chimbwidos* to share their food in their dining hall. There were no Chimurenga lectures and *pungwes*; no more visits from the Rhodesian forces in their camouflage uniforms. The Combined cease-fire teams sometimes drove into the mission, monitoring the cease-fire. Sometimes a few guerrillas emerged and asked to be taken to the Dare

rendezvous. For the staff members, no more order lists. The Lundi Business center was opened. The curfew was lifted in January 1980. Lundi Mission Clinic was no longer commanded to provide medicine, but helped the genuinely sick. The situation was definitely returning to normal. Lundi Mission had miraculously survived through the war.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE *MUJIBHAS* (LIBERATION WAR COLLABOURATORS) AND LUNDI MISSION

On 1 January 1979, after Comrade Tirigidhi and his colleagues reached an understanding with the Mission group, led by the deputy headmaster, Mr. A. D. Chauke, comprising the bursar, Mr. D. Gambiza, and the author, concerning the ceasefire, the life style for the popular *mujibhas* drastically changed. The author is free to write on this incident because it became a public case in a judiciary court, newspapers and to all the local people.

Guerrillas could not operate without *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos*, the young men and young women respectively who did the donkeywork. They acted as sentinels, gathered information concerning security forces such as numbers in a group, type of weapons they carried, camping places and general movements. They also carried goods or heavy loads for the guerrillas on their trips. The *mujibhas* were in the front of the war, were killed or maimed in large numbers during contacts between guerrillas and security forces. Security forces communiqés always referred to the *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos* as having been caught in cross fire ‘mingling with or collabourating or assisting terrorists.’ Some of them were captured, tortured, imprisoned or hanged. After capture, a good number changed sides to collabourate with the security forces particularly the notorious Selous Scouts – nicknamed ‘*sikuzu apo*’. Therefore, the *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos* were also very useful for the security forces. The young men and young women were very valuable for both the guerrillas and security forces. Life became hard for youths that lived in operational areas if they were not in school or boarding schools. It was obvious if one were not in school; he was a collaborator with the guerrillas or informer with the security forces.

As recently as 2002 the ZANU PF leadership has publicly recognized the role of the *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos*. They have been officially recognized to reward them after a two-day conference held in Masvingo in August, 2002.¹

On the other hand, the commander of the Selous Scouts, Lt. Col. Ron Reid Daly in his diary that turned into a book, gave a detailed account of how the *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos* were effectively used by both the guerrillas and security forces.²

When schools opened in January 1978, the author’s uncle, elder brother of the author’s father’s personally requested the author if he could stay with his last-born son, who was a school leaver and in his mid twenties in the mission. Life had become unbearable for the young man because of his association with guerrillas. The author also lived with his elder blood brother’s son who was in Form 4. In March, the author’s uncle, young brother of his father, personally requested the author to take in his house his son who was a day scholar doing Form 3 because his studies were heavily disrupted by war activities outside the mission. The father had high hopes for the boy since he was the first born of his mother in a polygamous marriage. Therefore, the author, in his first year of employment, lived with three cousins who were very potential *mujibhas*. In the

¹ Comrade E. Mhangagwa, Speaker of Zimbabwe Parliament, Secretary of Administration for ZANU PF, speech broadcast by the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation Television Service, August, 2002.

² R. Reid, Daly, Selous Scouts Top Secret War, Galago, Alberton, 1982.

Hlengwe language the word ‘cousin’ does not exist, one is either a brother or son. The mission was one of the very few places ‘safely respected by both guerrillas and security forces’. The miracle – why Lundi Mission since many other missions were looted and ransacked. This particular mission founded in God’s vision was protected by the physically invisible God.

The author began to notice the unexplained movements of a school leaver and Form 3 student sneaking in and out. It was after June 1978, when the guerrillas had officially introduced themselves to the mission, that the two young men were also finally introduced as official *mujibhas*. Comrade Tendai Zuva visited the house of the author to announce that the two young men were to link guerrilla activities and the mission. The author had to keep them as one of his contributions to the Liberation War. Later on, the headmaster, the deputy headmaster, the clinic matron, the kitchen staff, the mission bursar and Bible school head were officially informed of the *mujibhas*. There would be other *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos*, but the afore-mentioned were the official ones. The guerrillas pointed out that they had done so to prevent against psuedo *mujibhas* who were also common, time and again.

This event was a great challenge to the author, and a dilemma. The truth was that the author literally had four sleepless nights and daydreams concerning his life and future. He was only a young man who had started professional work as a teacher, not more than six months ago. He could not eject them out of the house and expect to be spared by the guerrillas. He could not live with them and expect the security forces to spare him. All mission residents including students, who came from various family backgrounds and parts of the country, knew the status of the two young men and their host. He expressed his fears to the headmaster and deputy, who were very appreciative and understanding, but who also had no solution to the dilemma. One memorable November night 1978 when the mission had become an in-and-out ground for both guerrillas and security forces, the author decided to throw in the towel – surreptitiously disappear from the mission. In the middle of the night he consulted the headmaster. It was agreed that disappearance could also have had consequences on the author, mission or other people. It was resolved that both guerrilla leaders and local security forces, who after all knew the situation, had to be informed about the author’s dilemma. This was a hard decision because there could have been unforeseen consequences. The amazing truth was that when both groups were consulted on the issue, they never gave a positive or negative answer.

The author approached his mother with the problem. After listening to her son’s dilemma, her answer was simple and short ‘*Xikwembu xaswitiva leswi xitoendla*’, meaning ‘God knows what He is going to do.’ The author left and stayed put until the war came to an end in April 18, 1980. He adopted the attitude ‘God knows why.’

From February 1978 until January 2, 1980, after the signing of the Lancaster House Agreement in 1979 November, the two *mujibhas* dwelt in the author’s house. When the Liberation War intensified, time and again the guerrillas would visit the author’s house looking for the *mujibhas* at odd hours and for various ‘urgent business.’ The security forces time and again also visited the author’s house and several times informed him that they knew all the movements of the *mujibhas*. They informed him that they made surveillance of the house many times. After contacts, sometimes security forces visited and searched the house. Fortunately, every time they came for the search the *mujibhas*

were absent. When the war came to an end, a coloured friend who operated in the area revealed that twice they had made surveillance of the house and noticed guerrillas and *mujibhas* around. In each incident the leader of the security group advised against shooting, which they could have done very easily.³ In fact, one early morning 1979 the security forces made a swoop of the mission starting with the author's house. In the house there was the author's mother and his grandmother, who was not feeling well. In fact the two old women had come to the house to be close to the clinic. The author's maternal nephew studying Form 2, Tapiwa Manokore, was also in the house. The *mujibhas* and guerrillas had come at midnight and left because of the presence of the two old ladies. When the security forces arrived, they explained what had really taken place that night. Thus, it was really true that the security forces kept an eye on the author's house. Why the security forces restrained themselves from shooting remains the Miracle.

There is no doubt that until the signing of the ceasefire in November 1979, the *mujibhas* defended the mission when certain groups of guerrillas raised questions or doubts on the support of mission residents. They also made it very hard for pseudo guerrillas or *mujibhas* to operate in the Mission, although attempts were made. On the other hand, they were definitely a security risk which kept the author and mission leaders on the edge. They were very powerful. The Form 3 *mujibha's* attendance of lessons became almost zero and he was an almost full time *mujibha*. The security forces, police special branch and district assistants knew very well about the activities of the *mujibhas*. Why they did not hunt them down until they picked them up remained a miracle. One obvious case was that if the official *mujibhas* were picked up, they would have revealed more than enough concerning the activities of guerrillas. If the '*mujibha's* were arrested the guerrillas could have closed the mission. The Miracle was that the obvious and expected did not happen.

The ceasefire in November 1979 had a great impact on the activities and life style of the *mujibhas*. Their hostile attitude towards the mission and mission authorities must have been a realization that their authority and influence had come to an end. The future was uncertain and bleak. The commands that they gave material benefits and provisions, which they received during the course of the war, could not continue. The negative attitude was first revealed when they liasoned with Comrade Tirigidi and colleagues to make unrealistic demands from the mission authorities when the ceasefire had been officially declared on 31 December 1979. When material demands which were signed by Comrade Tirigidi were rejected by the deputy headmaster, Mr. A. D. Chauke and the bursar, Mr. D. Gambiza Moyo, the *mujibhas* made threats of death. There was a common ground between the *mujibhas* and Comrade Tirigidi and colleagues who were drifting towards being renegade guerrillas. They were also not certain of their future. The *mujibhas* were blood relatives of the author and deputy headmaster, but their threats sounded real. The author arrived in the mission on that particular day, 31 December 1979 at about 6 p.m., from Bulawayo. The deputy headmaster and bursar briefly informed him about what had expired and that they were driving to Masvingo immediately to inform the ZANU – ZANLA leadership and the combined ceasefire commission. The Masvingo ZANU leadership, particularly the late Comrade Nolan Makombe, who became President of the Senate and Speaker of Parliament after independence and other ZANLA leaders were well informed of how Lundi Mission

³ Interview with Corporal C. Peters, Ngundu Centre, December, 1979.

residents, whether by choice or not supported the Liberation War to their maximum ability.

At about 9 p.m. the *mujibhas*, in the company of three guerrillas called at the author's house, which was also the permanent resident of the two *mujibhas* since February 1978. The headmaster, Mr. A. D. Ndebele, had gone to his home at Chikombedzi. The *mujibhas* explained their encounter with the deputy headmaster and bursar earlier in the day and their disappointment. The author had never seen such bitterness, having stayed with the *mujibhas* for two years. He was also familiar with the three guerrillas who displayed the same attitude. During the course of the discussions, threats to kill the mission leaders and destroy property were made. Expressions on their faces, sounds and tone of voices and gestures made it very real. The author found it very hard to imagine that the mission had survived through the course of the bitter war only to be destroyed when the war had been officially declared over. Was God forsaking the mission at the last minute? The group was only cooled down when the author suggested that the deputy head and bursar may have rushed to Masvingo to purchase their orders. When they left, their last words were that they would return in the morning, and if the goods were not available, this would be the end of Lundi Mission. There was no doubt that the author had a sleepless night reviewing all that had expired before and now after the ceasefire. The night was long, to say the least. The Miracle was that the *mujibhas* and guerrillas could have destroyed the mission that night, but a strong invisible force restrained them. One guerrilla passed a comment to the effect that the deputy headmaster and bursar had gone to Masvingo to report them to their superiors, not to purchase goods. He was very correct. The comment made the author very unsettled, but for unknown reasons it was not discussed further.

By 8.30 a.m. on 1st January 1980 the deputy headmaster and bursar true, to their word, were back in the mission. They briefed the author who had remained to hold the fort in the mission and who in turn told them what had happened the previous night. However, the Ceasefire Commission had advised them not to give anything and that they were going to cover and protect the mission leaders. How it was to be done was a million-dollar question to answer. The *mujibhas* arrived and when the deputy headmaster said that he was bringing the goods in person to the guerrillas, they left cursing. When the deputy headmaster asked the whereabouts of the guerrillas, the *mujibhas* did not answer, but simply disappeared. They were no longer prepared to help as they had done for the past two years.

The deputy headmaster, bursar and author made their own search and finally located the spot where the guerrillas were located – on the banks of Chilote Pool in the Lundi River. After a protracted hostile argument, which started at about 10 a.m. until 5 p.m., the *mujibhas* were on the side of the guerrillas. They were falsely accusing the mission leaders of abandoning the Liberation War. On the other hand the deputy headmaster, a talented debater and persuasive speaker, bravely defended the Mission. He was able to counter false arguments put forward by the *mujibhas*, his blood relatives. The author, recalling how he had come to live with the *mujibhas*, could only understand this when he recalled the incidents of Judas Iscariot in the New Testament and Brutus in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. The miracle was that at the end of the argument Comrade Tirigidi gave a benefit of doubt to the mission leaders. He promised to visit the mission that night to conclude the discussion. This he did with his group, but very surprisingly

the *mujibhas* were not in sight. The obvious reason was that they were disappointed with what had happened. However, the deputy headmaster, his colleagues and those who happened to be around since it was a school vacation, had a friendly discussion with guerrillas. The mission residents contributed what they could to give the Comrades. The deputy headmaster's last words to the guerrillas was an advice that they must find their way to Ngundu Rendezvous or Assembly point and he was prepared to assist them if they wanted. The commander Tirigidi thanked the mission residents and disappeared forever.

The *mujibhas* had attempted to incite or instigate the guerrillas to destroy the Mission at that last minute because it was no longer serving their personal material interests. God had forbidden.

On the 3rd of January 1980, the author, deputy headmaster and his family went to stay with relatives in Masvingo town. The *mujibhas* still resided in the author's mission residence although the situation was now calm for them to go to the rural homes. On the morning of 5 January 1980 the bursar, Mr. Davison Gambiza Moyo, found that the mission office which housed the headmaster's office, general office and bursar's office was broken into through the window and inside ceiling. The safe was broken and about five thousand dollars and petty cash was stolen. This was a lot of money in 1980. The bursar informed the headmaster, deputy headmaster and the police and the Free Methodist Church Missionary Representative, Rev. T. Houser, residing in Chiredzi.

The police had their own suspects. These were the bursar, possibly faking a theft in order for him to make a quick dollar after going through hard times during the war. This included the headmaster, deputy headmaster and author with the same motive. The bursar pointed to the two *mujibhas* because of their activities and threats which they had made during the few past days. The police pounced on the *mujibhas* who warmed up very easily. Half of the amount was found hidden in the ceiling of the author's house. The other amount was dug out at the *mujibha* school boy's home, placed in a tin and dug in a contour ridge. Fortunately, the *mujibhas* did not implicate anybody. They vehemently stated that it was their own plan and for their own personal interest since the future was uncertain and bleak. Boas was convicted and sentenced to six strokes because he was less than 18 years of age. Ling was above 18 years of age; he was convicted and sentenced to 6 months hard labour in jail and served three months because of remission for good behaviour. This was at Beitbridge court in 1980.

After independence in April 1980 Boas was rewarded by the ZANU government when he was appointed a Rural Councilor in Mwenezi for his role as a '*mujibha*' during the war. He later on joined the army, married, and unfortunately died, in a car accident. Ling is married and a successful motor car mechanic. However, the attitude of the two *mujibhas* must be empathetically understood. These were young men who were afraid of the new future, having spent two years in a demanding and risky life style of a *mujibha* or guerrilla collaborator. Their activities and attitude during the Liberation War and ceasefire exposed Lundi Mission and its residents to a great risk of closure or destruction. The Miracle of Lundi Mission – Lest We Forget, was that this did not happen, because God did not want His Mission founded by foreign men and women and supported by local men, to be closed. Their work was a great service to the Hlengwe people and all other ethnic groups in Zimbabwe.

COMRADE TENDAI ZUVA AND COMPANY 1980

When the term started in 1980, for the new students the war events were only history. Lundi Mission and the Secondary School were peaceful places. Rumour started that Comrade Tendai Zuva and three colleagues had been seen in the area around the mission. Comrade Zuva was one of the few guerrillas who had operated for a long time in the Lundi war zone. Their explanation as to why they were roaming around, when others were going to the rendezvous and assembly points, was that they were on a mission of rounding off ZANLA business in the area. The last time Comrade Tendai Zuva was seen active was before the Dimbiti Hill Massacre in 1979. After the massacre, he had gone underground to avoid the wrath of the *povo*. Now once again Comrade Zuva was roaming in the area, claiming to be on ZANLA business. Those who knew them claimed that the group was always in the company of girls. The system of *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* was past, so it appeared that most of those who hung around them were forced to, or wished to reject good family values. People began to question if what they were doing was ZANLA business. Possibly in the name of ZANLA, Comrade Zuva and friends were trying to overcome frustrations. Probably they had turned into rogue guerrillas.

One Friday afternoon Comrade Tendai Zuva and three friends were reported to be at Lundi Business Center enjoying the brown bottles and were inebriated. The headmaster and the author saw them in the state of drunkenness. Comrade Zuva was a very good political commissar. He was preaching about the war, cease fire, and the forth-coming elections in March. When he was asked about the rendezvous and assembly points, his reply was that he was there. He had been sent out on a ZANLA Mission to round off their business and mobilize the *povo* for the elections. There was no reason to doubt him, but the rate of drinking raised questions. It was a ZANLA strategy to leave some of the guerrillas outside rendezvous and assembly points in case of unknown eventualities.

At about 9:30 p.m. the headmaster had a knock at his door. It was Mrs. Tavaziva, the boarding mistress. She reported that Comrade Zuva and his colleagues were causing havoc in the girls' hostels. They were using tactics to have the company of girls, like the ones used during the days of the *chimbwidos*. Some girls, who had never had these war experiences, were wailing and shrieking. The boarding mistress, Mrs. Tavaziva, failed to control the girls. The guerrillas had threatened to beat up, kill, or maim all those who resisted. They also threatened to burn down the mission if the authorities hindered them to carry out the so-called duties of ZANU and ZANLA.

The headmaster went to the girls' hostels. This was not the Tendai Zuva he used to know, and whom he had seen at the Lundi Business Centre. They were in a drunken world. The guerrillas insisted on taking girls out of the hostels for private discussions, and they were prepared to shoot those who refused or prevented them on their intended business. This was rape and abduction in the name of ZANLA assignment. The headmaster and boarding mistress saw that the threats could be easily made into a horrible reality. They might kill and burn the hostels. The headmaster did a very wise thing when he left and drove straight to Ngundu where the Combined cease-fire team had a small office. They in turn phoned Masvingo headquarters.⁴ The team from Masvingo, led by ZANLA Commander Munyoro, reacted swiftly, and went to the mission. He and the headmaster went to the girls' hostels.

⁴ Interview with A. D. Ndebele, Lundi Mission, January, 1980.

As a result of intoxication, the judgment of the guerrillas had been impaired. Comrade Munyoro, the headmaster and colleagues heard the voices of men and girls. Probably some of the girls were enjoying the company. There was great need for caution and wise strategy to arrest them. Comrade Munyoro was a professional guerrilla, so he knew how to get hold of them. On the other hand, intoxication had made the guerrillas forget alertness and caution, and they had laid their guns aside in the company of girls. Comrade Munyoro took Zuva and friends by storm. They were given no chance to fight or escape for they were surrounded, and the young girls were ordered to go to their hostels. The Commander immediately recognized his wayward guerrillas, who also recognized him. The guerrillas were tied by the steel wires used by girls to hang their clothes.

Comrade Zuva, on behalf of the group, was ordered to explain their operations since the official announcement of the cease-fire. He gave a correct account. He had decided not to report to the rendezvous, because they were not sure. They had lied to the *povo* that they were on a ZANLA rounding off mission. Then he started to give examples of how he had contributed in the war, his family background in Manicaland Province, and apologies. Comrade Munyoro announced that he was going to punish them the ZANLA way.

They were tied with what is called in Hlengwe '*timbila takondo*'. Hands and feet were tied and a strong stick was passed under knees. Then the victim was pushed to lie on one side. Then they were beaten up by large sticks. At first they were crying out loud, but finally became silent in a state of shock. They were literally thrown in the back of a truck like inanimate objects. The Commander and colleagues, who had this cargo, drove off after midnight back to Masvingo.⁵ This was the last time Comrade Zuva was seen at Lundi Mission until after independence. After independence Comrade, Tendai Zuva, who had now become a civil servant, made several visits on social occasions around Lundi Mission.

The Comrade Tendai Zuva saga nearly rocked the mission when the war had officially come to an end. If the case had not been well handled, because of over-excitement and inebriation, Comrade Zuva and friends could have burnt down the hostels, or shot at some of the authorities. A shoot-out between Comrade Munyoro and Comrade Zuva could have resulted in deaths of innocent people. Deaths and injuries could have happened in the mission during peaceful times, which had not happened during the wartime. This was an explosive situation that could have turned very nasty. It was a miracle that the explosion was avoided at the last minute. The Miracle of Lundi Mission. Lest we forget!

Life in the mission station returned to normal after the Comrade Tendai Zuva saga. Lessons continued without interruptions. Combined cease-fire teams visited the mission time and again monitoring the cease-fire exercise. In February 1980, representatives of political parties such as ZANU PF, ZAPU PF and UANC visited the mission campaigning for parliamentary elections. When the election dates were fixed, Lundi Mission became one of the voting centres. The mission offices, which housed the headmaster's office, bursar's office and reception office, were used as voting booths. Elections came and passed with ZANU PF winning the elections.

On the day when election results were announced there was uncontrollable joy in the

⁵ Ibid.

mission. The Lundi Mission zone was a ZANLA zone during the war. No wonder there was great jubilation and celebration when ZANU PF was pronounced the winner. On 18 April 1980, Zimbabwe became an independent state. This officially marked the end of the Liberation War.

THE MIRACLE OF LUNDI MISSION

At the end of 1979 more than 95 percent of mission institutions with schools and clinics in the countryside had been closed. Most rural business centres had been closed. Lundi had survived, and the only time it was closed was for three hours in April 1979.

Whenever missions were closed it was after students, staff members and other residents were killed, injured or arrested. Not a single person had been killed or injured within Lundi Mission premises. The headmaster, deputy head, and a senior teacher were arrested for four days in 1978, and later released.

Missions that closed were ransacked, plundered and looted of valuable goods, buildings, roofs, doors and windows. In some cases local people took advantage, and looted property even before the mission institutions were closed. The looters used the "sell-out" bogey to threaten the mission authorities so that they could loot. This never happened except for a few strands of fence stolen by well-known criminal elements. The fence was recovered and returned by the local elders who wanted to preserve their mission. Lundi Mission survived in an environment when most of the missions collapsed. This was a Miracle. Some analysts had attempted to provide answers to its survival, rather than accept the explanation of a Miracle of God. Lest We Forget!

CHAPTER TWELVE

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HLENGWE AND OTHER EARLY CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

The establishment of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe followed Cecil John Rhodes' policy of granting large tracts of land to the missionaries who would teach Africans values of the Bible and make them better workers for white settlers. On the other hand, missionaries were given a free hand to teach their Christian doctrines, provide educational and medical services. This gave birth to a symbiotic relationship between the government and missionaries which lasted throughout the years.¹ The only Christian mission which was outside Rhodes' arrangement was the London Missionary Society which set up Inyati Mission on 23 December 1859 after an agreement of friendship between Robert Moffat and the Ndebele King Mzilikazi. In 1870 Mzilikazi's son and heir allowed them to set up Hope Fountain Mission. Lobengula also allowed the Jesuits Fathers of the Roman Catholic Church to open Empandeni Mission in 1880.² These missions introduced Christian schools, medical services, modern farming methods and technical skills among the Ndebele, which were greatly valued later on.

When Rhodes and his British South Africa Company occupied the country in 1890 there was an influx of Christian Missions establishing mission institutions throughout the country. Mission stations meant medical and educational services which became a great demand with the dawn of each day. The advantages and benefits of medical and educational services, became a pre-requisite for a better and modern way of living. The interesting historical fact was that although various Christian denominations established stations among the different ethnic groups in Zimbabwe, there was no meaningful mission set up among the Hlengwe until 1939. The Hlengwe felt neglected by the early missionaries until the Free Methodist Church from the United States of America established Lundi Mission in 1939. The Hlengwe, like other ethnic groups were suspicious and cautious regarding white settler and Christian civilization. However, after the First World War they began to appreciate medical and educational services mainly provided to the Africans by missionaries. Unfortunately, there were no mission institutions among the Hlengwe until 1939.

The Roman Catholic Church, the largest of all Christian missionary organizations, opened Chishawasha Mission in 1892 among the Zezuru. The different orders of the church soon spread their religious, educational and medical activities among all the Shona dialectical ethnic groups and the Ndebele. St. Ignatius, St. Dominic's and Kutama Mission became very popular among the Zezuru in Mashonaland Province. Bondolfi, Gokomere, Serima, Silveria, St. Antony and Berejena Missions served the Karanga in Masvingo Province. Holy Cross, Hama and Driefontein Missions were set up to provide services in the Midlands province among the Karanga and Ndebele. Marist Nyanga and Kriste Mambo and Monte Cassino were built to cater mainly for the Manyika. After

¹ Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

² Smith, K. M., The London Missionary Society in Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

1890 it expanded its activities among the Ndebele which it had started during the reign of Lobengula, the last king of the Ndebele.³ The nearest point the Catholics came to the Hlengwe was Matibi Mission, which even though was built to serve the Karanga. The interesting fact was that the Catholic Church with its octopus activities among the African ethnic groups in Zimbabwe, avoided the Hlengwe until the late 1950's. However, a few Hlengwe managed to be in direct contact with Catholic educational and medical services. For instance, the Hlengwe who were close to Matibi Mission, Gokomere Mission, Bondolfi, Berejena and St. Anthony (Musiso) Missions became aware of benefits brought by Christian missionaries and yearned to have their own Missions. Therefore, when the Free Methodist Church came, the Hlengwe were prepared to protect and preserve missionary institutions.

After 1939 when the Free Methodist Church had built Lundi Mission, the Catholics began to have interest among the Hlengwe. There was little cooperation between the Free Methodist Church and Catholics. There were some deep differences in their church doctrines and principles. However, this must not be interpreted to mean enmity or hatred. The historical facts were that even by 1980 the Catholics had not made a great impact among the Hlengwe, compared to the Free Methodist Church.

The Dutch Reformed Church from South Africa opened its first mission at Morgenster on 9 September, 1891, in Chief Mugabe's area among the Karanga. It concentrated its activities among the Karanga in Gutu, Zaka, Bikita, Nyajena and Chivi Districts.⁴ The Karanga of Zaka, Bikita, Nyajena and Chivi were neighbours of the Hlengwe, but the Dutch Reformed Church ignored the Hlengwe until the 1950's. However, before 1939 an insignificant population of the Hlengwe managed to receive educational and medical services from the Dutch institutions, particularly at Morgenster Mission. These Hlengwe who benefited from Dutch institutions spread the word among their kith and kin.

The Hlengwe yearned to have their own Christian medical and educational institutions. When the Free Methodist Church established their churches, schools and medical institutions among the Hlengwe, from 1939 strong cooperation developed between the two Christian organizations. The Hlengwe benefited very much from this relationship. The first Hlengwe teachers, nurses, and pastors were trained at the Dutch institutions. For instance, the aging choir master, Mr. Muzakwata Vhulengoma Chauke now retired from teaching, and the late Joel Daniel Chauke an active member of the Free Methodist Church were some of the first Hlengwe teachers trained by the Dutch Reformed church at Morgenster Mission. Mrs. Sarah Muzamani and Mrs. Betina Chauke were the pioneer medical nurses at Morgenster Mission Hospital, Lundi Clinic and Chikombedzi Hospital.⁵ There were limitations on cooperation which created a desire among the Hlengwe to have their own institutions.

It must be put on record that in 1895 the Dutch Reformed Church had sent Joseph Mboweni, a Hlengwe, to open a church school in Paramount Chief Chitanga's area of the

³ Kammerledmer, J., 'The Roman Catholic Church', in Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

⁴ Jackson, S. K., 'The Dutch Reformed Church', in Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

⁵ Interview with Daniel Gwalale Chauke, Lundi Mission, 1978. The author had many formal and informal interviews with D. G. Chauke whose son, the late Joel D. Chauke was one of the pioneer primary Hlengwe teachers.

Hlengwe people. Mboweni received very little support from the mother body who were not eager to serve the Hlengwe; hence among other factors the operations of the school and church were short lived.⁶ However, desire for literacy was created among some of the Hlengwe people. This desire was abruptly terminated and the Hlengwe yearned to have their own institutions.

According to a popular interpretation circulated among the Hlengwe, Mboweni lost favor in the eyes of Paramount Chief Chitanga, hence his church and school were short lived. One of Chief Chitanga's sons by the name of Chimuji attended Mboweni's school when it was opened in 1895. He lived at the school and when the school closed he disappeared forever. Some claim that he secretly disappeared and is believed to have joined the migrant labour trek to South Africa, after acquiring basic literacy of writing, arithmetic, reading and speaking the Queen's language (English). Mboweni, out of fear, hesitated to inform the chief who later found it by himself.⁷ Mboweni was forced to abandon his station and relocated about 20 kilometres from the Chief's site among the Karanga. He opened the new mission in 1916 which he named Rata from a Hlengwe hymn referring to the 'Second Coming of Christ'.⁸ A few Hlengwe managed to follow up Mboweni's educational services at Rata Mission. This was a small station with little support from the Dutch Reformed Church, located on the fringes of Hlengwe area. However, Mboweni's Mission had created an awareness of educational benefits among the Hlengwe. In a way he had prepared the way for Ralph Jacobs among the Hlengwe of Chief Chitanga.

The Anglican Church opened its first mission in Matebeleland in 1893. This was followed by stations in Salisbury (Harare), Bulawayo, Penhalonga (St. Augustine), Rusape, Shurugwi and Chivhu. St. David Bonda in Manicaland, St. Patrick near Gweru, St. Bernard Muzeki Marondera and St. Mary's Harare were some of its major educational and medical headquarters representing various parts of the country.⁹ The Anglicans served almost all ethnic groups in Zimbabwe, minus the Hlengwe, even at independence in 1980. The scope of this account did not look into the reasons why the Anglican Church avoided coming into Hlengweland, even after the Free Methodist Church had opened the way in 1939.

In 1891 the Methodist Church (United Kingdom) started its work in Harare. Between 1892 and 1914 it opened some of its reputable churches, educational and medical institutions, such as Waddilove (Nenguvo), Kwenda, Tegwani, Gwaai, Shurugwi, Kadoma and Hwedza (Chimanga).¹⁰ They concentrated their activities among the Shona (Zezuru) and Ndebele. The United Kingdom Methodists (Wesleyan) had nothing to do with the Hlengwe even after 1939.

The Salvation Army started its work in May 1892 in the Mazoe Valley among the Shona. It later on spread its Christian educational and medical services in the Lomagundi area, Bindura, Mt. Darwin – Bradley Institute, Madziwa, Masembura, Bushy Hurungwe,

⁶ Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

⁷ Interview with Paramount Chief Chimamise Chitanga, Chitanga Residence, 1680. The author had many formal and informal interviews with the Chief from April, 1980 to 1981.

⁸ Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

⁹ Gibbon, R. G. and Pugh, G. H., 'The Anglican Church', Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

¹⁰ Thorpe, C., 'The Methodist Church (United Kingdom)', in Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

Harare and Gweru among the Shona. Howard Institute, opened in 1924, became its headquarters for church and educational services. The army stretched its work among the Ndebele by opening stations at Nata, Semokwe, Filabusi, Figtree and Kana. In Gutu and Zaka it served the Karanga. It also opened a station among the Manyika in Mutare.¹¹ However, the Salvation Army also avoided the Hlengwe.

The American Board of Commissions for Foreign Missions established Mount Selinda Mission on October 19, 1893 and in 1895 Chikore Mission, all in the Chipinge District of Manicaland Province.¹² The educational and medical institutions set up at these missions had a great impact in the district and throughout Zimbabwe. A carpentry course spread the name of Mount Selinda in the whole country. In 1919 Mr. E. D. Alvord, an agriculturist, set up a farming experiment which later on heralded modern scientific methods of farming such as crop rotation throughout the country. His successful farming methods made him to be employed by the government. In honor of his services Alvord Agriculture Experiment Institute near Masvingo was named after him. In 1908 the mission, with the cooperation of Rev. Hatch of Rusitu Mission set up a printing press which published material on the Ndau dialect. By 1925 a training course for nurses and a building course were established at Mount Selinda. In 1955 one of the earliest secondary schools was started at Chikore Mission. In 1959 a Higher Teacher's Training course was set up at Mount Selinda.¹³

Although the American board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions targeted its work among the Ndau ethnic group, its impact was felt all over the country. The Hlengwe are kith and kin of the Ndau and geographical neighbours. A few Hlengwe students found themselves registered at Mt. Selinda and Chikore Missions. They soon told those at home the benefits of modern educational and medical services. Some of the Hlengwe began to wish they could have their own 'Mt. Selindas' in their own areas. After the establishment of Lundi Mission in 1939, aware of their shortcomings, the Free Methodist Mission established cooperation with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Free Methodist Mission students were sent to Mt. Selinda for further education and training. For instance, the first Hlengwe woman primary teacher after graduating at Lundi Mission, Mrs. Grace Manokore nee (Miss Grace Chauke), had part of her teacher training at Mt. Selinda.¹⁴ The fact was that the few Hlengwe who were exposed to the educational and medical services at Mt. Selinda and Chikore spread their benefits among their people.

Hence, when the Hlengwe had their own 'Mt. Selinda and Chikore Missions' in the form of Lundi and Chikombedzi Missions, they were not prepared to lose them in any way. It must be taken note that Lundi Mission primary and secondary schools later on offered agriculture and carpentry courses, which were very successful to the students and the local community.

In 1894 the Seventh Day Adventist Mission opened its first mission at Solusi Mission near Bulawayo. This was followed by other mission stations at Lower Gweru, Hwanke –

¹¹ Cox, R., 'The Salvation Army', in Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

¹² Abbott, D. K., 'The American Board of Commissions for foreign Missions', in Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Interview with Mrs. Grace Manokore, number 76, Cambridge Road, Greendale, Harare, 12, August, 2002. She is a retired primary school teacher.

Selukwe and Glendale near Fort Victoria. In their mission schools they introduced industrial education, orchards, herds of milk cows, crafts of woodworking and iron working. Girls were taught household arts such as cooking, sewing, knitting, house keeping, laundering and gardening.¹⁵ The Seventh Day Adventist Mission's activities had a zero influence on Hlengwe people even after 1939. It was still possible that some Hlengwe who worked in Bulawayo came in contact with graduates from Seventh Day Adventist Missions who testified about benefits they received from these institutions. The church had concentrated its mission among the Ndebele, Kalanga and Karanga.

In 1897 the South Africa General Mission opened its first station at Rusitu in Chief Dzingire's area in the Masetter (Chimanimani) District. In 1900 the Nda language was transformed into written language and a first Nda dictionary published. At Rusitu and Biriwiri Missions, educational and medical services were established. An orphanage and Bible school were set up at Rusitu in 1952. In 1956 a teacher training course for primary schools was opened at Biriwiri Mission.¹⁶ Before 1939 a few Hlengwe students attended school at these Missions. They brought good news of these institutions when they returned home. This created awareness among the Hlengwe, kith and kin of the Nda where these missions were situated. When the Free Methodist established Lundi Mission in 1939 they developed a strong relationship with the South Africa General Mission. Many students from Lundi Mission were sent to Rusitu and Biriwiri Missions for higher education and teacher training courses. The author, after ZJC at Lundi Secondary School, did his O Level at Biriwiri Secondary School. The first black Hlengwe Free Methodist Church superintendent, Luke Klemo, did his secondary education at Rusitu Mission.¹⁷

These missions were primarily for the Nda, hence the Hlengwe wanted their own missions. Therefore, when the Hlengwe had their own missions they made sure that they protected them. The South Africa General Mission could only accommodate a small number from other missions.

The United Methodist Church of the United States of America opened its first mission station at Old Umtali (Hartzell) in October 1898 among the Manyika in the Manicaland Province. This was soon followed by a chain of missions such as Mutambara 1908, Nyakatsapa 1907, Murehwa 1909, Mtoko 1911 and Nyadiri in 1922. Medical and educational services were established in the mission stations, which were spread among the Manyika, Nda and Zezuru. Religious, academic, industrial, agricultural, educational, teacher training courses and nurses training were set up at Old Umtali, Mutambara, Murehwa and Nyadiri. In 1907 the Mission Press was established which printed literature in the Manyika language. Hospitals and nurse's training schools were opened at Mutambara, Old Umtali and Nyadiri. The Methodists of the United States in cooperation with its counterpart the Methodist of Great Britain, opened one of the most celebrated Christian training centres, Epworth Theological College in Harare.¹⁸

The American Methodist, though it confined its activities among the Manyika and

¹⁵ Reid, F. G., 'The Seventh Day Adventist Missions', in Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

¹⁶ Glen, R., 'The South Africa General Mission (Rusitu)', in Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

¹⁷ Interview with Luke Klemo, Christian Care Centre, Eastlea, Harare, August, 1991.

¹⁸ Hassing, P., 'The Methodist Church (U.S.A.) in Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

Zezeru, had an influence among the Hlengwe after 1939. The Free Methodist Mission established a close relationship with Old Umtali Mission. The first Hlengwe primary woman schoolteacher, Mrs. Grace Manokore, referred to in an earlier account had part of her training at Old Umtali. The nationalist and political activist, John Mandleve Chauke, had his secondary education and training as a higher primary school teacher at Old Umtali.¹⁹ A good number of Hlengwe students attended Old Umtali (Hartzell) High School.

The educational and medical services provided by Old Umtali were spread among the Hlengwe by their own sons and daughters who were graduates of this institution. Old Umtali was primarily set up for the Manyika and it could only admit a small number of the Hlengwe students. It became imperative that if the Hlengwe wanted more students to be admitted, they had to have their own 'Old Umtali'. This could be done by expanding Lundi Mission and Free Methodist activities among the Hlengwe. This was the reason why the Hlengwe made sure that Lundi Mission had to be preserved against its adversaries.

On 11 October 1898 the Brethren in Christ officially opened Matopo Mission. This was followed by Mtshabezi Mission in Gwanda District in July 1906. Wanezi Mission was opened in the Filabusi District and Tsholotsho Mission in the Gwaai District. The Brethren in Christ Mission targeted the Ndebele and Kalanga. Tsholotsho Mission also targeted the San (Bushmen). A school, a primary teacher's lower certificate course, a building course and a medical hospital were established at Mtshabezi Mission. Matopo Mission became a center of a secondary school, a primary teacher's higher certificate, a medical hospital and a book depot. A Bible School institute, a central primary school, a homecraft school for women and a clinic were established at Wanezi Mission.²⁰

The Brethren in Christ Mission, although intended to serve the Ndebele, and geographically very far from the Hlengwe, its activities had a great impact over the Hlengwe after 1939. The Free Methodist Church being aware of their limited financial, material, manpower and educational resources, established strong relationships with the Brethren in Christ Church. In each year Free Methodist missionaries allocated a number of students to attend the secondary school and a primary Teacher Higher Certificate course. The same applied to the Primary Teacher's Lower Certificate Course.²¹ This was a noble and mutual arrangement which was made by the missionaries to benefit the Hlengwe. By 1980, a majority of the Hlengwe primary teachers were graduates of Matopo and Mtshabezi Mission. Before 1970 a large number of Hlengwe Form 4 or O Level graduates were from Matopo Mission. For example, the late Mr. Simon Major Chauke, one of the first and long-serving Hlengwe higher primary school headmasters was a graduate of Matopo Mission. He was the pioneer headmaster of Chikombedzi High Primary School in 1961.²²

¹⁹ Interview with Mr.s Grace Manokore, number 76, Cambridge Road, Greendale, Harare, 12, August, 2002.

²⁰ Chimenhaga, A. M., 'The Brethren in Christ', in Houser, T. A., *Free Methodist and Other Missions in Zimbabwe*, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

²¹ Interview with T. A. Houser, 12 Dunstable Circle, Avonlea, Harare, 27, August, 2001. The author had many formal and informal interviews spanning many years with Rev. T. A. Houser.

²² Interview with Mr. Simon Major Chauke, June 1989, 101 Derby Road Bellevue, Bulawayo. Mr. S. M. Chauke was the pioneer headmaster of Chikombedzi Higher Primary School in 1961, the second higher primary school for the Free Methodist Church after Lundi Higher Primary School.

The Hlengwe became aware of the educational and medical benefits brought by Matopo and Mtshabezi Missions. Only a number of their children could be admitted at any given time; hence they wanted their own 'Matopos' and 'Mtshabezi's. When the Hlengwe had Lundi Secondary School as their only one since 1965 to 1980, there was no way they could let it slip out of their fingers. Unfortunately, until 1980 the Free Methodist Mission, although the spirit was willing, financial resources inhibited the establishment of a Teacher's Training Course.

The Church of Christ or Foreign Mission Union of Associated Churches of Christ in New Zealand, opened its first Church in Bulawayo in 1898 among the Ndebele. In 1912 it opened a church in the Lundi Reserve among the Karanga. Dadaya, opened in 1919, became the mission's headquarters. In 1947 a secondary school was opened, to be followed by a Higher Teacher Training Course in 1951. Dadaya was centered among the Karanga and within reach of the Ndebele. However, its activities soon became national and the Hlengwe also became beneficiaries. The Rev. Garfield Todd, who also became a politician and Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia 1953 – 1958, and his wife, made Dadaya a national educational center.²³ It was after 1939 when the Free Methodist Mission established cooperation with Dadaya that the Hlengwe began to benefit from this reputable educational center. A very small number of graduates from Lundi Mission were sent to Dadaya for higher education and Teacher Training courses. The impact made on the Hlengwe by the graduates from Dadaya was great compared to their numbers.

The late Joseph Muzamani Chauke was the first Hlengwe sent by the Free Methodist Church from Lundi Mission to Dadaya. He did his Secondary and Higher Teachers Training Course at Dadaya in the early 1950's. The Hlengwe student left an indelible record among students and teachers for being a genius. He came first in academic work and extramural activities at the institution. He was a gifted, magnetic and persuasive speaker.²⁴ His reputation was echoed by many of his school and classmates at Dadaya. The recent information was in 2002 in an interview with Mr. S. Ndebele after 50 years, when he was a classmate of Joseph Muzamani Chauke at Dadaya.²⁵

After graduating from Dadaya Mission, Mr. Joseph Muzamani Chauke was the first Hlengwe and black teacher at Lundi Higher Primary School manned by white missionaries. He was the first Hlengwe and black member of the Free Methodist Church from Zimbabwe to represent the church in its worldwide General Conference in the United States of America. He was the first Hlengwe to become an education officer in 1970 when the government took control of all primary schools from missionaries. Unfortunately, it was then that he became an innocent victim of the Liberation War in August 1976 according to existing evidence.

Rev. T. A. Houser, who closely associated and worked with Joseph Muzamani Chauke for 28 years described him, as 'a brilliant, mild-mannered, leading layman in the church, he often worked for closer communication between the mission and church,

²³ Knapp, R., 'The Church or Foreign Mission of Associated Churches of Christ in New Zealand', in Houser, T. A., *Free Methodist and other Missions in Zimbabwe*, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

²⁴ Interview with Mr. Mazarire, Masvingo, August, 1976. Mr. Mazarire was an education officer and a classmate of the late Joseph Muzamani Chauke at Dadaya.

²⁵ Interview with Mr. S. Ndebele, 22 Princess Rd., Bulawayo, 14 September, 2002. Mr. Ndebele is a retired educationist who was at one time a headmaster and education officer.

schools and medical services. The Annual Conference elected him secretary for many years because of his excellent knowledge of English'.²⁶ His death was a great loss and irreplaceable among the Hlengwe and the Zimbabwe nation.

Joseph Muzamani Chauke's life history was associated with the words 'always first'. He was a pride of relatives, parents and colleagues. He was a living testimony and practical demonstration of what missionary education represented. All thinking parents wanted their sons to be 'Joseph Muzamani Chaukes'. They were aware that to be like him, they had to go to school. There was a need to have their own 'Dadaya' institutions to facilitate attaining their ambitions. Therefore, when Lundi Secondary School was opened, it was a chance to have their own 'Dadaya' to produce their own 'Joseph Muzamanis'. Lundi Mission had to be protected and preserved.

The late Mr. Simon Jonah Chibaya was another distinguished graduate of Dadaya Mission, sent there by the Free Methodist Church. His father, Pastor Jonah Chibaya, was one of the pioneer local black evangelists for the Free Methodist church. Simon Chibaya was a Karanga, but his mother was a Hlengwe, nee Martha Matsilele Chauke. He left an indelible mark as a primary school and music teacher between 1960 and 1996. The impact made by the late Joseph Muzamani Chauke and the late Simon Chibaya was a clear testimony of the benefits of missionary education. It was all there for the Hlengwe people to see. There was a need for Hlengwe to have their 'Dadaya'. Lundi Secondary School became a little example of Dadaya Mission and its benefits.

The Presbyterian Church began its work in Bulawayo in 1898. Schools, churches and medical clinics were built at David Livingstone Ntabazinduna, Gloag Ranch Mission, Salisbury, Gwelo, Wankie, Shabani and Gwanda.²⁷ Most of the mission's work was concentrated among the Ndebele and to a lesser extent among the Karanga and Zezuru. Any influence among the Hlengwe before 1980 must have been very indirect or very minimal.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church started its work in Southern Rhodesia in 1900. The schools and churches that were established mainly served the Zezuru and Ndebele. The church offered nothing for the Hlengwe people on known record.²⁸

In 1903 the Church of Sweden opened missions in Selukwe and Vukwe near Mnene. Mnene Mission became the headquarters of the Church of Sweden. In the Gwanda District, the Dutch Reformed Church asked them to take over their Masase Mission to reach the Birboa ethnic group of the Sotho dialect. Manama Mission served the Venda of the Beitbridge area. After Mnene Mission, they also built Chegato Mission in the Belingwe (Mberengwa) District to serve the Karanga.²⁹ The Church of Sweden did not intend to serve the Hlengwe, but because of the neighborliness between the Karanga of Mberengwa and the Hlengwe District of Mwenezi, the Hlengwe ended up using the educational and medical services. The Hlengwe and Karanga took advantage of the Selous Pioneer trail 'pato la Masutule'; as the Hlengwe called it, to communicate with each other. There are some Hlengwe communities who are located in Mberengwa. In

²⁶ Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000, p.82.

²⁷ Leask, A. G., 'The Presbyterian Church', in Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

²⁸ Tladi, S. J. N., 'The African Methodist Church', in Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

²⁹ Albrekton, K., 'The Church of Sweden', in Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

the course of contact with their large communities in Mwenezi, they related to them educational and medical benefits brought by the Church of Sweden. Thus when the Free Methodist Missionaries arrived in 1939, some of the Hlengwe were eager to set up Lundi Mission, were prepared to make it theirs and preserve it forever.

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland came to Southern Rhodesia in 1924. The mission's target was the Fingoe ethnic group and later on the Ndebele. Schools and clinics were established at Ingwenya Mission in the Ntabazinduna reserve, Zenka Mission in the Shangaani Reserve and Mbuma Mission. In 1954 Mbuma Teacher training centre was set up.³⁰ However, the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland had very little if any influence on the Hlengwe people.

This survey on the relationship between the Hlengwe and Christian missionary churches before 1939 was an attempt to show how the Hlengwe were by-passed. This will help to explain the reasons why the major churches avoided or ignored the Hlengwe until 1939. According to the discussed issues, the churches were jostling and competing among other indigenous ethnic groups at the expense of the Hlengwe. This will assist to show why the Hlengwe valued and respected the Free Methodist Church and its missions. However, it would be historically wrong to say that the Hlengwe were totally ignored by the missionaries in the early 1890's of missionary penetration in Zimbabwe.

In 1896 the Swiss Mission from Valdezia thirty miles east of Louis Trichardt in the Transvaal, sent missionaries to ask permission from Chief Sengwe of the Hlengwe people in Zimbabwe to open a church and a school. Valdezia Mission was opened in 1875 to cater to the Hlengwe. In 1895 the Transvaal Republic Government introduced a new law the 'plakkerswet' intended to limit the number of African families to five on each European farm. The Swiss Mission superiors realized that if the law was enforced, thousands of Hlengwe families would leave the Transvaal, cross the Limpopo and settle in the then British South Africa Company colony, now Zimbabwe.³¹ Therefore, the intention of the Swiss Mission was not to open a mission among the original Hlengwe of Zimbabwe, but a follow up of their Hlengwe from the Transvaal.

Rev. H. Berthoud, accompanied by another white missionary the Africans called 'Zhani', made the journey on foot and a donkey pack from Valdezia to Chief Sengwe's area in 1896. Chief Sengwe welcomed the building of a mission station probably bringing more subject people under his control.³² However, it must be noted that young men from Chief Sengwe's area had been crossing into Transvaal as migrant labourers in the cities, mines and farms. They witnessed benefits of education and medical services largely provided to the Africans by white missionaries. Thus, Chief Sengwe was not immune to such good stories, not to welcome the Swiss Missionaries in his chiefdom.

Rev. Berthoud returned to Valdezia. He sent Rev. Rosset and an assistant, Miss Pittert, to open Dzombo Mission on the upper slopes of Dzombo Hill in Chief Sengwe's area. They arrived during a disastrous drought period and there had been no rain for 15 months. Most of the Hlengwe males were absent from the villages in search for food. The missionaries were constantly racked with malaria.

In 1897, eight months after the establishment of Dzombo Mission, food shortages and

³⁰ Nicolson, J., 'The Presbyterian Church of Scotland', in Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

³¹ Wright, A., Valley of the Ironwoods, Cape and Transvaal, Cape Town, 1972.

³² Ibid.

malaria forced Rev. Rosset, his wife, two small sons and the assistant to abandon the Dzombo Mission enterprise. Rosset was carried on a litter back to Valdezia because he was too ill to walk. Rev. Rosset's report about the severe drought and malaria obviously forced the Swiss Mission to abandon the plan. The British South Africa Company had drawn a lease that a white missionary was to be resident at any mission site. The conditions at Dzombo were uncondusive for white missionaries to stay. On the other hand, the Transvaal government had not enforced the 'plakkerswet' law.

The anticipated Hlengwe exodus from the Transvaal into Zimbabwe had not happened. For twenty years the Swiss Mission had appointed an African itinerant evangelist, Zibidiya, to hold fort before Dzombo Mission was permanently closed.³³

In 1958 (and 1990) the remains of Rosset's house built of ironwood could still be seen. The story of Dzombo Mission remained and still remains a legendary event among the Hlengwe people of Chief Sengwe.³⁴ Its educational and religious impact was very insignificant. However, its presence heralded a new chapter among the Hlengwe. It was possible that this historical event influenced the later Chief Makote Sengwe to invite the Free Methodist Church in 1928 from Mozambique to come and open a mission in his area. The first mission was not opened in his area, but in Chief Chitanga's, his kith and kin. It was only in 1950 that Dumisa Mission was opened in Chief Sengwe's area.³⁵

The episode of Dzombo Mission had a negative impact on other Christian missions. All those who heard and read about the disastrous end of Dzombo Mission were discouraged to set up missions among the Hlengwe until 1939.

After the Free Methodist Church had established Lundi Mission in 1939 and Chikombedzi Mission in 1947 among the Hlengwe, the Assembly of God Church missionaries were interested in the Sengwe area in 1948. Rev. Austin Chawners of the Assembly of God Mission in the Northern Transvaal visited the Hlengwe areas of Chikombedzi and Sengwe. The Assembly of God opened Marumbini Mission at the confluence of the Save and Lundi rivers. Henry Koopman and his wife Florence resided at the mission. Koopman also established a few schools in the Nuanetsi District, mainly in Matibi no. 2 and Sengwe areas.³⁶

The Assembly of God Mission's activities ceased, particularly educational work, when Koopman and his wife left Marumbini in the early 1960's. The neat and tidy buildings fell into disrepair. The Hlengwe in Marumbini wanted nothing from the whites, but conceded that the mission school was very useful as long as the missionaries did not try to educate their daughters. They feared educated girls would become prostitutes.³⁷ This was a general Hlengwe attitude in the early days of missionary education. The Koopman's helped them with medicine, but had their own herbal remedies. When the Assemblies of God Mission left, the Free Methodist Mission was left with a monopoly to provide educational and medical services among the Hlengwe. It must be recorded that the Catholics had started moving in when they built Chanyenga in the late 1950's, but their service was very minimal. Therefore, the Hlengwe largely

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.p.17.

³⁵ Embree, E., Now Rings the Bell. The story of Ralph Jacobs, Missionary pioneer to Africa, Light And Life Press, Winona Lake, Indiana,1978.

³⁶ Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

³⁷ Wright, A., Valley of the Ironwoods, Cape and Transvaal, Cape Town, 1972.

looked upon the Free Methodist Mission for genuine educational and medical services. After tasting the niceties of modern educational and medical services, the Hlengwe could not easily let it go.

The Free Methodist Church and its missionaries took care of the Hlengwe, who had been by-passed by the other Christian missionaries. The 1890 to 1939 era proved that Christian missionary medical and educational services were becoming a prerequisite for development. The Hlengwe noticed that better life could be acquired through modern education and medical services.

The new economic and political dispensation demanded educated people. Government and private sector officials had to be educated, attain certain levels of literacy, professions and skills. The majority of government officials who worked among the Hlengwe such as teachers, agriculture demonstrators, dip tank attendants, policemen and District messengers were Karanga, Zezuru and Ndebele. The Hlengwe often complained that officials who were of non-Hlengwe ethnic groups ill-treated and discriminated against them. They were treated as foreigners in their own land. The Hlengwe were aware of the cause. There had been no meaningful educational and medical institutions among them until 1939, compared to the areas where these officials came from. The Hlengwe lagged behind because they never had a mission institution. The solution was clear for the Hlengwe. They needed their own mission institutions.

When the Hlengwe arrived in Zimbabwe in the 1840's, they were conquerors and victors. They had conquered some of the Karanga groups and subjected some Shona groups as tributaries. The Hlengwe were a proud group until the arrival of the white settlers in 1890. The arrival of Christian missionaries, with their educational and medical services, brought a new order. It was no longer a question of being a good warrior to be great or popular. Education became a criterion for one to be popular, great and famous. The Hlengwe felt humiliated when the people whom they once looked down upon were now their masters, bosses and supervisors. The solution to solve the problem was to attain education. Education could only be attained from Christian Mission schools. Therefore, when the Free Methodist Mission introduced education and medical services, they were over-due as far as a majority of the Hlengwe were concerned.

The missionaries also scored a Christian diplomatic victory. When they noticed that they lacked adequate financial and manpower resources, they soon entered into cooperation with other missions. They successfully entered into cooperation with the Dutch Reformed Church and the Brethren in Christ. 'The Free Methodist Mission interacted with other Missions in many ways, comity agreements were made'.³⁸ This immensely benefited the Hlengwe.

All of this helps to explain why the Hlengwe were prepared to protect and preserve Lundi Mission. On the other hand, God made the majority of the Hlengwe Christians and non-Christians aware that they could no longer live and prosper without the mission, given to them by men and women of God. The majority was prepared to stand by the mission through thick and thin during the Liberation War.

³⁸ Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE SURVIVAL OF LUNDI MISSION DURING THE WAR

Some have attempted to explain the survival of Lundi Mission during the war due to other factors other than the theory of a miracle, even though they have seen some evidence of a miracle. Christian believers, as well as non-believers, had seen God's intervention in the survival of the Mission.

The foundation of Lundi Mission is linked to the founder, Rev. Ralph Jacobs, and his mother's vision.

Rev. Ralph Jacobs was born in Youngsville, Pennsylvania on October 1, 1889. His ambition was to be a farmer in the Yakima Valley, Washington. It was Rev. H. C. Morrison of the Free Methodist Church who brought him to Christ. Ralph Jacobs had this to say concerning his conversion, "When I was converted, I immediately felt that the bottom had dropped out of my plan for my life. The great cry of my heart was for God to show me concerning my life's work. This continued for several years until one day during my schooling at Greenville while in secret prayer I heard the Lord speaking as plain as though by an audible voice saying, 'I want you in Africa'. I immediately rose from my knees, went into the sitting room where my mother was, and told her that the Lord had called me to Africa"¹ His mother replied that several times she had seen visions of black faces, and God calling her son to Africa.

Since that day, Jacobs had a sense of a definite call from God, which entreated him to go to Africa. At first he was not sure of the exact black people and place in Africa. Between 1915 to 1939 Ralph moved from one place to another until he finally settled at Lundi Mission in 1939. After completing his studies in a business course at Greenville College, his rich uncle Fred offered to buy him a farm, but Jacobs refused. He wanted to pursue his vision. The Free Methodist Church General Missionary Board recommended him to serve at Osaka Bible School in Japan. He refused, because this was outside his vision. Jacobs testified that he had no doubt that the vision was about the black Hlengwe people at Lundi Mission in Zimbabwe, Africa. Those who worked with or heard about Jacobs had no doubt as to the survival of Lundi Mission during the Liberation War, against all odds. The founding of the mission was through a vision-miracle of God, and there is no doubt that God intervened to save the mission.

On October 27, 1915, Ralph Jacobs and his wife were appointed missionaries to South Africa. He accepted this because it was in Africa, (though he was not yet sure of the exact place or people). On December 2, 1915, they left home for South Africa. Their hometown newspaper carried headlines to the effect that, "The Jacobs' have made the supreme sacrifice." In 1916, his first appointment in South Africa was as director of Edwaleni Training School. He discovered that this was not the place of his vision, though it was in Africa and among black Zulu faces. While he was at Edwaleni for the next three years, he reminded the General Missionary Board that God had called him to do pioneer evangelism. He was not prepared to teach, but to evangelize. He applied to change to evangelistic work as soon as possible.

¹ Embree, E., Now Rings the Bell, Light and Life Press, Winona Lake, 1978.p.17.

Jacobs was transferred in 1919 to Mabile Mission Station in the province of Inhambane in the then Portuguese East Africa, now Mozambique. His work at Mabile was related to his calling, but it was not the people or place of his vision. He wrote that he could relate to the Chopi, Tonga, Tswa, Nguni and Hlengwe people closer to his vision than at Edwaleni in South Africa. He learned the Tswa language and studied their life-styles in detail.

In 1921, Ralph and his wife were sent to found a new mission station at Inhamaxafo, thirty kilometres from the India Ocean. After a short while, he wrote a letter to the Missionary Secretary stating that this place still was not related to his vision. He felt it was about time for him and his wife to move. Before the General Missionary Board could reply to his letter, a miraculous event happened. In 1928 Jacobs received a letter delivered by one of his pastors, Samuel, from Chief Sengwe of the Hlengwe people in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). The letter read:

“To Mufundisi Jacobi:

I greet you. I have heard from your evangelist, Samueli, that you teach people about God. We have no one to teach us. I am weeping to see the people perish. Oh, hurry and send us a missionary. We have bought a bell. It is I, Chief Sengwe”²

Jacobs had no doubt that this was a reminder of his vision. He had to wait for ten years before pursuing the invitation of Chief Sengwe. The bell kept ringing in his mind and ears day and night. The letter was made public to the Transvaal missionaries meeting at Inhamaxofo Mission, Mozambique. The invitation letter was very exciting for Jacobs, who felt that his vision was on the eve of being fulfilled. The chief was also inviting him to open schools and medical services among his people who had been by-passed by other pioneer Christian churches in Southern Rhodesia. Jacobs would be carrying God’s message to a needy people never before evangelised, after the Swiss Mission had failed thirty years before. The Hlengwe people of Chief Sengwe were closely related to the Tswa people among whom he was working in Mozambique.

In August, 1930, the Free Methodist Church General Missionary Board sent Jacobs and J. Ryff to survey the area of the invitation letter. They did not reach Chief Sengwe’s area, but close to his home and among his relatives who were also excited to have missionaries in their area. Jacobs and his colleague returned to report to the General Missionary Board. The Missionary Secretary responded positively to Jacobs’ and Ryff’s report, “We desire that this small voice calling us to occupy will be heard by our home church. If we listen and respond, God himself will open a way.”³ The World Great Depression of 1928 – 1933 delayed the General Missionary Board moving into Southern Rhodesia. The idea was shelved, to Jacobs’ deep disappointment.

On August 22, 1936, Jacobs was moved from Inhamaxafo to Massinga. Still this was not the destination of his vision. At the Annual Conference in 1938, the Missionary Board requested Jacobs and Arksey to make a second trip into Southern Rhodesia as a follow-up to the invitation letter. They met Assistant Native Commissioner Mr. Ling who encouraged them to come into the area to build churches, schools, and clinics.

² Ibid.pg.53.

³ Ibid.pg.53.

Unfortunately, at that time they could not build a mission station in Chief Sengwe's area because of malaria. They could begin by building a mission station in Chief Chitanga's area, a relative of Sengwe, and his people of the same tribe. This was exciting news for Jacobs because his vision was very close to being fulfilled. Jacobs and Arksey went back and made a report to their General Missionary Board. Their recommendation was that Southern Rhodesia must be entered immediately.

The Women's Missionary Society of the Free Methodist Church responded to their report on Southern Rhodesia by voting to give the General Missionary Board \$2000.00 dollars to help open the door in Chief Chitanga's land. The Missionary Secretary, Harry F. Johnson, sent a message to the mission executive committee on the field. "Your committee recommends that we open work in Southern Rhodesia as soon as funds are available, and hereby authorize securing of the site this year. We give a thousand dollars from the W.M.S. (Women's Missionary Society) general organization that is on hand for the beginning of this project. It is to be known as a W.M.S. project, and all things being equal, they expect to give us another thousand dollars a year from now on for establishment of the mission".⁴

The Southern Rhodesia Government officially granted the Free Methodist Church effective occupation on a piece of land in Chief Chitanga's area on January 1, 1939. The church lacked one thing, manpower. Meanwhile Jacobs felt that the events were part of fulfilling his vision. After his second visit in November 1938, he reported in the *Missionary Tidings*, "They can ring their bell out there in darkness, but the gospel is lacking. They now possess the tinkling cymbal, and is there not someone who can go and tell them about the love of God? Someone even over in America ought to hear that bell ringing".⁵

Jacobs was becoming impatient for the hope of fulfilling his vision. He was receiving pressure from the Mozambique government that was Roman Catholic and anti-Protestant. The alternative was to come to Southern Rhodesia.

The Free Methodist Church would be starting on the ground floor in an area 16,000 square kilometres, with no competition from any other established denomination. This was especially attractive to Jacobs, who had worked for many years under the uncooperative Mozambique Government. The way had not yet opened for him into Southern Rhodesia.

By the end of 1938, after twenty-three years in Africa, Ralph and Ethel Jacobs were due for a furlough. When they were about to leave, a letter from the General Missionary Board arrived.

"How would you like to go to Southern Rhodesia and start building a house on that site granted by the Southern Rhodesian Government, instead of coming home for furlough? I can think of no one more capable of doing that job of constructing a new mission station than you. You say in your letter that you have everything but the 'man' necessary to go forward. Of course I see there are some obstacles in the way of going forward immediately. For example, you have no mode of transportation, you have no sufficient funds, you are in need of furlough, etc. However, those things might come if we moved forward by faith.

⁴ Ibid.p.62.

⁵ Jacobs, R., 'Missionary Tidings', November, 1938.

As for sending another couple to Portuguese East Africa, I think that day is a long way off. Now we will have to do the best we can with what we have to do with".⁶

This was terrific news and a miracle for Jacobs. The timing and contents of the letter were unbelievable because he had almost given up hope. Jacobs' response showed how much he had been waiting for this opportunity.

"We had all plans made to go to Cape Town when your airmail letter came like a "bolt out of the blue", but there was no confusion, only a calm assurance that this is the will of God for us. Where He leads, there we will go by His grace and strength. Gladly do we turn our backs on the needed rest, and face the battlefield again. If we have to leave on a furlough in a year's time, I do not see anyone to fill in after us, but I suppose we must leave that to faith. The whole work there in Rhodesia has thus far only opened as we go forward".⁷

Once again the vision was on the eve of being fulfilled. Ralph and Ethel Jacobs left for Rhodesia with only a bed and a few cooking utensils in the back of their pickup truck. They were willing to live under any conditions necessary in order to get the new mission started and fulfill the vision. The final entry in Jacobs' diary was, March 25, 1939 "we arrived in Southern Rhodesia".⁸

OPENING LUNDI MISSION

On March 28, 1939, the Jacobs started building at Lundi Mission. June 8, 1939, at noon, Assistant Native Commissioner H. A. Ling laid and dedicated the cornerstone of the church. The church building was dedicated on September 20, 1939. Striking the stone with his trowel, Mr. Ling concluded with these words,

"I trust that this Mission and its work will be as strong and solid as this stone".⁹ Ralph Jacobs' vision had been fulfilled. The black faces were the Hlengwe people, and the exact spot was Lundi Mission in Chief Chitanga's area in Southern Rhodesia. When Jacobs began his Mission in Southern Rhodesia, the Hlengwe people were his target. By 1945, Jacobs believed that his vision was on the correct course at Lundi Mission. He moved to Chikombedzi Mission, a sister Mission to Lundi. Until his retirement in 1955, he moved between Lundi and Chikombedzi though he was largely based at the latter Mission.

In 1950, Ralph Jacobs' name was submitted for a possible appointment as Secretary for Africa. "I am unable to accept such an assignment. I am a missionary, and the appointment would cut me off from close contact with my chosen people. I am not prepared to relinquish my position in front-line trenches for one of general

⁶ Embree, E., Now rings the bell, Light and Life Press, Winona Lake, 1978.p.62.

⁷ Ibid.pg. 63-64.

⁸ Jacobs, J., Diary, 5 March, 1939.

⁹ Houser, T. A., The Free Methodist Church and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.p.11.

superintending.”¹⁰ His response was very clear because it was outside his vision.

At the end of 1955, Ralph and Ethel left Southern Rhodesia and retired in America. They had completed 40 years of missionary work, and the last 16 years of fulfilling his vision. In 1963, December 11, Ethel died at the age of 74 years. Seven years later, Jacobs taught his Sunday School class as usual. The next day he was admitted to a hospital, where he was diagnosed with advanced cancer. On May 21, 1970 he passed away. Ralph and Ethel Jacobs never had a human offspring, but they had many spiritual offspring in Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

For those who knew, studied and heard about Ralph Jacobs, the founder of Lundi Mission, there was every reason for this mission to survive against all odds. The mission was founded by God’s hand, and God had protected it throughout the war times. There was no doubt in the minds of Christians that God’s protective hand was over and around Lundi Mission. For the many staunch believers and followers of Jacobs, the closure of Lundi Mission could have been the defeat, or drawback, of the work of this man of God. “Mufundisi Jacobe” was a household name for the many old folks of Lundi Mission, Chikombedzi Mission, Mwenezi and Chivi Districts.

Another incident, showing the Hand of God concerning Lundi Mission was related to Rev. Tillman Houser by Rev. Trygvar and Anne Brauteseth of Ferndale, Gauteng, South Africa. A Mr. Geldenhuys, while praying, saw the hand of God over Lundi Mission during the height of the Liberation War. The Brauteseth’s told Mr. Geldenhuys that what he described was exactly a picture of Lundi Mission.¹¹ For believers like Brauseteseth, Lundi Mission survived because the omnipotent and omniscient God protected it.

The Free Methodist Church at Lundi Mission represented the aims, values and principles expected by the local community. Lundi Mission became a symbol of what the people wanted in the New World. The Hlengwe people had their culture and traditions to preserve, but they were aware of the impact of European religion, economic, political and social systems. There were certain advantages that would come by accepting them. If Lundi Mission represented their expectations, the local community was prepared to protect, support, and fight for Lundi through “thick and thin”. The local community played a very important role in seeing that Lundi Mission survived throughout the Liberation War.

Christian missionaries are associated with the provision of religious, educational, medical, and social services. After 1890, the Hlengwe people in Southern Rhodesia were exposed to the mission and commercial farming activities of the Transvaal and their own country. In no way could they remain in their own cultural shell forever. Chief Sengwe’s area had tasted a little bit of missionary work in 1895 when the Swiss Mission made an attempt to establish a mission station at Dzombo. Unfortunately this was short-lived, mainly because of malaria and isolation from their home base in the Transvaal.

In response to Chief Sengwe’s letter, the General Missionary Board sent two veteran missionaries, Ralph Jacobs and Jules Ryff, to explore the portion of Southern Rhodesia where the Hlengwe tribe lived and still live. On August 18, 1930, the two missionaries embarked on their journey. They entered the country through Beitbridge into the Hlengwe reserves of Matibi No. 1 and Matibi No. 11. The reserves formed a quadruple measuring 200 kilometres each side. Government reports showed a population of at least

¹⁰ Embree, E., Now rings the bell, Light and Life Press, Winona Lake, 1978.p.110.

¹¹ Interview with T. A. Houser, 12 Dunstable Circle, Avonlea, Harare, 1999.

10,000 Hlengwe people who occupied the area without schools, medical and Christian religious services. The Hlengwe were concentrated on the north and south sides of the Lundi River, especially near the Portuguese border.

As Jacobs and Ryff conversed with the people along roads and villages, they responded with surprise and pleasure to hear white men speaking their language. The missionaries discovered that opportunities to spread the gospel, introduce schools and medical services were unlimited. They called at one of the Hlengwe chiefs near Chikombedzi. The chief was greatly elated, and on behalf of his people he expressed hope that the missionaries meant closer health facilities and schools. Their young men who learnt English and math could get jobs. All the Hlengwe leaders whom Jacobs and Ryff met, welcomed missionary services in their area, particularly schools and clinics. The missionaries could not make any commitment until they had returned to South Africa to give a report to their Missionary Board.

The significance was that the Hlengwe took the initiative to invite the missionaries and to welcome missionary services. If the missionaries in the future met the expectations, there was no way in which the Hlengwe and local people could fail to defend missionary work. Lundi Mission was a symbol of missionary work that met their expectations, so they defended it during the war.

In 1938 the General Missionary Board directed Jacobs, fellow missionaries L. M. Arksey from Mozambique and J. W. Haley from Natal, to revisit the Hlengwe in Southern Rhodesia with the idea of establishing a mission station. These missionaries met several chiefs who urged them to establish schools and health services as quickly as possible. Jacobs noticed the urgent need of the people and he wrote in the *Missionary Tidings* November 1938, "They can ring their bell out there in the darkness, but the gospel is lacking. They now possess the tinkling cymbal, and is there not someone who can go and tell them about the love of God? Some one even over in America ought to hear that bell ringing."¹² Surely, this enthusiasm would bind the local community to the mission as long as the mission fulfilled their ambitions.

Jacobs and his companions had to meet with government officials in order to get permission to establish mission stations. The Assistant District Native Commissioner of Mwenezi, H. A. Ling, cordially received them and gave them every possible encouragement and help. Rev. Jacobs once remarked that Mr. Ling asked them a point blank question before committing himself to helping them. The question was on reference to what his subjects expected from missionaries.

"Will you cooperate with the government and provide educational and medical services to the people?" Mr. Ling asked.

"Of course we will. The Free Methodist Mission policy has always been to teach the unlearned, heal the sick, as well as preach the gospel," Jacobs replied.

Mr. Ling said, "It is good that you are willing because just recently the Swiss Mission from South Africa applied to establish only churches in this area. We refused them entry".¹³

The missionaries, in response to the invitation letter, wanted to establish their main mission in Chief Sengwe's area. Mr. Ling could not then approve their request because

¹² Jacobs, R., 'Missionary Tidings', November, 1938.

¹³ Houser, T. A., The Free Methodist Church and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000. p.11.

this was a lowveld malaria-prevalent area. Getting supplies and communication would be very difficult, for it was 235 miles from Fort Victoria (Masvingo), the nearest town. Much of the road was a simple trail through the bush. He also reminded them about the Swiss Mission disaster of the 1890's.

He suggested that the mission station be established in Matibi Number 1 Reserve in Chief Chitanga's area near the Lundi River. Then they could move into Sengwe's area when conditions permitted. Mr. Ling, because of his knowledge of the area and people, picked a spot on the banks of the Lundi River, 100 kilometres from Fort Victoria on the Beitbridge highway, where the mission could be built. Mr. Ling was of the same mind with the missionaries, that educational and health services should be founded upon religious training. Anything less would be useless. The church should be free to evangelize.

Chief Hlengani Chitanga was very skeptical as far as the mission was concerned. He had inherited the chieftainship from his father who had died in 1934. His skepticism was based on the experience of his father and a black missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church, named Joseph Mboweni. Joseph Mboweni, in 1895, was allowed to set up a Mission school near the chief's homestead. The chief only allowed boys to be taught, not girls, because he feared they would become prostitutes. One of the chief's sons, Chimuji, who attended Mboweni's School, disappeared. Mboweni made a "mistake" of not reporting the disappearance to the chief. The young man probably went to South Africa.

The chief banished Mboweni from near his home, and had always held a strong resentment against missionaries. Later on Mboweni built Rata Mission 40 kilometres away from the chief's homestead. As a result of this event, Chief Hlengani Chitanga resented the new missionaries, and had the same fear as his forefathers. In spite of what happened, Mboweni introduced Christianity and education to Chitanga's people. They had tasted the niceties of these services.

According to Joseph Chisandako, who is of the Chitanga dynasty and became Jacobs' cook, his uncle Hlengani did not want the missionaries. In spite of the chief's objection, many of his people and the assistant Commissioner were eager to see Lundi Mission established at Lundi River.¹⁴ Mboweni had also paved the way for Ralph Jacobs' reception into the area.

If the local people were able to put pressure on their chief, who reluctantly agreed to accept the mission, it would be logical for them to defend it through thick and thin. The issue was, as long as the mission represented and served their interests, they were prepared to protect and defend the mission.

Chief Hlengani Chitanga thoroughly resented the idea of girls going to school. He could only express his resentment as an individual, but not as chieftainship policy. He was aware that the majority of his subjects wanted education. Sarah Muzamani Chauke and Grace Manokore were the first pioneer girls to attend the missionary school; had interesting encounters with the chief. Every time he came across them in the absence of adults, he referred to them as "prostitutes". The two ladies resented him, and always avoided him whenever possible.¹⁵ The chief was proved wrong when Sarah became the first trained nurse and Grace became the first trained teacher produced by Lundi Mission. They were also legally married following both customary and church systems. They set

¹⁴ Interview with Joseph Chisandako Chauke, Chitanga area, March, 1996.

¹⁵ Interview with Grace Manokore, Mukachana Area, 27, January, 2001.

an example, which was highly appreciated by the local people. Thus the mission was worth accepting and defending.

The appreciation and impact of Lundi Mission was noticed within three years of its establishment. A missionary visitor at Lundi Mission wrote in the *Missionary Tidings* of December 1941 about the service missionaries were doing among the Hlengwe people.

“Through the week Sister Ethel Jacobs teaches the old women to read, and every morning she treats the sick, many patients each day. Miss Frederick with her native helpers teaches children of all ages as well as evangelizes. She hopes to train evangelists and teachers for many are needed as the woods on either side are full of people and ours is the only Church for the two great reserves. The European Commissioner is very friendly and helpful and is very anxious that his people have the gospel”¹⁶.

The enthusiastic response of the people meant that for a long time they desired such services. As long as the mission continued to provide these services, there was no way the local community would let it go. By this time there were 11 outstations, 179 church probationers, 119 full members, 5 village and station schools with 160 scholars. These statistics were very impressive considering the time span. Other places were calling for schools and teachers. They proved the people’s desire for these services.

After only five years of the founding of Lundi Mission, the pioneer missionary Rev. Jacobs was satisfied, and very much encouraged by his work. In July 1944 Jacobs wrote in the *Missionary Tidings*,

“The Church expanded, and in due time churches and school homes built, evangelists and teachers were sent out.”¹⁷

The local community accepted the services of the mission. If this trend continued, it meant the mission was becoming the local community mission. Lundi Mission, from the time of its inception, was very much welcomed by the local people. The people valued its medical services. If these services continued to be provided, the mission was the people’s mission. They had all the more reason to defend their property.

When the Liberation War broke out, the mission was still serving the needs of the local people. The local people played a very important role in seeing to its survival throughout the war. Many missions collapsed during the war because the local people were against them. They ceased to serve the needs of the people. At the same time the Liberation War was fought in the name of the people.

The first and foremost aim of the Free Methodist Church was to spread the Christian gospel, in this case, among the Hlengwe people of Southern Rhodesia. ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’.¹⁸ The Free Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia began by word of invitation from Chief Makoti Sengwe of the Hlengwe people in Southern Rhodesia. A messenger from the Chief delivered a letter to the Annual Meeting of the Mozambique and Transvaal Missionaries

¹⁶ A Missionary visitor, ‘Missionary tidings’, December, 1941.

¹⁷ Jacobs, R., ‘Missionary Tidings’, July, 1944.

¹⁸ St. John 1:1, Holy Bible, King James Version.

at Inhamaxafo Mission Mozambique in 1928. In the letter the chief invited missionaries to his country to provide schools, medical services and churches. The missionaries followed up the invitation by sending missionary explorers Jacobs and Ryff in 1930, Jacobs, Arksey and Haley in 1938, and the establishment of Lundi Mission in 1939. Although the mission was not set up in Chief Sengwe's area until 1948, the headquarters was set up in Chief Chitanga's area, a relative of Chief Sengwe. The people of Chief Chitanga, like their relatives in the Sengwe area, were very receptive to the missionaries; the only difference was that the chief had not written the letter of invitation. It is humanly logical that an invitee must take care of the visitor. The Hlengwe people were expected to take care of the Free Methodist missionaries and their mission. This type of relationship between the invitee and invited, continued throughout the years. During the war the Hlengwe people were expected to protect the missionaries and missions. As long as the invited were still carrying on the services they were invited to do, the local people had a duty to protect them.

At Mr. Ling's suggestion, the assistant native Commissioner at Mwenezi, a formal stone-laying ceremony for Lundi Mission took place on 8th June 1939. Government officials, police, traders and ranchers attended the ceremony. A total of thirteen white people, chiefs and headmen were brought in the Commissioner's truck. Many men and women surrounding the area attended the ceremony. Mr. Ling addressed the crowd in fluent Shangani language. He told Africans that if they obeyed the missionaries' words, they would be shown the way of life, and that his work was secondary to the work of the mission. They would be taught to stop drinking, dancing and killing one another. Then striking the cornerstone sharply with a trowel he declared, "I trust that this mission and its work will be as strong and solid as this stone."¹⁹

The work of the mission became as strong and solid as the foundation stone to stand against the odds of the war when most missions crumbled. Two or three chiefs were given the opportunity to welcome the missionaries. Chief Sengwe, the one who wrote the invitation letter, was one of the chiefs who spoke. Appeals came from all sides and far-off sections asking for someone to teach them. The Christian gospel was welcomed from the beginning. If the people accepted the gospel, then there was no reason to abandon it in the future, unless something gross happened.

After the ceremony, many expressed the wish to become Christians. Testaments and hymns were bought even though the buyers could not read. The Sunday worship services were held under the large shady trees near the river and were well attended. For the first two years, there was rarely a Sunday that passed without people choosing the Lord. By the end of June, after the foundation-laying ceremony, there was an inquiry class of seven members, most of whom were young men and heads of families. Curiosity brought some of the people at first, but there was a genuine reception of the Christian gospel.

The opening ceremony of Lundi Church on 20th September 1939, was a great ceremony for the local people. Women and girls came dressed in Hlengwe skirts; men and boys came on foot or rode bicycles. The Assistant Native Commissioner, Mr. Ling, brought other officials. They encouraged the people to go ahead in accepting the missionaries and their work.

Jacobs considered development of the church a higher priority than educational and health services. His core message was from Matthew 21:13, "And he said to them, It is

¹⁹ Embree, E., Now Rings the Bell, Light and Life Press, Winona Lake, 1978.p.74.

written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves,”²⁰

After his sermon, Rev. Jacobs took the first twenty converts on church probation. Offerings on that day amounted to one hundred and one dollars, two live fowls, three eggs, a little grain and six pawpaws (papayas). This was a very great offering, considering that this was in 1939. Mrs. Jacobs served dinner to all the white visitors, and tea to all Africans who welcomed Christianity with two hands. Those who were genuinely converted would be prepared to defend this religion amidst thick and thin. The discriminate serving of dinner and tea would raise eyebrows today, but not in those days. Being close to white people was something important, let alone the service of tea. This was not significant enough to discourage people from welcoming the new religion.

The first year’s work was overwhelming for Jacobs. He wrote to Mozambique, asking for volunteer African evangelists to minister in Rhodesia for a few years. The first to respond were two young couples, then two more men and their families joined, and later on two single men. One of the pastors was sent to open the church at Sengwe. Within six months after Jacobs’ arrival in Rhodesia, the bell was ringing in Chief Sengwe’s area. People were converted, but Chief Sengwe himself, was not. The need for help from Mozambique was a clear sign of the gospel expanding among the Hlengwe. Anything welcomed and accepted had to be defended.

BIBLE SCHOOL

In 1941, three years after the establishment of Lundi Mission, a visitor wrote, “Miss Frederick, with her native helpers, teaches children of all ages. as well as the evangelists. She hopes to train evangelists and teachers, for many are needed, and the woods on either side are full of people, and ours is the only church for two great reserves.”²¹

The first missionary to join the Jacobs at Lundi Mission was Daisy Frederick, a single woman teacher from Mozambique with many years of missionary service. Jacobs asked her to teach Bible subjects to young men, Hlengwes and Karangas who wished to become pastors. The crash program was evidence of the rate of how Christianity was accepted. The local pioneer pastor students were: Hatlani Chauke, Zachariya Mashava, Jonah Chibaya, Francis Mabunda and Zachariya Hlungwani. Ralph Jacobs had declared from the founding of Lundi Mission that a training school must be established to train adult men converts who showed leadership ability. Most of them had no formal education. Some, while working in urban areas, attended night schools and learnt to read and write African languages. As Rhodesian converts took their places in the church, the Mozambique evangelists gradually returned home, having accomplished their purpose.

The church work continued to grow. The pioneer local pastors had a tendency to ask for money from the missionaries. Jacobs’ policy was that if the church was to grow strong, it should be self-supporting. The evangelists would have to learn to trust God for their needs. He wanted to instill in the minds of the local people that the church was theirs, and if they felt that it was theirs, they would defend it to the end. Within the first five years, there were 650 church members at Lundi Mission. There were those who returned to sin, but the general trend of repentance was very encouraging. The urgent need was local manpower.

²⁰ Matthew 21:13, Holy Bible, James Version.

²¹ Missionary Visitor, ‘The Missionary Tidings’, December, 1941.

Rev. and Mrs. Eldon Sayre arrived at Lundi in 1946 to found a pastoral training center for the church. The idea was to create adequate manpower for the expansion of the church. Rev. Sayre failed to start the Bible School immediately because he assumed the duty of Mission Superintendent and manager of the primary schools. The Bible School would have to be postponed. Jacobs went on furlough, and Daisy Frederick passed away.

When Jacobs returned from furlough, he was involved in developing Mwenezi Mission (Chikombedzi) in Matibi No 11 as a medical center. Rev. and Mrs. Tillman Houser were appointed to open Dumisa Mission in 1950.

A severe famine affected the area between 1945–48. Rev. Sayre carried the heavy weight of feeding the pastors and their families and other church members. The church offerings became non-existent, and most evangelists became destitute. The General Missionary Board sent famine relief funds. Rev. Eldon Sayre was authorized to purchase corn meal for the evangelists and others in need.

Rev. Eldon Sayre wrote, “It came like a flash of light in the night”.²² The mission was not only serving spiritual life, but it also performed social welfare work. All this was in the eyes of the local people. Such an institution must be preserved. This was not the first or last social welfare activity. Throughout its existence, in times of famine, the mission had played its role. This kind of an institution could not be allowed to die whenever the local people were able to defend it. During the Liberation War the mission continued to play this role when necessary.

The church needed more workers as time unfolded. This was a clear sign that it was growing. Before the opening of a Bible School, other means had to be used. Whatever manpower was there had to be used. The following list of evangelists, without proper pastoral training, ministered in the church during its expansion:

Ezekia Mafumise, Jona Chibaya, Simon Dziva, Jeremiya Mpfu, Kefasi Zhou, Wilson Ndlovu, Josifati Moyo, William Dziva, Tadios Nhamo Sibanda, Meki Hlungwani, Jokoniya Chauke, Zacharia Hlungwani, Mika Ngwenya, James Baloyi, Jefta Chiwaya, Samson Myambo, Josefa Tapera Khosa and Samuel Mlambo.²³

The church membership grew at a very fast rate, showing that the new Christian religion was being accepted.

According to Rev. Eldon Sayre, Superintendent of Lundi Mission between 1946 to 1956, 1957 to 1959, 1962 to 1966, the membership statistics for the first ten years were 667 full members and 711 probationers. In terms of repentance, the total number was 1378 of those who had accepted the new religion.²⁴

This was a fantastic figure showing that the new religion was filling a gap in the people’s spiritual needs. For this reason, the people were prepared to defend Lundi Mission, the headquarters of the new religion. The membership statistics were from Lundi Mission and its outstations, such as:

Sarahuru, Golonyi, Nwanezana, Maranda, Sitera, Masogwe, Musaverema, Mabare, Shazhaume, Gwamatenga, Matande and Dengenya.

²² Embree, E., *Now Rings the Bell*, Light and Life Press, Winona Lake, 1978.p.98.

²³ Sayre, E.B., *Evangelists and Accounts*, 1946 – 1956.

²⁴ Sayre, E.B., *Free Methodist Membership Book*, Matibi No. I and No. 11 in Southern Rhodesia.

Rev. Eldon Sayre recorded that there were a few cases of backsliders who returned to beer drinking, adultery, polygamy and going to other churches, such as the Lutheran Swedish Church or the Dutch Reformed Church. The rate of defectors and backsliders was very far below the number who accepted the new religion. Rev. Tillman Houser, who was superintendent of Matibi No. 1, 1951-1953, 1955-1961, 1965-1966, illustrated the church full membership by a graph of church growth in Zimbabwe between 1950 and 1974, the eve of guerrilla operations in areas in which the Free Methodist Church was dominate. The graph showed a very sharp, vertical rise in membership between 1950 to 1970.²⁵ The new religion was popular and met the needs of the people. The numbers were increased by students and teachers who were compelled by the church laws. The total of full members reached 2000 in 1970, and then there was a sharp fall to 1300 in 1974.

In 1970 the Rhodesian Government took over all church primary schools. The teachers and students were now free to choose to be members of the church. This explained the sharp fall of membership. Even after the decline of membership in 1970, the church was satisfied by the number of genuine members, compared to other established Christian denominations, such as the Dutch Reformed Church, Roman Catholics and Swedish Lutherans. Lundi Mission was associated with Christian religion that satisfied the spiritual appetite of some Hlengwe people. When the mission was threatened by activities of the Liberation War, Christians viewed it as a threat to their religious needs. They were prepared to defend it in their own way, by praying.

Pastors and church leaders who were displaced by war in their stations ended up living as refugees in Lundi Mission. Church elders such as, D. Sandani, J. Chauke, D. Dziva and M. Hlungwani lived in the mission throughout the war. Other church leaders, when the war was hot in their areas, took temporary refuge at the mission. Some of these church elders, after the war, revealed that they prayed day and night. Sometimes they fasted in order for the mission to survive. They strongly believed that their prayers, and the prayers of fellow Christians throughout the world, particularly their mother body in the United States, prayed with them.²⁶ Rev. Tillman Houser confirmed that in the United States of America the mother church had many special days and occasions when prayers and fasting were targeted for the protection and survival of Lundi Mission.²⁷ Devout Christians believed that Lundi Mission was protected by prayers to God.

The establishment of the Bible School, though shelved since 1939 because of educational and health services, was believed to be the solution to the high demand of workers to serve the church. At the Annual Conference of Portuguese East Africa, Transvaal, and Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference, a resolution was made, "After discussions of the Bible School situation in Rhodesia, it was ordered to approve the establishment of a Bible School adjacent to Lundi Mission.....On motion, Eldon Sayre was elected as Director of the Bible School in Southern Rhodesia."²⁸ Rev. Eldon Sayre started to build dormitories and classrooms for the Bible School. The only lessons he

²⁵ Houser, T. A., The Free Methodist Church and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

²⁶ Interview with Reverends D. Sandani, Jackson Chauke and M. Hlungwani, Lundi Mission, April, 1980.

²⁷ Interview with Rev. T. A. Houser, 12 Dunstable Circle, Avonlea, Harare, November, 1999.

²⁸ Minutes of Thirty Annual Session of Portuguese East Africa Transvaal and Southern Rhodesia Provincial Conference Mission Meeting, 1956.

could hold were short pastoral training courses whenever he had time from other duties.

After the 1961 Annual Mission Meeting of Southern Africa, Rev. Philip Capp was appointed Principal of the Bible School. It opened its doors to five pastors and their families. The pastors had a three-year program course, and their wives were taught home craft, childcare and hygiene. Applicants from other denominations were also admitted. The Free Methodist General Missionary Board sent funds to subsidize the Bible School expenses and help the students. By 1976, when the missionaries left, the Bible School and its Theological Education Extension program had 70 Students. Since its first graduates of a three-year program in 1964, the school had an annual average of 40 graduates. The need for the Bible School was indicated by the number of graduates completing the program every year. The Bible School graduates, and some of the students, were bound to defend the mission, first and foremost, in prayer when it was threatened. During the war days, Bible school graduates, teachers and students held special prayers and revival meetings asking God to protect the mission. Even when the principal of the Bible school, Rev. Naison Chauke, was abducted by guerrillas in 1978, the pious students still prayed and saw the hand of God. After all, the New Testament and the history of Christianity have an unending list of martyrs and those persecuted for the Name of the Son Jesus and His Father God. The students of the Lundi Bible School, graduates and staff members were convinced that the survival of Lundi Mission and its institutions was the hand of God.

EDUCATION

The Free Methodist Church was the first to provide formal schools among the Hlengwe after Joseph Mboweni's failure in 1895. In 1895 Joseph Mboweni was sent by the Dutch Reformed Church to open a church and school near Chief Chitanga. The chief allowed boys to attend, but not girls, because he was afraid they would become prostitutes. One of the chief's sons, Chimuji, stayed at Mboweni's home while attending school. During the vacation, the chief's son did not return home. There was a strong belief that he disappeared forever to South Africa. Mboweni's mistake was that he did not inform the chief. The chief blamed the disappearance of his son on Mboweni, and he was banished from the area. This was the end of the school. Some of the Hlengwe had tasted the importance of formal school such as reading, writing and arithmetic. The Hlengwe were exposed to working in the commercial farms, mines and houses as domestic servants in South Africa, and within Southern Rhodesia. They discovered that formal education was necessary. Government officials, such as native messengers or native police, agricultural officers, dip attendants, and health officers were all formally educated. By 1939 the Hlengwe were very aware of the benefits of formal schools, yet there were no schools among them.

The letter of invitation written to Rev. Jacobs at Inhamaxafo Mission in Mozambique by Chief Makoti Sengwe in 1928 mentioned schools, and the need for a preacher and churches. In 1930 the Missionary Board sent Rev. Ralph Jacobs and Jules Ryff to Southern Africa in response to the letter. As Jacobs and Ryff drove and talked with the Hlengwe people along the roads and villages, they discovered that they were looking forward eagerly to the establishment of formal schools and health services. One of the chiefs who lived near Chikombedzi was greatly elated when missionaries arrived. This meant closer health facilities and schools. Schools meant that their children would learn

English and mathematics opening opportunities for employment. All the Hlengwe chiefs they met asked for schools and health facilities. Unfortunately for the Hlengwe, the missionaries returned without making any commitments for schools. The government officials whom the missionaries met in addition to the establishment of churches insisted on schools and hospitals.

This reference showed one mind between the missionaries, government policy, and needs of the local people, as far as education was concerned. As a result, the stakeholders were bound to protect the mission against any threats as long as it served the interests of the people.

The government officially granted the Free Methodist Church permission to build the mission. The mission site was not at Chief Sengwe, the initiator, who brought missionaries into Southern Rhodesia. Mr. Ling chose the site in Chief Chitanga's area. Chief Sengwe's area was seriously infected with malaria, and very remote from supply centres, such as Fort Victoria. Lundi Mission, located on the banks of the Lundi River, on the Fort Victoria-Beitbridge highway, was an ideal location as compared to Chief Sengwe's area. The initial hurdle was Chief Hlengani Chitanga. The chief still remembered the unfortunate experience between his father and Joseph Mboweni. He also believed, like his father, that educated women would turn into "prostitutes". The Assistant Native Commissioner, in no uncertain terms, told Chief Chitanga to accept the new mission.³¹ The Native Commissioner expressed what the people wanted. Chief Chitanga's people were eager to have a school, in spite of past experiences. The chief finally gave in, though reluctantly. Therefore if the people were eager to have a school, then logically they had to protect it. As long as the school benefited the people, then the people would defend the school even in a war situation.

Jacobs saw the development of schools as essential to missionary work. He summarized his ideas concerning the importance of primary schools as an agent in his work. In the issue of the *Missionary Tidings* in August 1943, he reported:

"The mission school conducted rightly is a great feeder to the church. A good percent of our school congregations here in Southern Rhodesia are under the age of 21 years. School in Africa means a new world for the child raised in heathen villages, surrounded with heathen teaching. As our work in Southern Rhodesia is only four years old, many of our school children have heathen parents. With this background, a heathen boy or girl starts school. The first thing he must do is to get the consent of his parents, then beg a few pennies for a slate and Tswa speller. He rises at daybreak and marches off to school, sometimes several kilometres away. His first lesson is punctuality; something he never heard of before. Then before entering school he is lined up with 40–60 others for morning inspection. Are his fingernails clean? Has he washed his face and hands? Has he combed his hair this morning (with the common school combs)? Are his teeth clean? In his slate washed clean, and is his pencil ready for the day's work? Then into the school home they march for prayers and a half-hour Bible study. Just the beginning of school, but what a contrast already to the life he has been living in his father's heathen kraal.

³¹ Interview with Mr. Joseph Chisandako, Chitanga Area, March, 1996.

Clothing is an important item when a boy or girl starts school, not because we demand it, but because of the lack of clothes makes the child in school ashamed—something he never felt before, because of his nakedness. Here and there however, we find a little boy, who being denied clothing by his father, goes off to school with only the necessary strip of cloth tied around his waist by a string. To such as these I try to give a smile, not a laugh, especially during school drill and exercises. The little chap no doubt needs all the encouragement he can get, and who can tell his future as he comes into contact with Christian teachers, our evangelists and the church. The majority of our P.E.A. evangelists did not have such a good start as he is getting. I hear someone say, why doesn't the missionary give him a pair of trousers? It wouldn't cost much. Yes! It wouldn't cost much, but it would be starting something, and soon all the heathens would be sending their children without clothes so they would be clothed. No! The best way is to leave him alone, apart from giving him all the encouragement possible, and later, if he chooses the Lord (which a good percentage of these school children do), then God will open the way for him to get a pair of trousers, or even possibly he may enter the Free Methodist Church on probation without them, by then they will come in time. Better Christians are made this way than if the mission supplies the temporary needs.

In most of our schools the majority of the pupils are members of our church, either on probation or in full membership. On some of our outstations, an evangelist or class leader conducts the weekly class, which meets just as school dismisses at noon; church members or seekers in the school can attend before they scatter to their homes. In our Sunday congregation on every station, groups of children from the schools, young men and women, some married, others unmarried, make up the bulk of the crowd; the old people are few. We are again reminded of Solomon's advice. Ecclesiastes 21: 1 "Remember now thy creator in the days of your youth while the evil days come not nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them." We ask your prayers for the young people of this young work and for the missionaries that we may lead this new church in the right way".³²

Jacobs' ideas were also representative of the needs of the people. If he was unable to stand on his principles, there was no question that the local people would fail to support the mission. There are those who strongly believe that Lundi Mission, to a very large extent, fulfilled these ideas throughout the years. When the Liberation War came, the local people could not let the mission go. They had to defend their mission. Jacobs derived the motto of the school from Genesis 1:3 "And God said let there be light and there was light".³³ The school motto of Lundi Secondary School to this day is re-enforced by 2 Timothy 2:15 "Study to show thyself approved to God, a workman than

³² Jacobs, R., 'Missionary Tidings', August, 1943.

³³ Genesis 1:3 Holy Bible, King James Version.

needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”³⁴

African demands for schools were overwhelming. At each place where a church was established, a school was built; these schools were known as “kraal schools”. The church building served as classroom during the week. On Sunday the classrooms served as churches. This was a visible result of the gospel and education working hand in glove. Children came in clean clothes during the week, and through reading on Sundays, many found the Lord. A large percentage of students and church members at this early stage were under 21 years of age, and the future looked bright for the Free Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia. This bright beginning took the school through the dark years of the war.

Jacobs insisted that the local people should build their own classrooms, teacher’s residences, and all other necessary school buildings. The community picked the site for their school. Sometimes chiefs wanted the site close to their homes, which might not be suitable for the community. In such a situation Jacobs intervened. The men and women made dried mud bricks. The women made hard floors out of a mixture of cow dung and muddy soil. Women also cut grass for roofing. Men made the roof poles and structures. African bricklayers built the walls. When the building was completed, very little had been purchased. The building was the property of the local community, built out of local material. Jacobs inculcated in the minds of the local people the strong feeling that the school was their own “baby”. This was also true at Lundi Mission. Even now, some old folks nostalgically point towards some old building which they built, or a site where a classroom they built once stood. The late Zachariya Mashava, one of the African mission pioneers at an advanced age in the 1980’s, used to come into the mission to revive his memories. He would address himself to anybody who happened to be near, giving a history of the buildings and of Mufundisi Jacobs. Mashava had trained as a carpenter, so he was responsible for roofing and making furniture for the buildings.³⁵ Meki Hlungwani, Daniel Gwalale Chauke and Joseph Chisandako, who happen to have their homes close to Lundi Mission, did the same. They took pride in their contributions when Lundi Mission was founded. The feeling that the mission belonged to them was very strong among the local people. It is even so among some of the present generation. They feel it is their inheritance. It was, and is common to hear the following remarks from the local community:

“Mission ya hina hi nga vaka na Mufundisi Jacobs”. The literal translation from Hlengwe is, “The mission is ours which we built together with Rev. Jacobs”. This feeling of ownership made the local community defend the mission throughout the war years. As long as Lundi Mission met their educational interests, the local community was willing to see it through the dark years in their own ways. Generally, the local people spoke well about the mission when the guerrillas and security forces solicited their views.

The Southern Rhodesia Government policy demanded that the missionaries teach and heal Africans when they preached the gospel. After the Lundi Mission school, the first six schools spread a distance of 360 kilometres into two reserves, Matibi No 1 and Matibi No. 11. Rev. Jacobs was allowed to hire untrained teachers just to open schools. These teachers did not qualify for government grant, even though they demanded little salary. Rev. Jacobs needed trained teachers who were Christians, who could lead services on

³⁴ 11 Timothy 2;15, Holy Bible, King James Version.

³⁵ Interview with Zachariya Mashava, Lundi Mission, 1980,1981,1982.

Sunday if there were no pastor. This made it even harder for Rev. Jacobs to get African trained teachers, as they were hard to come by. Parents and pupils, because they were so hungry for education, accepted anyone who could at least teach.

The first class at Lundi Mission was made up of children of all ages who had never been to school before. The teacher was untrained. There was need to develop the school at Lundi as a Central School catering to the kraal school graduates. A missionary teacher was urgently needed to guide this development at the school. The need for education by the Hlengwe people had to be urgently addressed if the mission was to remain in the hearts of the people. Rev. Jacobs presented the need for a teacher to assume the task at Lundi to the General Missionary Board. Miss Daisy Frederick, a teacher at a Girls' High School at Inhamaxafo, gladly accepted to go to teach at Lundi Mission. She was a single woman teacher with many years of missionary service. She moved to Lundi Mission to teach and train teachers for the outlying schools. Miss Frederick took over Lundi School to teach normal school along with Bible subjects. Her first class, which was held in the church, was a mixture of children and young married men.

“The pupils were sitting, or trying to sit, on backless benches. Many had to be shown how to sit. Supplies were a bare minimum. Many students had only a slate and pencil. Teachers had a chair, two small portable tables, black boards, a table and a cupboard. This was a Rhodesian plan which I understood only faintly”.³⁶

Whatever was the situation, the students were eager to learn. When Lundi School opened in January, 1940, the African teacher took the little children. Miss Frederick took the older ones and the young men, to be trained as pastors. By August, Rev. Jacobs had completed the school building. There was great excitement when students saw long plank benches and blackboards. This was a “*doropa*” for them, a Hlengwe word meaning “town”. If the eagerness and enthusiasm continued with the children, and those who would come later, the parents surely would not fail to defend the school during hard times. The school meant a lot in their lives— a new and bright future.

By December 1940, Daisy Frederick wrote explaining her purpose in going to Lundi Mission. “We could have many more schools if we had teachers prepared, so that is my work. And, if we had as many as ten, then we could get a nice grant from the government, and that would be such a help.”³⁷ This demonstrated another example of students’ desire for education.

The growing Lundi Central Primary School did not escape the attention of parents and teachers of outlying schools. Intelligent children needed further education. This brought about the need for boarding facilities where children could live while they continued their education. This was an example of the Hlengwe acceptance of formal schools. Lundi School began to attract Karanga pupils, mostly from across the river in the areas south of Chivi District. Mr. Mashamba, a Karanga African teacher, joined the school, and proved himself competent. Mr. Mashamba and Miss Frederick sometimes taught in one classroom, or one would teach a class under a tree. Miss Gwambe later joined them. During every lesson there were two teachers using one classroom. This inconvenience

³⁶ Embree, E., Now Rings the Bell, Light and Life Press, Winona Lake, 1978.p.82.

³⁷ Frederick, D., ‘The Missionary Tidings’, December, 1940.

showed that there were many students who were eager to learn, but they needed more teachers and classrooms. Rev. Jacobs also pointed this out in 1944.

“The church expanded and in due time churches and school homes were built and evangelists and teachers were sent out.”³⁸

Miss Frederick, in reflections in 1945, echoed the same thoughts about the growth of the school under the title, “The Evolution of a Little School”.

She reported: “In 1940 it fell to my lot to take over a little school that made its very beginnings earlier in the year under an untrained boy. My school met in the church. The children sat on church benches, only many of them did not know how to sit on a bench.”³⁹

Those who were in the “know” now assert that Miss Frederick was only humble because the development was not evolutionary, but revolutionary. The numbers of students were increasing compared to the facilities available and original expectations.

In 1946, Miss Frederick unexpectedly passed away in the Fort Victoria General Hospital. Her Hlengwe friends and students, in order to express their deep love, asked for her to be buried at Lundi Mission. She is the only white person buried at Lundi Mission cemetery. Many of her pioneer students, and her own students, are buried in the cemetery. The most distinguished of her students buried in the same cemetery are Pastor Jonah Chibaya, elder churchman Zachariya Mashava, Daniel Gwalale Chauke, professional educators Joseph Muzamani Chauke and Joel Daniel Chauke. The death of Miss Frederick was described as “a heavy dark cloud that had descended over Lundi Mission, particularly the school”. The future of the school and of student expectations looked very gloomy and uncertain. The respect and love which the local people showed Miss Frederick, was a demonstration of their desire for education. She was “education personified” as far as the people were concerned.

Word of the sudden death of Daisy Frederick reached Rev. Ralph Jacobs while he was in Durban en route to the United States for furlough. This was a great shock and a blow to his vision. But he believed that Miss Frederick’s death was only a setback, not the end of his mission, for the mission was founded on God’s vision.

As it was, Miss Ruth Smith who joined the Lundi staff in 1946, took over from Miss Frederick as principal in 1946. She maintained a high standard of academic excellence in the school. Later she left to enter the women’s church work in 1960. She was a disciplinarian. Some of her rules were detested. For instance, conversations between different genders were not allowed without her listening, African languages were restricted, and if spoken, it was only Hlengwe, which the missionaries understood; Karanga was completely banned. These restrictions were later lifted.

During Miss Smith’s leadership Lundi Mission expanded with the expansion of church schools. Lundi Central Primary School received students from the following schools: Chitanga, Masogwe, Shazhaume, Musavarema, Pambe, Sarahuru, Gwamatenga, Mabari, Goloni and Nwanezana in Matibi No. 1 Reserve. Bangwe, Dengenya and Mangwerume from Maranda Tribal Trust Land. Matibi No. 2 Reserve were Chompani, Chikombedzi, Boli, J-29, Masivamele, Chikhovo, Chipinda, Chilonga, Makambe and

³⁸ Jacobs, R., ‘Missionary Tidings’, July, 1944.

³⁹ Frederick, D., ‘The Missionary Tidings’, July, 1945.

Muhlanguleni. In Sengwe Tribal Trust Land there was Sengwe, Mpandle, Samu, Number 6, Malipati, Bondela, Makanani and Masuku. These were Free Methodist Church feeder schools to Lundi Mission Central Primary School. This illustrates how formal schools were eagerly welcomed by the Hlengwe and the Karanga. Lundi Mission Central Primary School received students from the Dutch Reformed Church and Roman Catholic primary schools in areas south of Chivi District. Some students from the Lutheran Swedish Churches in areas on the boundary between Mberengwa and Mwenezi Districts also came to Lundi Central Primary School, and some children from the Sugar Estates of Triangle, Hippo Valley and Chiredzi came. The school was meeting the educational needs of the local community and afar. Those who benefited were bound to safeguard the school if needs were met. The government took control of all primary schools from the churches in 1970.

The demand for boarding places increased every year from the inception of Lundi Central or Upper Primary School. Students who excelled in the junior primary schools naturally wanted missionaries to create boarding places for them. The demand for more primary schools, classrooms and teachers increased in the Mwenezi District. This put more pressure on Lundi Mission. Missionary teachers received salaries from the government, and also from the General Missionary Board in the United States. The government salaries, which were to pay missionary teachers, were used by the missionaries to subsidize school operations. The missionary teachers were an advantage to the school. If the mission school closed, the educational needs of the people would not be met. There was logic in the local community defending the mission as long as it continued to serve their interests. Day after day, year after year, the Hlengwe parents recognized the importance of good education. It was bearing lasting fruit for their children by providing employment in cities and elsewhere. There was only one Lundi Central Primary School. It had to be jealously guarded.

Educational developments in the country passed from the primary into the secondary level. By 1960 the missionaries had expanded their upper primary schools in Chitanga, Chikombedzi and Shazhaume. The need for secondary education was very urgent. Before 1965, Lundi Mission sent its primary graduates to Chibi, Biriiri, Rusitu, Zimuto and Matopo Secondary Schools. These missions could accommodate only a few, for they had their own students. Parents began to put pressure on the missionaries for secondary education. The missionaries would be falling short of fulfilling their educational promises otherwise. The missionaries realized that their educational relevance was partly attached to the opening of a Secondary School.

The Free Methodist Church phased out the primary school in 1965 to open a secondary school. The secondary school was initially opened with missionary teachers. There were no local graduates. Government salaries for missionary teachers could be used to assist in the operation of schools since they were subsidized. The mission was reluctant to import teachers from other areas, though they did. Many of those teachers did unsatisfactory work, had moral problems, poor attitudes, and used alcohol. Lundi Mission was the first to open the secondary school in Mwenezi District. The opening of the secondary school was a great educational step among the Hlengwe and Karanga neighbours. This was a dream come true for the local parents. Lundi Secondary School not only served the Mwenezi District, but its enrollment areas covered the southern parts of Chivi, parts of Mberengwa, parts of Beitbridge, Sugar Estate areas of Triangle, Hippo

Valley and Chiredzi, and as far as Chirumanzu, Shurugwi, Chivhu, Gutu, Zaka and Bikita. There were special Lundi Secondary School attributes which attracted pupils from very far.

In 1965 Robert Magee became the first Principal of Lundi Secondary School. The Secondary School was like an “egg” for the local community. It had to be handled with care. The origins of Lundi Secondary School, others argue, contributed to its survival during the dark days of the Liberation War. Lundi had its own peculiar background and teaching. It was a community secondary school, and as long as it was theirs, the parents would not let it go.

Between 1965–1972 Lundi Secondary School offered only the first two years of secondary education, or the Zimbabwe Junior Certificate. Lundi Mission Secondary School graduates who needed O-Level, or Form 4, had to go to other schools. Chibi, Zimuto, Matibi and Biriiri Secondary Schools catered for the few. Five years after its establishment, there was great demand for O-Level, or Form 4 education. The parents put pressure on the missionaries to open O-Level classes. The missionaries listened to the cry of the local community by opening O-Level classes in 1972. The missionaries had established a tradition of listening and fulfilling the educational needs of their local community. The local people had trust and confidence in the missionaries and in their educational program.

The opening of O-Level classes brought with it African teachers, such as, R. Chipwanya, the late J. Harinangoni, A. D. Chauke, A. D. Ndebele and T. Matenda as colleagues of white missionaries. During the era of primary school there were few African teachers. Relationships between white and African teachers became special during the period of O-Level education. It was when political pressure and the Liberation War became a reality. Missions survived, or collapsed, as a result of the relationship between African teachers and white teachers, and other colleagues in the institution. This relationship became more evident and grew during the Liberation War. The white and African teacher’s relationship at Lundi Mission from 1939 to 1976 was generally good. There were some hitches here and there. There is need to analyze this relationship before making any sound judgment. Teachers were a special group in the mission. They were on the same level, or above, the educational level of the missionaries.

“Cecil John Rhodes and his British South Africa Company after occupation of Southern Rhodesia in 1890, welcomed Christian missionaries by granting them large tracts of land to build mission stations among the Africans. He saw the value of European missionaries educating and providing medical services to the African population. Missionaries would teach the values of the Bible, making Africans honest, healthy and industrious. Therefore better workers for the new settlers. On the other hand, missionaries were given free reign to teach their doctrine and conduct their churches as they wished. Thus developed a symbolic relationship between the government and missionaries”.⁴⁰

This good relationship placed the missionaries in an awkward position during the days of African nationalism and the Liberation War.

⁴⁰ Houser, T. A., The Free Methodist Church and other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.p4.

In 1939 the Free Methodist Church was given a lease to Lundi Mission by the government of 100 acres for the school, and clinic. Later 150 more acres were granted for reforestation and the Bible School. The missionaries had to cooperate with the government to promote African welfare as they saw it. The government of Southern Rhodesia expected missionaries to teach and heal Africans with whom they worked.

When Rev. Jacobs and his colleagues made the second trip into Southern Rhodesia pursuing the invitation to open a Mission station, they met government officials who urged them “to immediately apply for a site, promising government aid in school and medical programs, with complete freedom for evangelisation.”⁴¹ The missionaries later met Mr. H. A. Ling, Assistant Native Commissioner of Mwenezi, who gave them every possible encouragement and help. Mr. Ling enumerated the benefits missionaries were going to have if they cooperated with the government. Missionaries were going to have 100 acres of land available for lease to build schools, hospitals, clinics and residencies for the very small annual fee of 3 pounds. At each school site established by mission in the surrounding areas, no other denomination was allowed to plant a school within 3 miles. All school buildings under mission management could be used for all church activities. The Free Methodist Mission in the Mwenezi District would be on the ground floor in an area 16,000 square kilometres, with no competition from any other established denomination. Points two and four were very attractive to Rev. Jacobs who worked for many years under an uncooperative Mozambique Government dominated by the Roman Catholic Church.

Jacobs was aware that the policies of the government were based on racial discrimination. The government’s attitude towards missionaries who refused to cooperate was clearly explained by the example of the Swiss Mission. How was Rev. Jacobs going to maneuver himself to be able to work with both Africans and the government?

The cooperation between the missionaries and government was demonstrated by the role Mr. Ling played in the establishment of Lundi Mission. The Assistant Commissioner spent an entire morning with the missionaries traipsing through the bush looking for an ideal spot. Finally Mr. Ling said to the missionaries, “Build here!” This was on the banks of the Lundi River. When Chief Chitanga was reluctant to accept the mission being built on his soil, the Assistant Native Commissioner put maximum pressure, supported by his people, on the chief to accept the mission.

When Rev. Ralph and Ethel Jacobs arrived in Southern Rhodesia in March 25, 1939, their first white guest was Mr. Ling, who sat on a box and drank tea.⁴³ It was he who suggested the ceremony to lay the foundation stone on June 8, 1939. He addressed the crowd to the effect that if the Africans obeyed the missionaries’ words, they would be shown the way of life. He concluded his speech striking the cornerstone sharply with a trowel. “I trust that this Mission and its work will be as strong and solid as this stone”.⁴⁴ When the church building was dedicated on September 20, 1939, Mr. Ling gave another speech of encouragement. Apart from Mr. Ling other government white officials and ranchers attended all the official ceremonies, showing togetherness with the missionaries. The Africans were so interested in the educational and medical services the new religion

⁴¹ Jacobs, R., ‘Missionary Tidings’, November, 1938.

⁴³ Jacob, Ralph, Diary, March, 1939.

⁴⁴ Embree, E., Now rings the bell, Light and Life Press, Winona Lake, 1978.p.74.

was bringing, that they ignored the friendship between the missionaries and the whites that they knew to be racists.

From the first contacts there was cooperation between the missionaries and government officials. Apart from benefits each had from the other, there were other factors that brought the two together. The American missionaries and British settlers were of similar ethnic backgrounds and language in the Dark Continent. The missionaries' literature accepted the teaching of 1 Peter 2:13 'Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme.'⁴⁵ The Southern Rhodesian government was in power, and missionaries were aliens, not citizens. They had to cooperate with the government. Before 1950 missionaries provided their own teaching lessons until the government produced their own syllabus. The missionaries hired teachers whose salaries came from the government. Ordained missionaries managed schools until 1970: Ralph Jacobs 1939-1946, Eldon Sayre 1946 – 1956, 1957-1959, 1962-1966, Tillman Houser 1951–1953, 1955–1961, 1965-1966, Philip Capp 1966–1967, and Henry Orrin 1966–1970. This was all concrete evidence of cooperation between missionaries and the government.

The missionary manager and African teacher relationship was a very sensitive one. The manager was there basically to supervise and discipline the teachers. He had to implement government and church regulations. In the eyes of the African teacher, missionary managers were mainly government officials. Many teachers were disciplined for having affairs with schoolgirls, absenteeism from duty, and drunkenness. The point in question was how they related to each other during the armed struggle. This had a bearing on the fate of Lundi Mission. During war, adversaries solve old scores in one way or another. Sometimes false accusations are used in revenge. There was a possibility that the Lundi missionaries could be caught in this situation during the Liberation War at the expense of the mission and the school.

When Rev. Jacobs opened the Lundi School, he needed trained teachers who were Christians to lead church services on Sunday if there were no pastor. The school was the first one among the Hlengwe apart from Mboweni's failure. In the early days, they had to bring teachers from other denominations. In some cases those who came were a disappointment when their behaviour revealed why they had been rejected back home. Some were drunkards, inefficient, or morally weak. Rev. Jacobs requested a teacher from the Missionary Board to lead in the development of Lundi Mission School. The first white missionary teacher was Daisy Frederick from Inhamaxofo, Mozambique. Mae Armstrong, another single lady, also came to help Frederick. African teachers, Mr. Mashamba and Miss Gwambe, joined them. The relationship was reported to be generally good between the white teachers and African teachers. Sometimes they taught together in one classroom or one would go under a tree. The relationship was basically professional and religious, not social, as this was against the racial laws of the country.

Ruth Smith took over the leadership of Lundi Mission School in 1946 until 1960 when she resigned to devote her time to the women's program of the church. Clarke DeMille was the headmaster until 1964. Robert Magee became principal at the beginning of the Lundi Mission Secondary School in 1965. The period 1946–1965 was a period of growth at Lundi Central Primary School in terms of student body and teaching staff. There was also an increase in the number of outlying schools attached and interrelated to

⁴⁵ 1 Peter 2:13, Holy Bible, King James Version.

Lundi Central Primary School on a regular basis. The white missionaries provided the core of the teaching staff.

In the first 20 years of Lundi Mission, there was little social interaction between missionaries and African teachers. The missionaries had agreed to cooperate with the government, whose policies were based on racial discrimination. There was to be a clear-cut line between whites and Africans even in mission institutions. The cultural distance between missionaries and African teachers reinforced this separation. The government had demanded the missionaries to cooperate, and the missionaries had agreed. There was fear among the missionaries, “What would the Europeans think if they would suddenly arrive, and find Africans in the missionaries’ living room?”⁴⁶ Government officials and white ranchers regularly visited the mission. The government also kept a watchful eye on the missionaries because there were known cases when missionaries violated racial laws. Some missionaries wanted to preserve the American way of life in their homes, so whatever relationship they had with Africans had to be strictly professional and religious. The Africans were aware of this, but believed it was a reflection of the normal racial system in the country.

Rev. Jacobs believed that there should be differences between white teachers and African teacher’s homes. He believed that teachers would prefer housing culturally similar to their own homes. This was wrong. It was a way of hiding behind racialism. The 1950’s witnessed the rise and increase of African nationalism. African teachers at Lundi Mission were not spared. Equality consciousness also increased. Lundi Mission Primary School principals, Ruth Smith, Clarke DeMille, and Robert Magee had to deal with this sensitive issue. Missionary teachers such as Donna Grantier, Gayle Hershberger, Kitty Magee, Barbara Russell, Beth Beckelhymer, Henry Orrin, Dorothy Hibbard, Charles Ruth, Miriam Smith, Phillip Harden and Lucille Harden, also faced this situation. The attitude of these missionary teachers towards African teachers and African residences in the mission was responsible for racism that could influence the mission survival or collapse during periods of political tension.

Some of the missionaries noticed that there was a need to change behaviour or life styles that represented, or could be construed, as racialism. Some missionaries suggested that new missionary teachers from the United States be temporarily housed in buildings previously occupied by an African teacher. Ruth Smith at once replied, “You can live in one of those homes if you want, but I never would.”⁴⁷ This remark, made by the principal, would not help the survival of the mission, particularly when it was made by the principal. Fortunately, in 1961, Ruth Smith left teaching to become director of the women’s church program, and by the time of her death in 1964, her racial attitude had greatly changed. Rev. Tillman Houser, Sarah Muzamani, and many others who worked with her in her last days, confirmed her change of attitude towards racial equality.⁴⁸ Until the missionaries left in 1976, their homes were still different, though African teachers had better houses. These homes were still inferior to the ones missionaries had.

Clarke DeMille attempted to break the racial social contact at Lundi Mission. He arrived at Lundi Mission in August 1957 and began teaching in September of the same year. He easily crossed social racial boundaries. This raised the eyebrows of the senior

⁴⁶ Interview with T. Houser, 12 Dunstable Circle, Avonlea, Harare, Zimbabwe, November, 1999.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Interview with Sarah Muzamani, Avonlea, Harare, December, 2000.

missionaries, particularly the school principal, Miss Ruth Smith. Mr. DeMille was race-blind because of his background. His parents were missionaries in Mozambique. He had grown up together with African children in the mission. He was a very fluent speaker of the Hlengwe language. When his close contacts with the Africans were rebuked, he shied away, but whenever he had the chance, he broke the racial code. In respect to race relations at Lundi Mission, DeMille said, “It was the system I had to follow through. I was not strong enough personally to say, ‘I do not agree with this.’”⁴⁹ Had this racist relationship continued to the beginning of the Liberation War, the mission and the missionaries could not have survived.

Rev. and Mrs. Philip Capp first broke the “taboo” of social contact of Africans and white missionaries. The other missionaries were, possibly deep down in their hearts, not racists but cowards. They were afraid to break the laws of the country, which were based on racial discrimination. The bottom line was that, on the issue of racial equality, missionaries dedicated their lives to help the Africans. The Capps were the first missionaries to welcome Africans into their home for meals and social events after they arrived at Lundi Mission. The racial ice was broken, and other missionaries followed.⁵⁰ This fostered a better spirit among the Mission residences. When the Liberation War broke out, race relations at Lundi Mission were good and contributed to the survival of the mission and the school.

In 1965, political tension nearly destroyed the mission. The Gonakudzingwa Restriction Camp was established to house ZAPU African nationalists in 1964. Among them was its leader, the late Doctor Joshua Nkomo. The camp was about 200 kilometres from Lundi Mission and in the middle of the Hlengwe people. Discussed earlier in detail.

“In 1965, the stream of visitors became a flood, and the fame of Nkomo at the camp spread rapidly through the whole vast Mwenezi District and into neighboring Districts as well.”⁵¹

This was the report of Mr. A. Wright, District Commissioner of Mwenezi District. Some African teachers, residents and students were caught in the political fever. The missionaries had their understanding with the government made when the mission was founded in 1939. Members or sympathizers of ZAPU had to secretly visit Gonakudzingwa Camp. In 1965, the secondary school was opened at Lundi, and the last phase of higher primary school in the form of Standard Six. The only African teacher was John Mandleve Chauke, who was to see the last phase of primary school. All the other teachers for primary and secondary schools were white missionaries. Many of the secondary school students were from various parts of the country, and were already politicized. These students were easily attracted by the ongoing political activities at nearby Gonakudzingwa Restriction Camp. The teacher, Comrade John Chauke, was a very active and dedicated cadre of ZAPU. He led a group within the mission. He was able to recruit more members, and keep the fire burning by taking advantage of some of the racial attitudes of the missionaries. He pointed to some of the racial discrimination practices in the mission.

In liaison with the nationalists at the camp, there was to be an insurrection in the

⁴⁹ An Unpublished transcript of a tape recorded by Rev. T. Houser with Clarke DeMille, July 11, 1989.

⁵⁰ Houser, T. A., The Free Methodist Church and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

⁵¹ Wright, A., Valley of the Ironwoods, Cape and Transvaal, Cape Town, 1972, p.392.

country and major institutions at a date to be set up. Along the course of planning, the plan bogged down. Comrade John Chauke, and his group at Lundi Mission, had to be part of the insurrection. Someone in the mission burned books in the principal's study of Mr. C. DeMille. The culprit was one of the students, who was arrested. The political activities, which were to take place in the mission and to be led by the teacher, Comrade John Chauke, were all discovered, exposed, and revealed. The link with ZAPU nationalists at Gonakudzingwa Restriction Camp was revealed in detail.⁵² Comrade John Chauke was accused of having been the leader. He was arrested, and sentenced to six years hard labour in jail. More than twenty students who were politically active, including the interviewee, were expelled from school.

The District Commissioner, A. Wright, referring to this incident, had this to say, "There was no doubt that the many rumors of impending trouble at their (missionaries) stations had reached them (missionaries) and I could see they were (missionaries) impressed with the strength of my argument. I expected concrete results, and I soon got them. In fact, their (missionaries') cooperation enabled us to act just in time to avoid serious trouble at one station (Lundi Mission). The ringleader (Comrade John Chauke), a once trusted teacher, was later sentenced to several years imprisonment for incitement of the pupils to violence of the worst kind, and for several months I found their (missionaries') attitudes to security intelligence work and other relevant matter, immeasurably changed. I think they came to realize we were fighting something much greater and more dangerous than the usual localized upheavals in which missionaries could profitably stand aside and remain uncontaminated."⁵³

The missionaries had difficulties. Their point of view was appreciated; though not agreed with. The matters at stake during the winter of 1965 were far too serious to consider reputations and assumptions of the importance of maintaining the confidence of those who were preparing to "bite the hand that fed them" spiritually and educationally. Missionary work had flaws, which angered political activists in that the missionaries had sided with nationalists. The reputation of the mission and missionaries was at stake in the eyes of the Africans then, and in the future. The mission and missionaries, particularly the principal, were served by information they received from trusted people beforehand, because of the good services they provided to the people. It was possible that after this incident, relations with the local people could have been severely strained. Generally speaking, matters returned to normal at the same time when activities at Gonakudzingwa Restriction Camp were put under control.

In 1968 Comrade John Chauke was released from jail. His first place of call was Lundi Mission, and his host was the principal, Mr. Clarke DeMille. The two had a three-hour discussion, which attracted the attention of students and other mission residents. The principal was the leading witness leading to Comrade J. Chauke's conviction and sentencing. Their discussion ended amicably, because when the two parted they were laughing and shaking hands. The Comrade passed through the boy's hostel during lunchtime, where he briefly addressed those who were around. He literally knelt, and bit a mouthful of soil as a symbol of his love for his country. He visited the house he had lived in before the arrest, and then left.

⁵² Interview with late, Mr. Clarence Tagwireyi, Harare, April, 2000. A student and member of the ZAPU at Lundi Secondary School, 1965.

⁵³ Wright, A., *Valley of the ironwoods*, Cape and Transvaal, Cape Town, 1972, p.392.

That evening the Police Special Branch men were around interrogating some students, and warning them to desist from contact with political detainees in the future. I was a Z.J.C. student in 1968. Comrade John Chauke became active as a member of ZAPU during the Liberation War in Zambia, and returned home at Independence.

When the Liberation War started in 1975, there was a strong rumour that Lundi Mission and the missionaries could not survive because Comrade John Chauke was going to bring revenge for what happened in 1965. The missionaries left in 1976, and had not been harmed. The mission survived through that time. Lundi Mission fell under ZANLA instead of the ZIPRA operational zone, and Comrade John Chauke was ZIPRA. Occasionally ZIPRA forces penetrated this area by way of Mberengwa. Comrade Chauke was not fighting individuals, but a system. This was displayed by his amicable meeting with Mr. DeMille, the chief witness when he was jailed. By the time the Liberation War intensified, the missionaries had learnt how to deal carefully with guerrillas and security forces. This appears to have been the case of their previous poor record of relations with African nationalists. This time they were clever to survive. Other factors had also come into play between 1965 and 1975.

After the Declaration of Unilateral Independence by Southern Rhodesia from Britain on 11th November 1965, tensions worsened. The new Rhodesian regime was aware of the great possibility of war. Hence, as one of the precautions, it introduced national service for white men. All white males between the ages 18 to 60 years had to register for military service. This also included the missionary men. If missionaries took up arms against Africans, their missions and themselves would not be spared by the guerrilla warfare. The missionaries had agreed to cooperate with the government in its policies. This was a dilemma for the missionaries, and the answer had to be found first and foremost in prayer. Rev. Tillman Houser's reply to government military service became standard for the Free Methodist Church missionaries. His letter dated 25th April 1966 at Lundi Mission addressed to the National Registrar, Box 8138, Causeway, Salisbury read,

“This is to notify you I will not serve in military service or in the employment of the government. I quote from the United States passport, ‘You may lose your United States nationality.....by taking an oath or making a declaration of allegiance to a foreign state or by serving in the armed forces or accepting employment under the government of a foreign state.’”⁵⁴

No missionary served in the army before they left when the Liberation War intensified in 1976. Some missionaries in other areas did take up military service with the Rhodesian security forces, which contributed to the collapse of their missions. During the war the local people had much influence in considering the fate of the missions. The fact that Free Methodist missionaries did not carry arms on behalf of the white regime put them in a good light as far as local people were concerned.

Lundi Secondary School opened in the year of Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) when political tension was very high and the future uncertain. All the Secondary School teachers were missionaries from the United States. Rev. Jacobs' policy was that schools belonged to the local community, but this was not the case with the secondary

⁵⁴ Houser, T. A., Letter to the National Registrar, 25th April, 1966.

school. The missionaries were very aware of this sensitive issue, but the prevailing feeling was that there were no local Africans available with proper qualifications or experience. Missionaries reasoned that if African teachers were employed, they would need salaries commensurate with their positions and living expenses, which was not the case with missionary teachers. The local community was aware that when Jacobs introduced the first school, he hired teachers from other denominations because the local teachers were not available. The missionaries knew that in the future Africans were to replace them as teachers. In 1966 at a missionary meeting, Rev. Tillman Houser moved a motion, which was adopted at 2.30 p.m., in reference to missionary projected educational aims.

“We would like to work for replacement of mission staff by African staff in teaching in secondary school and management of the District primary schools and work towards a redeployment of the missionaries in other fields, such as the Bible School Evangelistic and Literature outreach. Target date 1977. To this end we would like to develop Junior Secondary Schools on a community basis, with African teachers and mission grants to assist in the initial buildings. Probably 1971–1972 would be the earliest date for available staff for the Junior Secondary School.”⁵⁵

This was a genuine protection for the missionaries, but for the Africans, it was a bit too long to wait. The missionaries started in 1971 to practically implement their projection as far as African teachers were concerned. For the African headmaster, it was a year earlier, because the missionaries were forced by the armed struggle. The missionary projection was fulfilled almost to the plan, and Africans took their word to be true. The pioneer African secondary teacher was Rainos Chipwanya, a product of the primary school, and son of the Mwenezi community.

In 1972 the Secondary School expanded from Zimbabwe Junior Certificate (Z.J.C.) to O Level or Form 1V. This called for more African teachers. Messrs. A.D. Ndebele, A.D. Chauke, and T. Matenda Shumba, sons of the Mwenezi community, joined the staff. Messrs. the late J. Harinangoni, S. Mutambara, and J. Mupoperi also joined the school as teachers. The missionaries were keeping their promise. The Secondary School was becoming part of the community since African teachers and some of them their own sons, were now members of the staff. The major issue was race relations between white missionary and African teachers. The opening of O Level classes and the recruitment of many African teachers coincided with the resumption of the armed struggle. The racial issue was a slippery road to be treaded with care, particularly by the missionaries, because they were the leaders and authorities. Relations between missionary and African teachers were definitely going to determine the future of the mission. Their relationship was going to permeate all residents in the mission, particularly students and the local community. There was no way that the missionaries could afford not to take sides in the Liberation War. The two groups could easily reach mutual understanding within the mission, but the external influence in the form of the Liberation War was a different story.

When the armed struggle resumed in 1971, the Free Methodist Church missionaries were more on the side of the government. They had honored the traditional agreement

⁵⁵ Missionary, Mission Meeting Resolution, January 8, 1966.

between R. Jacobs, the founder missionary, and Assistant Native Commissioner, Mr. H. A. Ling, of cooperation between the government and missionaries.

There were other reasons why the missionaries were inclined to the government side. The missionaries from the United States and the white settlers shared the same ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Missionaries argued that they were aliens, not citizens of the country, so they were bound to obey the laws of the government of the day. The Africans did not accept these reasons because there were other missionaries who were in the same situation, but who actively supported the Liberation Movements. ZANU and ZAPU were communist allies and were also communists. Missionaries were Christians, and the government was claiming to be Christian, so they were fighting communism that was anti-Christian. This was one of the major reasons why missionaries supported the government. Missionary work, by its nature, was against war. But they were taking sides for the government subsidized mission educational and medical work. It was impossible for missionaries to operate without subsidies.

The missionaries felt that Africans were not ready to take over the government. The Africans had no experience in directing commerce, foreign relations, land management, medical and educational services. In the missionaries' eyes, African political aspirations only sought for personal power. They thought Africans should not be in a hurry to assume political power. Whites would eventually work everything out. The missionaries were singing the same song as the Rhodesian regime.⁵⁶ These were American missionaries who were also used to fighting the cold war between the United States and Russia. This was the reason why some of their reasons for siding with the government could not hold water. The missionaries were treading on slippery ground as far as their relationship with Africans was concerned.

African leaders in the church, especially teachers, were very aware of the political situation and general attitude of missionaries. The first major guerrilla incident, which frightened the missionaries, was the gunning down of a group of white motorbike cyclists near Buby Hotel along the Masvingo –Beitbridge highway 70 kilometres from Lundi Mission.

Missionaries started to question their relation with Africans. When Mozambique gained its independence in April of 1975, it opened its borders with Rhodesia, giving ZANLA guerrillas access about 300 kilometres from Lundi Mission. In the words of the Lundi Secondary School headmaster, Mr. Clarke DeMille,

“In 1975 when Mozambique became independent and the new government favorable to Zimbabwe guerrillas and opened the border for access, we began to feel real pressure, and it really started to be hot.”⁵⁷

The mission and missionaries were threatened. If they continued with their old policy of siding with the government, there was no way they could survive the wrath of the guerrillas. Some missionaries began to see the “writing on the wall” that if they and the mission were to survive, there was a need to change their attitude towards Africans. The Church Conference Board of Education, which included missionary headmaster of Lundi Secondary School Clarke DeMille as chairman, made a revolutionary report to the Annual Conference in April 1975. The education board requested the missionaries to

⁵⁶ Interview with Rev. T. A. Houser, 12 Dunstable Circle, Avonlea, Harare, November, 1999.

⁵⁷ An Unpublished transcript of a tape recorded by Rev. T. Houser with Clarke DeMille, July 11, 1989.

allow an academically qualified teacher, Andrew Ndebele, to be trained to take over as headmaster if the military situation deteriorated. The committee cited examples of areas in Africa where missionaries were forced to hurriedly leave before preparing some qualified people to take over. The education committee did not want this to happen to Lundi Secondary School.

One of the missionaries stood in opposition to this request, saying, “I know you Africans. You would like to get your hands on the school funds. You would like to have the power to run this school, but you are not ready. Maybe in fifty or a hundred years you will be able to manage this school.”⁵⁸

The attitude of the education committee if implemented could serve the mission and the missionaries. This statement of the missionary, if followed, could plunge the Mission and missionaries into disaster.

The missionary who had opposed the appointment of the African as headmaster, pursued the point by surveying several missions in the country to determine the appropriate time it would take for an African teacher to qualify as Secondary School headmaster. He reported later at a meeting of the missionaries that the time needed for an African to be experienced enough to head a Secondary School was 10 to 20 years. He knew that Andrew Ndebele, whom the Conference Board of Education had suggested, had just completed his academic qualifications and had no experience. He therefore could not be appointed. Mr. DeMille, who was on the front line as far as educational changes were concerned, was very perturbed by this development. He was afraid of the consequences for he had interacted directly with both the teachers and the students. He sensed the tension which prevailed in the school. After the meeting, Mr. DeMille privately pleaded with Rev. Tillman Houser, who was one of the elders among the missionaries, to appoint Andrew Ndebele as deputy headmaster. Rev. Houser reluctantly made an attempt, but was met with the same absolute refusal.⁵⁹ This arrogant attitude spelt disaster for the mission and missionaries. The future looked very bleak for Mr. DeMille, and those missionaries who sided with him.

While the missionary staff was dragging their feet on Africanisation, and refusing to heed Mr. DeMille’s advice, the military situation was deteriorating in many parts of the country, and it was coming nearer Lundi Mission. In 1975 some teachers and students were transferred to Lundi Mission after Mamvuradonha, their school, had closed. They related war atrocities of beatings, killings and abductions before their school closed. Events which were happening around Lundi Mission, could not be very far away from following the Mamvuradonha way.

The headmaster could tell that the atmosphere in the school was tense. Students were close-mouthed and uncertain of their future. Sometimes he overheard the students discussing guerrilla activities and their concerns. The headmaster had a duty to maintain school discipline. At the same time, he kept his door open and promised not to report. When security forces came to the mission there was real tension.⁶⁰

After the first term holiday of 1975, a couple of students did not return. The “bush telegraph” reported that they had gone with the “struggle”. The records of the headmaster recorded that “the students did not return to school for unknown reasons”.

⁵⁸ Interview with Rev. T. A. Houser, 12 Dunstable Circle, Avonlea, Harare, November, 1999.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ An Unpublished transcript of a tape recorded by Rev. T. Houser with Clarke DeMille, July 11, 1989.

Students discussed about going away, and they complained about the government. The headmaster advised the students to guard their conversation. He was worried by the fact that information concerning guerrillas was not coming to him. The teachers, and some senior students, knew that the headmaster was the chief witness against Comrade John Chauke in 1965, who was convicted and sentenced to jail for political activities in the mission. Whoever had information on guerrilla activities could not share it with the headmaster. John Chauke's old record meant that he could not be trusted. If events continued to be as they were, disaster for the mission was imminent.

"In the middle of 1975", Clarke DeMille said, "I felt very, very strongly that we needed to Africanize as much as possible. It was at this time that the headmaster felt Andrew Ndebele would be an excellent deputy headmaster. He had to be groomed to take over. I remember trying to express this at missionary meetings, but always there were very negative responses. The headmaster brought Andrew Ndebele into his office, put in a second desk, and told him, "I want you to help me. I would like you to take over some responsibilities. with no official title." He learnt to accept. He was willing."⁶¹

The missionaries who opposed Africanization, always argued that, "It was not yet time, maybe in the future. Things were not really going to blow up around us.. Mozambique was far in the east."

Historical developments proved that they were burying their heads in the sand like ostriches. According to events that unfolded in 1975, the move by the headmaster to Africanize contributed very much in saving the mission and missionaries from disaster. The headmaster might have made a mistake in 1965, but in 1975 he got it right.

Before the Annual Conference in 1975, Clarke DeMille prepared his headmaster's report to be presented to the conference. Before his presentation, rumor circulated among staff members and church leaders that Andrew Ndebele would be officially appointed and approved deputy headmaster. Some of the missionaries made negative comments before the report was made public. The time came for the headmaster to give his report. The headmaster, Clarke DeMille, gave his report,

"We feel it is time that there is an African deputy headmaster. We of the school are requesting that the conference do something about it."⁶²

There was a mixed reaction to the report. Those who supported Africanization applauded. In the interview DeMille said that,

"There was a real negative reaction by someone I am not going to name. Then other missionaries felt undermined by the report. I apologized to some of the mission leaders. The conference leaders got together with certain mission leaders that night after the presentation, and tried to question the response. One of the leaders of the conference questioned,

"Are you telling us, then, that Mr. DeMille was wrong in what he did on the conference floor?"

The missionary response was,

"Yes he was wrong."

"We understand. That finishes it."

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

It was not accepting, but no further talking.”⁶³

Mr. DeMille’s account shows how determined some missionaries were prepared to prevent change. The sad thing was that if DeMille had not taken an initiative, disaster could have visited the mission.

After the conference, in spite of the general missionary opposition and without anything official, Mr. DeMille carried on throughout 1975 with training Andrew Ndebele as deputy headmaster.

In 1976, the headmaster gave Mr. Ndebele more responsibilities, such as admission of Form One pupils with the help of another teacher, Jotamu Mupoperi. The headmaster constantly checked on what Mr. Ndebele was doing, to avoid his making any mistakes while he was not officially appointed. According to S.B. Chauke, the chief dining hall cook, the headmaster’s foresight was due to reports that the guerrilla activities were within a short range of the mission.⁶⁴ He had made a mistake in 1965, but his current activities had shown that he could be trusted to a considerable degree.

By early 1976, true reports were that ZANLA guerrillas supported by Frelimo had penetrated the whole areas in the southeast of the country, such as Chilonga, Malipati, Chiredzi, Sengwe and Chikombedzi. These were areas in which the Free Methodist Church operated. Tension was really very high, and the Church Annual Conference was canceled because of war activities. In April 1976, a large group of guerrillas, estimated to be 200, tramped through Lundi Mission at night. No one saw them. Their footprints were the only evidence of their passing. The net was closing on the missionaries. In August 1976, Joseph Muzamani Chauke, a primary school manager stationed at Chikombedzi Mission, was brutally murdered by guerrillas. He was an active member and elder in the church. He was accused of being a “sell-out”. The resident doctor at Chikombedzi Hospital, Doctor L. Hurd, was threatened by death. The missionaries abandoned Chikombedzi Mission, their second headquarters, and came to Lundi Mission. Things were now happening very fast. The mission and missionaries were in danger, imminent danger. The Free Methodist Church Headquarters in the United States ordered all missionaries and their families to evacuate Lundi Mission and move to urban areas. This was the first step towards their evacuation out of Rhodesia. DeMille gave Andrew Ndebele more and more responsibilities. At this juncture, the missionaries had no choice. During the last term of 1976, the headmaster and mission superintendent officially handed to Andrew Ndebele the post of deputy headmaster, but with the full responsibilities of the headmaster.

“You are going to have to take over.”

Andrew’s response was “I wish I had a year with you.”

He felt shaken and not ready. It was a sudden thing that made it difficult to take the whole responsibility.⁶⁵ The hand-over between Clarke DeMille and Andrew Ndebele was now a crash program. In December, all missionaries were out of Lundi Mission. They were either in Fort Victoria, Salisbury, South Africa or had flown to the United States.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Interview with Chief Mission Cook, S. B. Chauke, Lundi Mission, 1981.

⁶⁵ An Unpublished transcript of a tape recorded by Rev. T. Houser with Clarke DeMille, July, 11, 1989.

Mr. DeMille went to Fort Victoria and returned to Lundi in January. Then in February he moved to South Africa. He briefly came to Lundi for a final handover, then left. Andrew Ndebele was now the effective headmaster, and there was not a single white missionary at Lundi Mission. The mission for now had survived without any one being killed or injured. Why did the guerrillas, with all the ample opportunities which they had, spare the mission and missionaries? They knew the missionary record of supporting the government. They had killed the African manager, and had only threatened the missionaries at Chikombedzi. They tramped through Lundi Mission at night, but without doing any harm. They had operated around the mission, but not in the mission. Why?

When guerrillas moved into the area, their 'point of call' was the local community. They had to be like fish in water. according to the guerrilla teachings of Maodze Dong. Before the guerrillas moved into Lundi Mission, they had checked with the local people. The local people had given them a report of good educational and medical services given at the mission, in spite of its failures. The school's performance had pleased the local people. In a way, the mission was a property of the local community. The locals were stakeholders in the mission. The guerrillas could not take any hasty action against the mission and missionaries. This gave an opportunity to prepare and abandon the mission without any calamities. If Africanization had not taken place, though, delayed disaster could have struck at Lundi Mission.

The teachers and students at Lundi Secondary School could have had their misgivings against the missionaries, but overall, the missionaries were an asset to them. They felt missionaries must leave, but in one piece and the mission remain intact. This was what happened at the end of 1976.

Christians and believers felt that the mission and missionaries survived because of God's protection. They were part and parcel of Rev. Jacobs' vision. They were an extension of the whole mission program as envisioned by Jacobs. God protected them and gave them a free passage out of the war. The missionaries could have completely dominated the institutions, and in some instances, were racially biased. In reflecting on the dedicated service of the Free Methodist missionaries in Zimbabwe, their commitment to their "mission" and serving the people cannot be denied. They had left their homes and families in North America, denied themselves professional and economic advancement, and suffered culture shock in a strange land to give their lives in Christian devotion to the Africans. A great deal of time was spent each day in the basic problems of existing in a hot climate with little rainfall. The missionaries were married to their work. Missionaries in education worked with the government to promote the well being of Africans in the rural areas. Schools and clinics testified to their desire to see the African quality of life improve. They desired that men and women, both black and white, respond to God's message for their lives. They continually prayed for the pastors, and people in and out of churches.

Missionary strategy was to teach Africans technology that they had not yet acquired, and to perform tasks they felt Africans could not yet do. They carried out their jobs responsibly, but usually from a Western perspective.⁶⁶ Rev. Tillman Houser's words are a true reflection of what the majority of blacks saw, as far as Free Methodist missionaries represented. They had survived and the mission institution survived as a symbol and

⁶⁶ Houser, T. A., The Free Methodist Church and other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

permanent reminder of their work in Zimbabwe. God, by preserving Lundi Mission during the “Dark Days” of the Liberation war, wanted to make it His testimony through the work of white Free Methodist missionaries and their African colleagues who shared the same vision.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

ANDREW D. NDEBELE - THE HEADMASTER AND SUPERINTENDENT OF LUNDI MISSION 1976 – 1982

The missionary headmaster and missionary Superintendent of Lundi Mission, Messrs. DeMille and Capp respectively, hurriedly placed the mission responsibilities on Andrew Ndebele and left. At the end of 1976, the Liberation War was beginning to intensify in the areas around Lundi Mission. The future was very uncertain and very dark. Lundi Mission had three institutions, namely the Secondary School, the Bible School and the Clinic. The superintendent was in overall charge of the mission with the heads of the other institutions reporting to him. Rev. Jacobs was the first mission superintendent by virtue of being the founder. Later on Eldon Sayre, Tillman Houser, Clarke DeMille, Robert Magee and Philip Capp served as superintendents.

When the missionaries hurriedly left, Mr. Ndebele was officially designated headmaster of the Secondary School by the Superintendent, Rev. Philip Capp who spoke these words to Andrew Ndebele, “You are going to take over.”¹

He was going to take over as headmaster, but was not clear as to being the superintendent of the mission. Andrew Ndebele was the most academically learned person, compared to the other heads, and the Secondary School was the largest of the institutions in terms of numbers, that is, students, professionals, teachers, kitchen staff and general workers. The headmaster had considerable responsibility. For instance, Andrew Ndebele, though not officially designated mission superintendent, became one. The superintendent controlled the mission cars, and had the final word on the hiring and firing of workers, and controlled the mission office. The mission administrator, or bursar, and his or her staff reported to him. These duties fell under Andrew Ndebele’s control. This simply meant that he was the Mission Superintendent, and the man on the spot. The General Missionary Board appointed Rev. Tillman Houser to oversee its affairs in the country. He was resident at first in Salisbury and later at Chiredzi, making occasional visits to the mission. Andrew Ndebele was to be the man to see the Mission through the events of the war.

Andrew Ndebele was a son of the Mwenezi District and graduate at Lundi Central Primary School. He grew up in the Chikombedzi area among Ndebele, Hlengwe and Karanga peoples. He was able to speak fluent English, Ndebele, Hlengwe and Shona. This background qualified him as the ideal person to lead Lundi Mission. He was academically qualified, and though he lacked experience in 1976, experience had to begin somewhere.

When Clarke DeMille thought of handing over leadership to someone, he did not have to think twice about Ndebele, because he had noticed his potential qualities.

“In 1975 I felt very strongly that we needed to Africanize as much as possible. It was at this time that I felt that Andrew Ndebele would be an excellent

¹ Houser, T. A., The Free Methodist Church and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

deputy headmaster. He had to be groomed to take over”.²

When the headmaster was preparing his educational report for the Free Methodist Church Annual Conference in 1975, he prepared his report with those who were close to him. He declared that,

“Weeks before the report I could feel people sensing and looking forward for Ndebele to be officially announced as deputy headmaster”.³

It was not the headmaster alone who noticed Mr. Ndebele’s qualities, but other people as well. Those missionaries, who opposed his appointment feared Africanization, it was not that he was incapable.

He was a soft-spoken man, cool and calculating in his decisions. He was not given to outbursts, but made very cool replies and answers. He mixed very easily with all people. In the war he was the man of the people or *povo*. Tolerance and patience helped him to deal with both guerrillas and security forces during the war when they pushed him. Frankness, honesty and straight-forwardness helped him not to be called a “sell-out”. He did not beat around the bush with information which he thought should be known by his colleagues, students, guerrillas and security forces. He was at the center of events linking the guerrillas, security forces and mission residents. He was in a very sensitive position, needing somebody with the sixth sense and extra-ordinary leadership qualities. His leadership qualities were measured by how he handled specific incidents, which nearly upset the mission boat. His role was remarkable at the first *pungwe* when guerrillas officially introduced their presence in the mission. He successfully showed his diplomatic skills when he persuaded the guerrillas to stop ill-treating the Bible School principal in front of the school students. The encounter with Comrade Gromyko and the first order list showed patience, tolerance and courage. After the Nine-Band Massacre, he was frank that the mission collaborated with guerrillas. The same situation was repeated after the Dimbiti Hill Massacre. Threats from the security forces, after the abduction of the Bible School Principal and his arrest, showed that he was brave and foreign to panic. He displayed courage by pursuing those who shot Amos Mazana, an ex-Lundi student, who was a passenger in his car from Masvingo to Lundi. He became blind to the fact that he himself could have been shot.

The discussion with Comrade Chaminuka, after he had closed the school, showed tremendous tolerance, patience and courage. The Tendai Zuva incident during the cease-fire demonstrated the headmaster’s level head and courage. His life between 1976 to 1980 vacillated on a pendulum of death and injury. He was able to persuade and understand other peoples’ feelings.

These qualities enabled him to cooperate and have unity with his colleagues, particularly teachers, kitchen staff, office staff and students with whom he was in daily contact. The other mission residents at the Clinic and Bible School also respected him, and followed him. He could have easily created enemies during the war as a ‘sell-out’ either to the guerrillas or security forces. As a leader he made more friends than enemies. Andrew Ndebele believed and followed the Christian traditions of the mission. He

² An Unpublished transcript of a tape recorded by Rev. T. Houser with Clarke DeMille, July 11, 1989.

³ Ibid.

encouraged and maintained its traditions. In other words he was the extension of the Rev. Jacobs' vision. God's hand was with him to guide the mission through until 1980.

In 1978 during the height of the liberation war Ndebele's educational report to the Missionary Board showed that he wished to carry on the work began by missionaries in spite of many adverse conditions.

“During the recent Rhodesian Annual Conference in April 1978 at Lundi, I met an old lady who expressed these words to me, ‘You know we are so fearful for you people. We just feel as if anything could happen at the school at any moment, but we pray for you. I always tell my son, a student at Lundi, to drop us a line wherever he may be, if abducted.’”

“She then went further to tell me of her boy's reply. Her son told her not to be afraid; for he said, ‘Mother, we worship and pray to a living God at Lundi. God surely keeps and protects us.’

“The words of this mother went right to my heart. They really made me feel that Lundi Secondary School was serving its purpose as a Christian Academic Institution. Lundi Secondary School assists and provides a Christian academic education to its students. We aim to give the highest academic instruction to our students. We aim to prepare them for their adult livelihood. They should be useful and contributing members to society. In addition to this useful side of our work, we feel it is not enough to prepare students for this world only. We also aim to prepare them for eternity. We therefore prepare them with as many opportunities as possible whereby they may be brought closer to Jesus, for this is the most important thing we can provide for our students. We have daily morning devotions to start the day and bring us closer to God. We have Christian societies, such as the Scripture Union, Boys and Girls Brigades, the Young Christian Movement, and witnessing groups. Through such societies we aim to reach the entire student body for Christ.

“It is gratifying to note that many students are responding to the Christian call and have come to a personal knowledge of the living God. It is heart-moving to hear their testimonies. Prayer cells are continually growing. Witnessing groups weekly visit patients at the clinic. All this work is student-initiated and led. We do thank the Lord for his saving grace.

“Lundi Secondary School provides a service to the community. The school provides places for their able children to receive education and Christian teaching. The School acts as a civilizing influence in the local community. Sons and daughters eventually end up as wage earners. They do send money to their parents, and help to raise the standard of living in the community. Students witness to parents at vacation. I have known parents who said that they were brought to the Christian life through the behaviour and witness of their children. In normal times, students go out in the community witnessing and to hold prayer meetings.

“The school, during troubled times, also renders valuable services to the community to feed its student body. It buys cattle, since there are no government cattle sales at the moment. The school buys some peanuts, tomatoes and groundnuts from the community. Therefore the school services the physical and spiritual needs of the community.

“It is our prayer that Lundi Secondary School will always be a source of light to

the community and its students, and that God will always be at the center of its activities. For without this we cease to serve the purpose of its founders.

“John 3:16 ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life’”.⁴

The headmaster’s report was a summary of the school’s aims, objectives, and purpose. If the school was fulfilling its existence, there was no way that the community was not going to protect it. At the center of the school’s existence was concern for the community. The mission survived because it served the community and, in turn, God and the community defended it.

When the Liberation War came to an end in 1980, Lundi Mission and the school had remained intact with very little damage. The Missionary Board made an assessment on Andrew Ndebele and concluded that he had managed Lundi Secondary School extremely well throughout the war. The following were some of his accomplishments:

- (1) He housed and fed over 250 students.
- (2) The financial books were always balanced.
- (3) In 1979 Lundi 0-Level students received the highest academic honors in the whole country.
- (4) Not a single student left the school to join either the security forces or the guerrillas.
- (5) He hired all the new teachers and workers.

Throughout the war, the school had a reasonable supply of qualified teachers.⁵ Andrew Dobongo Ndebele was the man that some of the missionaries had rejected as headmaster of Lundi Secondary School. He played the most important part in serving the mission during the war. Lest We Forget.

The role of a deputy in any capacity is the next leader in waiting, or performs duties of the leader during his absence. Some deputies have been known to promote, or hinder the work of their leaders. Andrew Ndebele and the mission were fortunate to have a capable deputy headmaster during the height of the war, Abner Daniel Chauke. The two men had much in common. as far as the interest of the mission and school were concerned. Abner Chauke was a son of the local community and his parents were some of the first converts of Jacobs and pioneer Christians of Lundi Mission. He was fluent in Hlengwe, Shona and English, with survival knowledge of Ndebele. He was also a graduate of Lundi Central Primary School, with high academic qualifications in education. His background made him a natural choice as deputy headmaster.

Mr. Chauke was a man who mixed easily with all people. He was very humble, but also firm when the situation demanded. He was an honest and frank person, a very fair judge. His courage and bravery against danger was tenfold his physical stature. Evidence of his qualities was clearly demonstrated on many occasions during the war,

⁴ A. Ndebele’s Headmaster’s report to the Free Methodist Church Rhodesian Annual Conference April, 1978.

⁵ Houser, T. A., The Free Methodist Church and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

and particularly in the incident of Comrade Tirigidi during the cease-fire. He did not hesitate to use his resources, particularly his car, to serve the interests of the mission during the war. The combination of the qualities of the headmaster and his deputy helped very much to serve the mission during the war. There were several occasions when the deputy headmaster was challenged by the *mujibhas*, who happened to be blood relatives, but he firmly stood his ground. What a fair and noble leader. Lest We Forget

Teachers who served at Lundi Secondary School between 1975 and 1980 will never forget this period. It would have been impossible for the headmaster and his deputy to operate and serve the school without the support of these teachers. These teachers were very well qualified to work in safe places in the country. For instance urban areas, which were much safer during the Liberation War. Whether deliberately, or not, when they found themselves caught in the war situation at Lundi, they never “took a gap”, but dedicated themselves to serve the mission and school.

The following teachers witnessed the dark days at Lundi Mission: Messers. R. Chipwanya, the late Harinangoni, S. Mutambara, the late A. Manyeruke, I. Shumba, S. Sithole, S Marimbire, J. Mupoperi and temporary teachers who had a stint between 1976 and 1980, and the author. These teachers had three-quarters of their salaries consumed by guerrilla order lists, as well as some demands from security forces. These gentlemen were silent heroes who must be saluted wherever they are. They were like many others throughout the country who are unsung heroes today. These teachers could have “thrown in the towel”, but all remained to the end, except J. Mupoperi who went to England for further education. S. Sithole and S. Marimbire transferred to their homes. They sacrificed their material resources, personal leisure, families and youth for the survival of the mission and school. Lest We Forget. Disunity, and lack of cooperation between the headmaster and his staff members were responsible for the death, arrest, and collapse of some missions. In some cases, they ended up “selling-out” each other either to the security forces or the guerrillas. Sometimes it was a question of solving old scores that had nothing to do with the war. Maximum unity and cooperation among the staff members and their heads played a very important role in serving the mission and the School.

The students who attended Lundi Secondary School between 1975 and 1980, particularly 1978 and 1979, had memorable stories to tell. Some of them were as young as 13 years old when they were introduced to war activities. Daily lives and futures were characterized by uncertainties. They were brushing shoulders with danger daily, and were surrounded by danger. Lessons were many times disrupted by gunfire, the sound of helicopters and Dakotas.

The heavily-armed security forces sometimes moved in and around classes, which created apprehension among the students. *Pungwes*, or re-education lectures by the guerrillas disrupted their studies or sleep at night. Sometimes there was shortage of food, and the meal timetables interrupted because they had to share their food with guerrillas.

Riots are largely known to be caused by food problems in boarding schools, but this did not happen at Lundi Mission. Major war atrocities that happened within and close to the mission could have made some students abscond and not return, but not a single student chose this avenue. The Nine-Band Massacre, the abduction of the Bible School principal, and the Dimbiti Hill massacre all had a great impact on the security of the students. These incidents traumatized some students, and perhaps somewhere today there

are former students who are still traumatized. In the midst of the war problems and uncertainties, not for a single day did the students turn their backs against the school authorities. These students suffered silently and endured all the problems. In other schools there were cases where students turned against authorities, or took advantage of the war to engage in activities needing discipline.

The students at Lundi rallied behind their leadership and kept cool heads. The head boys and head girls who were at Lundi Secondary School during the hard times must be complimented for their attitude and activities. They greatly contributed to the survival of the mission and the school. They could have persuaded their parents or guardians to collaborate with security forces or guerrillas to close the School or the mission. Lest We Forget!

Some of the students were dedicated Christians who engaged in prayers or godly work to serve the mission. Student Christian clubs, such as Youth Movement, Brigades and Scripture Union, during weekends dedicated themselves to God. Supplication at clubs, assemblies and churches, appealing to God to save the mission and school became a daily affair. The verse,

“But Jesus said, suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven,”⁶ was fulfilled. Christians feel that God listened to the prayers for protection uttered by his young ones, the students. He saved the mission and the school.

THE SECONDARY SCHOOL KITCHEN AND DINING HALL

The school dining hall fed the students, and later the guerrillas. A lot of unwanted visitors, displaced by clashes between security forces and guerrillas or others, took advantage of the war and filled their stomachs at the dining hall. The chief cook, S.B. Chauke, his deputy, E.Sithole, and colleagues, the late K. Madlome, C. Manguku and the postman A. Chibaya, did a sterling work.

Several times the staff was called on to serve meals to unplanned numbers of people, or at unusual times outside their program. Sometimes they had to make sure that there was enough food for everybody.

They had to endure hard words from students because the food was not enough, or not well cooked, although it was not their fault. At times they were gun-forced to cook or dish out food to the guerrillas, or to the security forces.⁷ The kitchen staff could have taken advantage by misusing some of the food supplies, such as, sugar, tea leaves, mealie meal, and meat, under the disguise of serving them to the guerrillas, or security forces during abnormal times. This group in the mission, because of the nature of its job as food custodians, could have been easily corrupted to the detriment of the mission. They were in a position to sabotage the mission and the school to please one group. The kitchen staff must be commended for having managed to cook and serve the food as normally as they could to those who were legal partakers and illegal consumers. The question “*Makai bikira*”? (literally meaning, “Did you cook for them?”) became popular with the security forces in the countryside. The positive, or negative answer landed many in jail, or led them to receiving blows. The kitchen staff at Lundi Secondary School was asked this question by security forces many times, and their answer was always positive. The

⁶ Matthew 19:14, Holy Bible, King James Version.

⁷ Interview with S. B. Chauke, Mukachana area, August, 1999.

headmaster was always on their side, although sometimes he may not have been aware. The agreed policy was that if the guerrillas wanted food, it had to be given; the same applied to the security forces. For all involved, such as students, parents, guardians, the guerrillas and security forces; the same policy applied. The mission authorities and kitchen staff had no choice. Lundi dining hall utensils, such as, knives, spoons, bowls and cups, were brought to the kitchen by security forces after the Nine-Band Base and Dimbiti Hill Massacres. The chief cook and his colleagues were the first ones to be confronted with this evidence. The kitchen staff worked in harmony with the head of the school, the teachers and students to serve the mission. Their lives were at daily risk because they controlled the food. There were times when the kitchen staff had to take a risk, or use their discretion as to whom they gave food. They were awakened several times by criminals, or wayward *mujibhas* asking to give them sugar and bread. The staff could detect genuine or criminal demands. When they refused, they risked their lives, but many times they did and the criminals left empty handed.⁸ No food meant no students, then no school. Lest We Forget. The kitchen staff endured many knocks at their residence at night, and they heard verbal threats that led to sleepless nights and nightmares.

Many times the mission kitchen storeroom was threatened by arson, yet they all kept their heads cool, and survived to the end of the war. A hungry man is an angry man, but a hungry and angry criminal became a beast.⁹ These are some of the accounts given by the kitchen staff that happened under the cover of darkness.

THE MISSION ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

The mission office was the heartbeat of the mission. When the war started to heat up in 1975, the mission bursar and bookkeeper, Gertrude Haight, like the school headmaster, Clarke DeMille, saw the “writing on the wall”. She saw the need to train an African to manage the financial books of the school. She selected Davison Gambiza Moyo as their trainee. When the missionaries left at the end of 1976, Davison Gambiza Moyo took over as mission bursar and bookkeeper. He supervised the late Mrs. Chipwanya, Miss L. Shumba and Miss V. Mutasa. He was answerable to the headmaster, Mr. A Ndebele. The bursar collected, distributed and controlled all the mission funds, for the Bible School, the Secondary School and Clinic. He paid all the mission workers wages, and all the bills. He had to balance the mission financial books. Whenever money was needed, and it was always needed, Mr. Moyo was at the center of it all. Moyo had to find a solution when the teachers were unable to meet the guerrilla order list. When food provisions became depleted because of unplanned visitors, Moyo had to find the money. When funds not allocated were used, Moyo had to find a way to meet the cost. During the height of the war he once remarked to me, “*Mukwambo ndichafira mari yandisina uye isiri yangu.*” Translated into English “(My) In-law (marriage relationship), I will die for the money I do not have and which is not mine.”¹⁰

Like any other professional bursar, Davison Moyo did not keep bundles of cash in the office safe or at his house. Money was kept at the bank in Fort Victoria (Masvingo) some 100 kilometres away. He only kept petty cash for emergencies. The money he collected

⁸ Interview with K. Madlome, Lundi Mission, 1980.

⁹ Interview with S. B. Chauke, Mukachana, August, 1999.

¹⁰ Interview with D. G. Moyo, Lundi Mission, April, 1979.

was mainly school fees, and it had to be deposited at the bank as soon as possible. Money withdrawn from the bank was either to pay bills in town, or to pay to the workers. He was the custodian of public funds. The guerrillas, *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos*, even certain locals, believed Gambiza Moyo kept large amounts of cash money in his office or home. This was so, because certain guerrillas and *chimbwidos* demanded cash now and then at odd hours, or any day. He received threats verbally, in the form of notes, and telephone calls. His sleep was interrupted when people knocked on his door. Verbal threats of arson were common during the night.

Mr. Moyo was also a target for common criminals. He had developed a “sixth sense” that enabled him to tell genuine guerrillas from criminals. Disbursement of all funds had to be done with the consent of the head or his deputy. There were times when Gambiza Moyo found himself under pressure during the absence of the head or his deputy. Sometimes Moyo was forced to part with some cash. Fortunately, there was great trust and transparency which existed between Mr. Moyo and his superiors, Mr. Ndebele and Mr. A. Chauke. Otherwise financial books would have failed to balance.

If Moyo had not been an honest person, finances would have collapsed at an early date, and the mission would not have survived. His good acumen in accounting and his ability in distributing the money served the mission well. He could have taken advantage of the war, misused the funds, or disappeared with them. In such a situation, the mission business would have halted. Under threats and pressure, he could have given away money to criminals or to wayward guerrillas, security forces and *mujibhas*, but he did not. He was a cheerful, ever-smiling person who managed to argue his way out, and he never parted with money under pressure.

Moyo’s resilience and courage was demonstrated during the cease-fire when Comrade Tirigidi and his *mujibhas* demanded money and a long order list. This incident nearly fulfilled his fear and prediction that he was going to be “killed for public funds”. After Comrade Tirigidi had called off his impossible demands on the New Year’s Day 1980, the popular *mujibhas* made their own follow-up demands with the bursar. He was lucky, and by God’s power, he survived. Reference must be made on the topic “The popular mission *mujibhas* arrested”.

This demonstrated the height of Mr. Moyo’s courage in matters concerning public funds. When the General Missionary Board made an assessment of D.G. Moyo’s work at the end of the war, the conclusion was:

“He, under Andrew Ndebele, accurately kept account of school funds throughout the war”.¹¹

This was from the “horses’ mouth”, so nothing, more or less, can be demanded from Davison Gambiza Moyo as bursar of Lundi Mission between 1976 and 1980.

¹¹ Houser, T. A., The Free Methodist Church and Othr Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

LUNDI MISSION MEDICAL SERVICES – 1939 – 1970

One tangible evidence used to argue for the survival of Lundi Mission was that its medical services were very vital to the local community, guerrillas and the security forces. Lundi Clinic and its referral, Chikombedzi Hospital, were part of Rev. Jacobs' vision when he founded the mission. Since medical services were for the people, there was no way the people could let the mission go. Medical services were all a part of the Lundi Mission history and tradition.

When Cecil Rhodes and the British South Africa Company occupied Southern Rhodesia in 1890, Mr. Rhodes welcomed missionaries by granting them large tracts of land to build mission stations. Missionaries would provide medical and educational services and teach Africans the Bible. This would make Africans honest, healthy and industrious, producing better workers for the white settlers. It was under this policy that the Free Methodist Church at Lundi Mission was leased 100 acres of land, which would include a clinic.

In 1928, a letter from Chief Sengwe was delivered to the Annual Conference of the Free Methodist Church Missionaries of Mozambique and Transvaal at Inhamaxafo. In the letter, Chief Sengwe of the Hlengwe (Hlengwe) people in Southern Rhodesia, invited missionaries to his country to provide schools, medical services and churches. Some of his people, who had gone to work in South African mines and commercial farms, were exposed to these services, and knew their great benefits. They wanted these benefits to be available to their families in Southern Rhodesia.

The Free Methodist Church responded to the invitation in 1930 by sending missionaries Rev. Ralph Jacobs and Rev. Jules Ryff to explore the situation. All the chiefs they met at Chikombedzi expressed a great need for medical and educational services. In 1938, Rev. Jacobs, accompanied by missionaries L. M. Arksey and J. W. Haley, made a record trip to Southern Rhodesia with a clear mandate from the Missionary Secretary (in the United States) to make concrete arrangements to establish a mission station. They met government officials who urged them,

“To immediately apply for a site, promising government aid in school and medical programs, with complete freedom for evangelisation”.¹ Mr. Ling, the Assistant Native Commissioner at Nuanetsi, assisted the missionaries in the early days when the mission was established. He gave the missionaries every possible encouragement and help. The mutual agreement of cooperation between the missionaries and Mr. Ling was realized when he asked them a point blank question, and the missionaries responded in the positive. “Will you cooperate with the government and provide educational and medical services to the people?” Rev. Jacobs replied, “Of course we will! Free Methodist mission policy has always been to reach the unlearned and heal the sick as well as preach the Gospel.”² It was clear that the government and missionaries undertook to promote medical services among the Hlengwe people.

¹ Houser, T. A., The Free Methodist Church and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000. pg.9.

² Ibid. pg.10.

Chief Hlengani Chitanga hesitantly accepted the school because of the pressure from the Assistant Native Commissioner and his people. He never had any qualms about the building of the Clinic. Mr. Ling picked the site where the mission was to be built. It was he who laid the foundation stone on June 8, 1939, and made a speech in which he urged the Hlengwe people to accept missionaries and their work. When the church building was dedicated on September 20, 1939, Mr. Ling was there, and spoke helpful words to the Hlengwe people when the foundation was laid.

Part of the Southern Rhodesian government's conditions for missionary work for Free Methodist missionaries in African areas in the Nuanetsi District, was to promote medical care. From the first time the Jacobs had a residence at Lundi Mission; Ethel Jacobs did her best to alleviate suffering with little medical knowledge. Ethel's great love of human beings added the right touch to her limited knowledge of elementary medicine. The first clinic was Ethel's mud hut. It was furnished with a table, a chair, and a cupboard made from packing crates. Drug supplies consisted of a bottle of aspirin, sulfathiazole tablets, eye ointment, anti-malarial medicine, and a set of dental forceps.³ The government could only give aid to the mission if they had a qualified nurse. Ethel was not a nurse, so the mission had to do with what was available. Patients started to come in large numbers. Ethel's medical skills were gained through her missionary career and self-study in books. The closest hospital and medical aid to Lundi Mission was in Fort Victoria, or Morgenster Mission under the Dutch Reformed Church some 112 kilometres away. Mrs. Jacobs did her best to treat minor injuries and illnesses, such as headaches and stomach-aches. The school catered largely the young ones, but the clinic served all ages.

The demand for medical services forced the Missionary Board to set ample funds to build a clinic building. Miss Nina Detwiler was appointed in 1947 as the first trained nurse at Lundi Clinic. Her first clinic was a single grass-covered house. It was only later that a brick building was built with a cement asbestos roof and cement floor. The local community gave a hand in the form of labour. They felt that the clinic was partly theirs. In the first days, Nurse Detwiler could only check five or six patients a day, because she was studying language and teaching a first aid course. In a letter to Rev. Tillman Houser, she reflected on her life as a pioneer professionally-trained nurse.

"The medical work at Lundi started in October 1947, in a thatched-roof mud hut. The table and cupboards were made from wooden crates. It was located in the schoolgirl's village back of our home. There was very little equipment, and only a few medications. Because I was a registered nurse, the work was subsidized by the government and I could get prescription drugs. Babies were born on the floor of the mud hut. I think it was at least two years before the clinic was built from bricks that were made and baked on the mission property. The first and only person that worked with me the first few years was Rebecca Hlungwani. She was easy to train and was a very capable worker until August 1962.

Ruth Smith, and I sent three girls who had finished school at Lundi Central Primary School for nurse's training at the Dutch Reformed Hospital Morgenster near Fort Victoria. Rulani Chisi (nee Zanamwe Sibanda), Sarah Muzamani Chauke (nee Chauke) and Betina J. Chauke (nee Mashava). The local people were so needy and appreciated everything that was done to help them".⁴

³ Embree, E., *Now Rings a Bell*, Light and Life Press, Winona Lake, 1978.

⁴ Nina Deitwiler's Letter to Rev. T. Houser, February, 24, 1993.

Her last statement echoed the sentiments of every local person. Once established, the local community could not do without the clinic. They were prepared through thick and thin to protect the mission clinic as long as it provided the necessary medical services. The clinic performed this duty before, during and after the war.

For many years Nina Detwiler's helper, Rebecca Mukwiri (nee Hlungwani), who had only two years of formal school, and the three trained nurses were all daughters of the local community. The community easily experienced the benefits of formal examination and medical services. Lundi Clinic is very close to the Masvingo-Beitbridge highway, so Miss Detwiler often treated people in seriously injured car accidents. If she failed to cope with inquiries, or other sicknesses, she arranged to transport them to Fort Victoria or Morgenster a distance of 110 kilometres away. The trip took an hour and a half. Some victims were saved and others lost. Local people and strangers, greatly appreciated the work done by the clinic.

Miss Detwiler's work was done "in the name of God" according to mission policy. God was put ahead of all medical services. Before the clinic opened its doors to the patients in the morning, and nurses started their work, there was Bible reading, explanation, and prayer led by a pastor or a member of the church. Clinic staff and nurses were compelled to attend. The clinic closed for lunch and opened at 4:00 p.m. for two hours. Another brief prayer session was held mainly for resident patients. Special prayers were conducted for very sick patients and any others present. Patients and relatives were encouraged to attend the church services on Sundays. Lundi Clinic's area of influence was very wide. It covered the whole of Nuanetsi District, more than about three quarters of Chibi District, and areas of Mberengwa. People from as far as Gutu, Chirumanzu, Bikita, Zaka, Zvishavane, Shurugwi and Beitbridge came to Lundi Clinic. The famous name, "*Xigonzo*", came to refer to Lundi Mission. *Xigonzo* is a Hlengwe noun meaning education or school. Bible programs and sermons before treatment were called (*swigonzo*) in Hlengwe. Karanga patients and relatives, who made up the majority of the clinic residents, took up the word "*xigonzo*" and later referred to Lundi Clinic as *KuChigonzo*. This name came to be widely used for a long time. Lundi Clinic was unique, and remained unique. It served a very large area alone. Even when government clinics were opened at Chishave in Chibi District 70 kilometres away, and Neshuro in Nuanetsi 20 kilometres away, *Xigonzo* remained unique. The uniqueness was that "the medicine is poured with love, and God's love." The missionary policy was that medical service was one way of reaching the people with the Christian gospel.

Miss Detwiler, and the Lundi Clinic staff in 1947, remembered an incident of a woman who gave birth to triplets. One of them died immediately. The mother also looked dead. While Miss Detwiler was concentrating on the babies and their mother, her colleague, Ruth Smith, was busy praying. The African ambulance driver pronounced the mother dead. After some time, the woman revived. The news of this 'Miracle' at *Xigonzo* Lundi Clinic spread like a bush fire. The white nurses at Lundi Clinic through their prayers to their living God, were able to "resurrect" the dead. The number of patients who visited the Clinic increased by leaps and bounds.⁵

The majority of patients and local communities were illiterate. White missionaries were messengers of God, and their sermons to the sick centered on references from the Gospels of the New Testament – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Miracles and healing

⁵ Interview with Rebecca Mukwiri, Neshuro Clinic, 1985.

powers of Jesus are well documented. The miracle of the triplet's mother could be easily equated to Jesus' miracles. If they were messengers of God like Jesus' disciples, then surely they could perform some of the miracles such as Peter, John and Paul. There was need to defend the clinic and its missionaries.

A man in the local community, because of his great confidence in the white nurses, once called Miss Detwiler to help his cow give birth. He was unaware of the difference between a veterinarian and a nurse. The nurse did not turn down the appeal. She successfully helped the cow to give birth to a healthy calf.⁶ This raised the trust and the confidence the local people had in the nurses and their Clinic. With the passing of time, people were able to tell the difference between the services of nurses and veterinary doctors.

Rev. Ralph Jacobs opened his second mission station in 1946 among the Hlengwe at Chikombedzi. Lundi Mission was to be the headquarters and educational center of the mission. Chikombedzi was to be a medical center. When the hospital was opened, it became a Lundi Clinic's referral. Nurses, and other medical staff, interchanged between Chikombedzi and Lundi. The doctor was resident at Chikombedzi and visited Lundi Clinic every two weeks, unless there was an emergency. It was the great success of Lundi Clinic that pushed the missionaries to establish Chikombedzi Hospital. Rev. Jacobs' mission was to serve the Hlengwe people first and foremost. The original invitation had been from Chief Sengwe. Because of the unfavorable conditions, mainly malaria, the Chikombedzi Mission headquarters was built on the edge of the Sengwe area. The more appropriate site for the hospital was to be built in the heart of Hlengwe country, and closer to Chief Sengwe. It was the high incidence of malaria that had made Hlengweland inaccessible to mission work. The work of the hospital would help to pave the way for the gospel and educational services in Hlengwe country.

There was a need for a medical doctor when Chikombedzi Hospital was opened. The first medical doctor sent to Southern Rhodesia to Chikombedzi Hospital by the Free Methodist Church was Doctor Naomi Pettengill. She served as doctor from 1950 to 1958. She devised a program of regular visits to Lundi Clinic, a distance of 144 kilometres, every two weeks. This continued until 1976 when missionaries left because of the Liberation War. Patients were referred from Lundi Clinic to Chikombedzi Hospital. Most of the referred patients had the privilege of being transported by mission vehicles. Lundi Clinic and Chikombedzi Hospital were medical institutions separated by a great distance. Doctor Pettengill followed the mission policy also practiced by Nina Ditwiler. A local pastor conducted a devotional service, preaching to the patients and relatives before treating the sick. Medical services were a way of converting people. The missionaries moved to the homes to treat those who were unable to come to the clinic or hospital.

Dr. Pettengill's boundless energy and ingenuity made her suitable as a pioneer doctor. There was no reliable running water at Chikombedzi or at Lundi Clinic. Medical equipment was inadequate. Her assistants were mainly without advanced medical knowledge. Patients came from all quarters by any means of transportation. Resident patients brought with them blankets, food, cooking pots, and their relatives to take care of them. Accommodations for the patients were built of pole and grass huts. Patients were prepared to leave their homes and camp at the hospital or clinic. This

⁶ Interview with Daniel Chihahle Hlungwani, Lundi Mission, 1980.

showed their confidence in the missionaries' medicine.

Doctor Pettengill introduced a mobile clinic system to outlying areas, which proved very popular. Mobile clinics treated cases such as colds, scabies, diarrhea, sore eyes, the bedridden, and the very elderly. However, let us not forget that their policy was that Christianity and medical services worked hand in glove. The missionaries and their medicines were good enough that they deserved to be defended in times of tribulations, such as war.

Ruth Morris, a registered nurse, became an asset at Chikombedzi and Lundi as a laboratory technician and X-ray operator. A laboratory and X-ray units are prerequisites for a hospital to function in a successful manner. Blood donations, blood, urine, feces tests, and X-rays were all magic, as far as the Hlengwe people were concerned. These technicians made the missionaries' medicine very effective and powerful. No sensible person could let the chance to use his or her services slip away.

Miss Morris wrote in the *Inhambane Tidings*, "Our Three Ps (Prayer, Penicillin and Dr. Pettengil) worked very well together, with Dr. Pettengil always available, weather permitting. Sometimes penicillin stock is low and supply does not arrive in time. Prayer, our other specific, is not limited in supply or by climate and circumstances, but is in reality available and effective in all types of cases – prayer.

"For what profit is it if we heal bodies and hearts are left sick? In John 10:10 Jesus said 'The thief cometh not but for to steal and to kill and to destroy. I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly.'"⁷

Ruth Morris was expressing and appreciating the work done by Dr. Pettengil—penicillin and prayer. Ruth Morris' work in the laboratory and the X-ray was a great backup to the work done by the doctors and nurses. Ruth Morris and Nurse Laverna Grandfield trained Joramau Chauke to operate the X-ray and work in the laboratory. They showed great foresight, because when the missionaries had to leave in 1976 because of the war, Joramau filled in the position and did his best. Most of the equipment at Chikombedzi was damaged by the war. Some was shifted to Lundi Clinic where it survived until the war came to an end.

Doctor Paul Embree and Mrs. Esther Embree arrived at Chikombedzi Hospital in June 1955. He took over from Doctor Pettengil in 1957 when she had to go back to the United States. Dr. Embree continued and perfected the traditions of Dr. Pettengil. The regular visits to Lundi Clinic, prayers before treatment, and mobile clinics were all maintained. Dr. Paul Embree was an excellent physician and surgeon. His fame spread out throughout the Mwenezi District, Masvingo, Mberengwa and Midlands provinces. The white ranchers and government officials, who had avoided the hospital and clinic because they catered to Africans, soon became regular patients because of Dr. Embree's efficiency. Spiritual needs of his patients challenged his attention. He often prayed at their bedside, and provided chaplains to minister to the sick and their relatives. Dr. Embree always demonstrated a deep concern for the spiritual welfare of the patients and staff with whom he worked. This concern also extended to the spiritual life of the church. If this man and his work were threatened, no doubt people were bound to protect him.

Doctor Embree left in 1967, and his accomplishments at Chikombedzi Hospital, the referral Hospital for Lundi, were many and great. A modern surgery unit, intensive care

⁷ Ruth Morris, 'Inhambane Tidings', 1952.

unit, obstetric unit and the outpatient department, were all completed in 1967.⁸

People were impressed by what the missionaries did, which showed their desire to help the local people. These units facilitated better treatment of patients. Hlengwe people had no need to travel far distances to seek treatment. There was no way the people, whenever possible, could let the medical service be destroyed.

Doctor Embree was one of the missionaries who believed that, in the long run, Africans had to take over administration of medical services. He did so when he taught Joram Chauke to run the laboratory and operate the X-ray machine. Joram was not the only person taught; he trained others in the treatment of the sick.

“When I was there in 1967, the Africans were doing more than making diagnoses and treating patients. Sarah Muzamani Chauke would see patients, and I would see patients. Sarah saw patients, and when she had a problem and she did not know what to do, she came and tapped on my examining room door, and brought them in. I asked her, ‘Tell me about it, Sarah.’ She would tell me about it, and then learn from my examination and comments. I would treat them. She would take them back out and take care of them.”⁹

It was not only Sarah, but also all senior nurses such as Betina J. Chauke and Selinah Moyo who were exposed to the teaching by Dr. Embree. His idea was to inculcate the spirit in the local people to feel that medical services were theirs, not the monopoly of the missionaries. If medical services were theirs, then they had an obligation to take care of them.

Dr. Embree expressed one idea that was not popular with many missionaries, including the founding missionary, Ralph Jacobs. Rev. Jacobs, and many missionaries, strongly believed that all Africans employed by the mission had to be Christians. On the other hand, Dr. Embree felt it could not always be the case, although it was to be the first choice. Doctor Embree said,

“I had a little bit of a problem at the hospital when I first went out there, because I think the former missionaries felt they should be committed Christians that worked on the staff. I felt it was a bit like “rice Christians” in China who said they were Christians so that they could get their allotment of rice. Whatever that story was, that it was our right to expect Christian conduct, that is, no smoking on the mission, no drinking on the mission, no one to come to work drunk, and a few things like that.”¹⁰

Dr. Embree's positive attitude towards non-Christians helped non-Christians to feel that the medical services also belonged to them. As long as the local people felt that they were not excluded from the medical services, then they were obliged to protect them.

Doctor Embree was aware of ‘positive discrimination’ in society because of the different status of people in society. One of the elements of positive discrimination is the

⁸ An Unpublished transcript of a tape recorded interview by Rev. T. Houser and Mrs. Houser with Dr. Paul and Ethel Embree, Modesto, California, October, 19,1989.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

nature of job one does in society. This was to be treatment by appointment at both the hospital and clinic.

“Storekeepers, truck drivers, bus drivers or teachers could not afford to stand in a line. They had work to do. I gave them a special appointment, but this was never during clinic hours. They could not disturb my clinic hours. They had to come in the afternoon. I charged them about fifteen shillings for an appointment. It helped the hospital, and it helped them out too”.¹¹

At a reasonable cost, even professionals felt that they did not need to travel very far for their medical needs.

One missionary medical nurse who was part and parcel of Doctor Embree’s program from 1956 to 1967 was Miss Virginia Strait. Miss Strait deserves her own special mention in the book of missionary medical work in Mwenzezi from 1948 until 1977. In her tour of duty in Southern Rhodesia, she worked both at Lundi Clinic and Chikombedzi Hospital at various periods of her missionary career. Miss Virginia Strait arrived at Lundi Clinic in 1948, but it was not long before she was transferred to be the pioneer nurse at the newly- opened Chikombedzi Hospital. Her work in Rhodesia, between 1948 and 1977, was related to both Lundi Clinic and Chikombedzi Hospital. Following one particular heavy rain, the first nurse at Chikombedzi Hospital, Miss Virginia Strait, arrived at Lundi Clinic. Rev. Jacobs summarized Miss Strait’s medical professionalism,

“Virginia felt at home with her work, dispersed her medicines with a smile and generous doses of love.”¹²

All those who knew her would never hesitate to subscribe to this claim. The statement was no exaggeration of Miss Strait’s personality. Sarah Muzamani Chauke, who closely worked with Miss Strait as co-nurses at Lundi and Chikombedzi from 1956 until 1977, summarized Miss Virginia Strait’s work on behalf of all co-workers and her patients, dead and alive.

“Miss Strait is a real missionary and nurse. She was always willing to help and to teach with understanding. She helped the poor with money, clothes, praying and treatment. She cared for the old. She loved all races, and she was loved by all races. To the young, she taught and helped. To the church, she cared for pastors and families, helping and praying for them. She always went to the church meetings unless busy with the sick. She encouraged her own staff to go to church. She was a Sunday School teacher. She always smiled. In 1977 when missionaries had to leave Rhodesia because of the war, she cried because she wanted to die in Zimbabwe, because her life was spent working here. When she was going she said, “Goodbye, we will see each other in heaven.”¹³

What an example of missionary perfect love! It was what the people admired in the

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Embree, E., Now Rings a Bell, Light and Life Press, Winona Lake, 1978, p.100.

¹³ Sarah Muzamani Chauke, ‘The Missionary Tidings’, June, 1983, Volume 87, No.6.

medical services provided by the Free Methodist Church at Lundi Clinic and Chikombedzi. This was the reason why the clinic came to be popularly known as *Xigonzo*. The tribute to Miss Virginia Strait's work was not only in words, spoken or written, but many parents have named their daughters after her. Miss Strait's colleague at Lundi Clinic, Miss Nina Detwiler, who opened the Clinic officially, had this to say:

“Virginia's life was dedicated to God; she had a deep love for African people, and unselfishly ministered to their physical and spiritual needs. We soon became more like sisters than friends.”¹⁴

In an interview with Rev. Tillman Houser, concerning her medical work, Virginia Strait told him, “I am married to my work.”¹⁵

Miss Virginia Strait remained a single nurse. She also was single-minded in her mission to perform God's duty through medical dispensation until her death by cancer on January 15, 1983. Medical nurses like Miss Virginia Strait, demonstrated the best of missionary medical services, and endeared them to local people. The local people had a reason to speak well of, and defend the missionaries and their institutions whenever they were threatened.

Miss Laverna Grandfield was another medical nurse who portrayed a good image of missionary service to the people. Although she worked more at Chikombedzi Hospital than Lundi Clinic, she had her stints at Lundi. The work she did at Chikombedzi Hospital, that of training Nursing Aids, had a great bearing also at Lundi Clinic. The nursing trainees had part of their practical training at Lundi Clinic, and some of them became permanent staff members at Lundi Clinic after graduating. Miss Grandfield worked under the supervision of the great Dr. Embree before leaving nursing for the women's program in 1964.

Since the introduction of the first medical services by Ethel Jacobs in 1939 at Lundi Mission, reception of missionary medical services by the local people was overwhelming. With the passing of time, more and more people came to appreciate the missionary medical services. When missionary medical personnel was inadequate, there was great need for more workers. The mission could not afford to train fully qualified nurses, so they trained nursing aides who were quite excellent in their work. Lundi Clinic, and its referral, Chikombedzi, were serving a very remote area, which made it very difficult to attract well-trained personnel.

In 1963, Laverna Grandfield arrived in Southern Rhodesia with the assignment from Dr. Byron S. Lamson, the Missionary Secretary of the General Missionary Board, to establish a nurse's aide training program at Chikombedzi Hospital. The length of the course was to be three years, and the program consisted of nursing, midwifery, bathing babies, making beds, and hygiene. The entry qualification was Standard Six; later on, Grade Seven. The pioneer trainees were Rhoda Gumbo, Anna Sibanda, Esinathi Sithole and Daina Dziva. The course became very popular, so that by the time it closed in 1976 when the missionaries left because of the war, it was qualifying about twenty graduates a

¹⁴ Nina Detwiler's Letter to Rev. T. Houser, February 24, 1993.

¹⁵ Houser, T. A., The Free Methodist Church and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000. p.92.

year. The government did not give any financial aid to the program because the program was not supervised by the number of qualified nurses required by the government. The government did fund the hospital and clinic. The missionaries covered their own personal funds. The trainees were mainly daughters of the local community and members of the church. The missionaries, and their medical services, endeared themselves to the people. Some of these graduates found positions outside the Free Methodist Church and the Mwenezi area. Therefore the local people had another reason to support the missionaries and their medical services.

Between 1962 and 1976 Ruth Morris and Phyllis Hurd, who were missionary nurses, carried on the training program when Miss Grandfield worked in the women's program. The nurses were assisted by Sarah Muzamani Chauke and Betina J. Chauke. The graduates were given a certificate and a special pin with the picture of a star of the Sabi (an indigenous flower) on it.¹⁶

One great observation made by Miss Grandfield in her work as a nurse and the training program of nursing aides, was the reaction by African traditional healers. She said,

“I never felt that Africans, practicing their traditional medicines, had any bad feeling towards us. I think we enhanced their ministry by their sending people to us.”¹⁷

The traditional healers could have adopted a negative attitude if the public had supported them. They were aware that the missionary medical services were very popular and not to be tampered with.

Sarah Muzamani Chauke, a daughter of the local community and one of the first trained nurses to work at Lundi Clinic and Chikombedzi Hospital, initiated the “Baby Clinic” and “Prenatal Clinic” programs, which were incorporated in the medical services. The missionary doctors and nurses promoted these programs, making them unique to the Free Methodist medical services. Sarah was born in the local community, graduated at Lundi Central Primary School, and trained as a nurse at Morgenster Hospital of the Dutch Reformed Church. She knew the medical needs of the local people. Hence, she created these programs. The programs were based on the philosophy that prevention is better than cure. Some of the common diseases could be prevented by these programs.¹⁸

According to Laverna Grandfield one of the white missionary nurses who was a colleague, said,

“Sarah operated as an excellent promotional person for medical work because of her personality and teaching abilities. She operated a ‘well baby clinic’ on a regular basis.”¹⁹

¹⁶ Unpublished transcript of a tape recorded interview with Rev. T. Houser and Laverna Grandfield in Camrose, Alberta, Canada, August, 16, 1991.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Interview with Sarah Muzamani Chauke, Avonlea, Harare, December, 2000.

¹⁹ Unpublished transcript of a tape recorded interview with Rev. T. Houser and Laverna Grandfield in Camrose, Alberta, Canada, August 16, 1991.

The “Well Baby Clinic” program required the mother to bring the baby in each week to have its weight, eyes, nose, ears, throat, chest, and a general physical checked. Mothers were given lectures on hygiene, toilets, malaria, immunization and preventative medicine. The program became very popular beyond expectations, and it included all mothers, particularly new mothers. The Baby Clinic was something that the mothers looked forward to every week. History has it on record that policies or programs supported by women live longer! Hlengweland is infested by mosquitoes, so malaria is very common. The very high temperatures in the area are also very conducive to fly breeding. The “Baby Clinic” taught the life cycles of both the mosquito and the housefly to the mothers. Sarah founded the ‘Prenatal Clinic’ for waiting mothers, which was organized to run parallel with the ‘Baby Clinic’. This was also very popular particularly to women who were pregnant for the first time. The “Baby Clinic” and “Prenatal” programs saved lives of many born and to-be-born babies. These programs became very dear to many women. Missionaries, their medical services, and work of local nurses, such as Sarah Muzamani Chauke, could not be easily replaced. These programs continued until 1976 when the missionaries left. The programs were irregularly continued at Lundi Clinic during the war until 1980. During the war a few mothers benefited, so Sarah Muzamani and missionary medical services were kept flickering.

The “Baby Clinic” and “Prenatal” programs were to be enhanced by a preventative health care plan. The program was to be spearheaded by Gayle Lindsay, who was appointed to the Rhodesian field as a missionary nurse in the late 1960’s, serving at Chikombedzi and Lundi Clinic. In order to acquaint herself satisfactorily with the Rhodesian situation, she attended the University of Rhodesia, qualifying in midwifery. Unfortunately, the war of Independence forced the evacuation of the Free Methodist Church missionaries from rural areas before Miss Lindsay could get her work started. After the ZANU government came to power, the Department of Health implemented a kind of preventative health care program throughout the country. The missionaries surely had foresight as far as their medical services were concerned.

The missionary medical services were generally welcomed, but there were cultural practices which had to be broken down. There were elements related to medical services which had to be changed or abandoned by the people. Lundi Clinic and Chikombedzi Hospital had large crowds of “in and out” patients, with relatives, on a daily basis. The use of toilets became a great problem, and disposal of human waste was part of health services of hygiene. The nurses and doctors discovered that it was a difficult task to convince patients to use the privy. The Africans preferred freedom of the bush, which was a health hazard. The clinic authorities devised a system where rules were read on a daily basis, both in the morning and evening, concerning the use of toilets. Offenders were made to clean the privy. Dr. Embree suggested that toilet walls be painted with pictures of bushes to make the patients feel more at home when they visited the conveniences. He said,

“These are intelligent and lovable people. All they need is opportunity and time to learn.”²⁰

This uphill battle was continuously fought, but by 1976 there was great improvement. The people became more aware that poor disposal of human wastes was a hazard to

²⁰ Embree, E., ‘A Missionary Wife Writes Home’, a diary, pg.16.

health. Many killer diseases, such as cholera and dysentery were spread by poor disposal of human wastes. The “Baby Clinics” played a very important role in promoting use of privies.

Tuberculosis, popularly called T.B. *xikohlolo* in Hlengwe, was one of the major killer diseases among the Hlengwe at the time Lundi Mission was established in 1939. As a way of effectively combating the disease, in 1948 a T.B. unit was set up at Chikombedzi. The traditional healers did not have any effective medicine for the disease. Patients coughed and spat blood, wearing out before they died. T.B. was easily passed from one person to another, and it was a very common and deadly disease amongst the Hlengwes. The missionaries made the fight against T.B. one of their priorities. They knew it was preventative and curable. The missionaries subsidized and supplemented food for T.B. patients. Dr. Embree was not only a great physician and surgeon, but also a proficient hunter. He occasionally took time off from the hospital to hunt meat for the T.B. patients, staff, and his family. T.B. patients were so much endeared to the missionaries apart from getting healed. By 1958 the missionaries were satisfied to their achievements, as far as treatment of T.B. was concerned. They wrote,

“Our T.B. patients are the most rewarding of all patients because they arrive sick, tired, unhappy and discouraged. After a few weeks of treatment, they are feeling better, putting on weight, and beginning to smile again. Because of daily contact with the gospel, a large percentage accepted Christ. A fulfillment of 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.”²¹

By 1976, the battle against T.B. had been won by more than three-quarters of the course. The missionaries and their medicines had successfully won against one of the deadly diseases among the Hlengwes. The local people could not help defending the missionaries and the mission.

Missionary maternity delivery service was one provision quickly accepted by Africans. Child delivery, using traditional methods, was an ordeal. A great number of children and a considerable number of mothers lost their lives in the process. Missionary methods were less painful. Child and mother mortality rate was reduced. In July 1956 the missionary report read,

“The maternity department is growing because African women are beginning to trust the white men’s medicine. Ruth’s practical “Well Baby Clinic”, with its diagrams and simple lectures, help the mothers to understand how babies function, and to realize that reasons other than evil spirits and hidden sins cause difficulties.”²²

By May 1958, the missionaries reported a large number of African women delivering their children at the clinic. The great demand forced them to train African nurses, and, along with some with rudimentary knowledge, to deliver children using modern methods. One great joy in the life of a Hlengwe woman is having children. More so if delivery of

²¹ Ibid.pg.107

²² Ibid.pg.20

the babies was done with less agony.

One missionary medical practice that frightened Africans was blood transfusion. This was not practiced in traditional medicine. Doctors Pettengill and Embree always had the great problem of getting blood donors. In the 1950's, blood transfusion services were not yet effective and wide spread. Blood transfusion was viewed with great suspicion, let alone a stranger's blood. A great belief among the Hlengwes was that getting somebody's blood would change the character and behaviour of the recipient. Many incidents of this fear confronted the nurses and the doctors. One incident was recorded by Doctors Pettengill and Embree for their medical references. On November 26, 1956, they diagnosed a case of a young girl who needed blood. When the father was confronted with the news, he disappeared into thin air. It needed the skills of a proficient hunter to locate the father, and skills of a diplomat to persuade the father to donate the blood. He was the only one available at that moment to save his own daughter. The blood transfusion took place, and it was successful. It became a test case and broke the myth of blood donation.²³ The missionaries and their medicine were performing wonders. They were good people to depend upon.

Traditional healers of various types and specialization held a special position in Hlengwe society. Some healers specialized in physical, mental, and spiritual sickness. Others were also specialists on various parts of the body, such as headaches, stomachs, backbones and legs. There were also general practitioners. The traditional healers held a special status in society, and some had the power of life directly, or indirectly. There was always competition over patients between traditional healers and western medicine. Only recently have the two made attempts to co-exist. Between the two, each has its own merits and demerits. The Free Methodist missionary doctors and nurses faced the same problem, particularly in the early days. The traditional healers frowned at the missionaries, who were trespassing on their domain. The medicine of the foreigners made the traditional healers show open opposition against the missionaries. Traditional healers were closely associated with witchcraft. Missionary medical services, once they made a break through, was hard to stop. Traditional healers were the first to accept such services.

Between Rutenga and Malvernia (Sango), a famous traditional healer fell from a moving train. He had a dislocated shoulder. and came to the clinic for treatment in April 1957. The incident spread like a bush fire. If a popular traditional healer went to the missionaries for treatment, what about the common people?²⁴ This was the beginning of many traditional healers who publicly came to the clinic or hospital for treatment. The work of traditional healers was not demeaned, since cases like mental illness, or some which failed to respond to modern medicine, went back to the traditional healers. On the other hand, the authority of traditional healers received a very hard knock. By 1976 missionary medical services had overtaken, by far, the work of traditional healers.

After 1960, missionary medical services had been generally accepted and were moving in the right direction. However, 1965 was a crucial year, and a test to the Free Methodist Church in general and medical services in particular. The White Settler Government, faced by the great tide of African nationalism, established Gonakudzingwa Restriction Camp for ZAPU nationalists, including their leader, Comrade Joshua Nkomo.

²³ Ibid.pg.53

²⁴ Ibid.pg.72

At that time there were 600 Hlengwes, Ndebeles and Karangas who accepted their political ideas. The whole of Nuanetsi District became agog. Then a stream of visitors from all over the country became a flood. The fame of Comrade Nkomo at the Camp, in the words of the then District Commissioner of Nuanetsi,

“Spread rapidly through the whole vast Nuanetsi (Mwenezi) District and into neighboring districts as well.”²⁵

The visitors went to the camp for the purpose of signing their names. Obviously ZAPU and its leadership were compiling a register of recruits and members. The ZAPU restrictees also confirmed the large number of visitors in their own newspapers:

“The stream of visitors increased rapidly in the past few weeks. Men, women and children from all over the country have been going to pay homage to Comrade Joshua Nkomo, and get inspiration from him. Reports of several thousand people of all races, intending to visit Gonakudzingwa, the Mecca of Rhodesia over Easter, have been received.”²⁶

The article was entitled under the heading “Many people on Easter Pilgrimage to Gonakudzingwa.”²⁶

This was the political atmosphere surrounding Chikombedzi Hospital and the Nuanetsi District, where the Free Methodist Church operations were dominant. Chikombedzi was 40 kilometres from Gonakudzingwa Camp.

Dr. Paul Embree, the medical missionary at Chikombedzi Hospital and mission, paid a visit one day to Villa de Salazar with the intention of holding a church service with some restrictees who were practicing Christians. On the following Sunday, when the doctor entered the church, he was alarmed by sullen faces of elderly church members looking at him. He thought the political spirit had gripped his mission. One respected elder of the church broke the ice with a voice rich with suspicion and indignation,

“We have heard the Mufundisi (Missionary) went to Gonakudzingwa last week to sign the book there. This does not please us! Why does the (Mufundisi) go and sign Joshua Nkomo’s book, when he has been put there because of the bad things he has done?”²⁷

Dr. Embree spent part of the service explaining that his visit to Gonakudzingwa was to preach the gospel, and emphatically denied that he had gone there to sign the book. He also promised not to visit the camp again. Dr. Embree related the incident to the District Commissioner who was, at least, relieved to know that there were some Hlengwes who were not yet trapped by the restrictees. The leaders had accepted the Doctor’s word because of the reputation he had built for himself as an exceptional medical practitioner among them.

²⁵ Wright, A., Valley of the Ironwoods, Cape and Transvaal, Cape Town, 1972.p.366.

²⁶ African Home News, 12 April, 1965.

²⁶ African Home News, 12, April, 1965.

²⁷ Wright, A., Valley of the Ironwoods, Cape and Transvaal, Cape Town, 1972.p.374.

At 10 p.m. on the 8th of May 1965, Dr. Paul Embree, his wife and children, European nursing sisters and other European staff, arrived at Nuanetsi Police Camp in cars packed with luggage and belongings. Their report was that soon after dark that very evening, one of their African nurses had knocked at the door of the hospital's sisters' room. She whispered that local Hlengwes of Nkomo's party were planning to attack the mission. The nurse urged the sister to inform the Doctor, and all the whites, to leave because a massacre was imminent. Dr. Embree had called for a hurried meeting, and decided to evacuate the mission where magnificent medical and other work had been carried on for the sole benefit of the Hlengwe tribe for many years. He left with white missionaries for Lundi Mission 90 miles away. His way took them through the Mwenezi Government station, where he made his report to the police.

The doctor was a very keen hunter who owned several firearms, but his attitude was that he could not take up arms against the tribesmen his mission had served so devotedly for many years, even if the mission itself were attacked, and the lives of his family and staff members put in danger.²⁸ This shows the dilemma the missionaries found themselves in, this political situation of siding with the white settler government, yet refusing to directly fight against the Africans. The police reacted by sending a detachment early the next morning 50 miles to Chikombedzi Dam where they found 500 Africans assembled. This was regarded as illegal, because it was not sanctioned by the District Commissioner. Later, the police claimed that many hundreds who would have come to the meeting, were deterred when they heard that the missionaries had fled. Naturally the police were going to come. Suspicion and mistrust had begun between the local people and missionaries concerning whom they supported in politics.

The gathering defied an order to disperse, which resulted with 173 men arrested; though the leaders melted away. These men were brought to the police camp where they were charged and sentenced to various terms of jail.²⁹ The meeting might have ended with the sacking of the Chikombedzi Mission, had it not been for the courage and loyalty of the African nurse. The evacuation of Chikombedzi Mission proved a telling point in support of political activities on the ground. The missionaries definitely were saved from massacre because of their good reputation. The incident did dent the good relationship, which had existed between the missionaries and the local people. This had negative consequences in the future for the missionaries and the hospital. The local people kept in their minds the fact that Dr. Embree, (the missionary) had reported them to the police, and that he was on the side of the white settler Government, and also that some of the local people had gone to jail. After this political activities went into a lull throughout the country until 1971 when the Liberation War picked up.

The District Commissioner, even after this incident, wanted to settle the political allegiance of the missionaries in his district once and for all. His first encounter was with a white missionary priest who came to see him, and to register a strong protest against the detention of one of his stalwart church-goers. The District Commissioner did not supply names, but he claimed that he proved to the white priest that his member was involved in political activities, such as active recruitment for Nkomo's army, ferrying of recruits to and from Gonakudzingwa, and relaying instructions to encourage violence and murder.³⁰

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

The priest apologized to the District Commissioner, and being convinced, he left.

Missionaries found themselves in a dilemma as far as politics were concerned. The government and African nationalists both expected the missionaries to take their sides. Some missionaries did, while others tried to take the “middle of the road”. This was not appreciated by either side. For instance, A. Wright, the District Commissioner of the Nuanetsi District said,

“I had a more general interest in missionaries, however. They had for years been a nagging gap in the chain of my security network, but by May 1965, my patience with them was exhausted”.³¹

Missionaries have been blamed for much of the unrest that had struck Africa from time to time. They have been denigrated and cursed by many, and praised by only a few. A settler writer once said, “Take away the missionaries, the newspapers, and the radio from Africa, and you would have a peaceful and contented continent.”³² He was quite correct on the side of the colonialists. Africa would be a very dull place, too!

The District Commissioner claimed that before the Declaration of a State of Emergency in Nuanetsi, he had received information that plans were being prepared to damage mission stations and their residents, but not a word came to him from the missions, although he had knowledge that the missionaries knew. This gap in the continuity of intelligence information, which had a bearing on the security of lives and property, amounted to a weak link in the District Commissioner’s set up. Matters had come to a head at Chikombedzi Mission when the staff evacuated in some haste, but after this incident, the cloak of secrecy descended once more. The District Commissioner summoned an emergency meeting with four prominent missionaries, including the Superintendent of Lundi Mission, and Dr. Embree of Chikombedzi Mission. He crudely pointed out to the missionaries that if they did not cooperate with him, he could not protect them and their families against African nationalists. He said “I made it clear that they had put their loyalties to their flocks in the balance, and had to weigh these against the very real risks their families now faced.”³³

The District Commissioner pointed out that he got positive concrete results after the missionaries at Lundi Mission cooperated with him to avoid serious trouble. This was the arrest of the teacher, John Chauke, and expulsion of some students who had planned to damage the missionaries and mission property. He found missionary attitudes to security intelligence work immeasurably changed. The District Commissioner confessed that he saw the difficulties, and appreciated the missionary viewpoint, even if he did not agree with them. But the matters at stake during the winter of 1965 were far too serious to counter reputations and false assumptions of the importance of maintaining the confidence of those who were preparing to “bite the hand” that fed them spiritually and educationally.

As far as the African nationalists were concerned, the missionaries were siding with the white settlers. They were also placing their missions and missionary work in danger, if not then, in the future. The African nationalists did not make a decision to destroy the

³¹ Ibid.pg.390.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.pg.392.

missions and missionary work then and there, because the educational and medical services they provided were appreciated by the Africans. The government was able to control and cool down African political activities between 1965 and 1971. The missionaries were able to continue with their work, but seeds of suspicion and mistrust were sown, as far as political matters were concerned.

Dr. Embree was in Rhodesia from 1955 to 1967, when he was called back home by the General Missionary Board. He returned in 1972, and 1981, after Independence. On these short intervals, he was specifically sent to give his wide expertise and experience at Chikombedzi Hospital. He was an asset to the missionary medical services in Zimbabwe before and also after Independence. When he left, to show their appreciation, Africans in the church, and outside the church, showered him with gifts comprised of goats, sheep and chickens. He could not carry the animals to America, so he donated them to the patients. Some feasted with friends and members of the church. Dr. Embree had this to say,

“When it became time to go home, I said, ‘I have this fat-tailed sheep we must eat before I go. With the hospital staff and others, we had a farewell party. Members said, ‘God will lead you. Do not forget your home in Rhodesia.’”³⁴

He had made his political mistakes, but for now, they were outweighed by his exceptional medical services. Dr. Embree became a household name among Hlengwes. The missionary medical workers effectively carried the torch of medical provisions that enabled them to be accepted by open hands of the Hlengwes of Rhodesia. They generally showed the Africans that medical services were given to meet their needs.

The following doctors worked at Chikombedzi Hospital and Lundi Mission between 1939 and 1976. Naomi Pettengill 1950 – 58, Paul Embree 1955 – 67, Esther Kuhn 1969 – 71, Floyd Hicks 1971 – 73, Kenneth Mudge 1969 – 70, Lionel Hurd 1967 – 76, Dale Thuline 1973 and Marquerite Palmer 1959.

The doctors could not successfully carry out their work without the maximum support of the following missionary nurses. Ethel Jacobs 1939 – 55, Nina Detwiler 1947 – 52, Virginia Strait 1948 – 77, Ruth Ryff 1952 – 56, Ruth Morris 1952 – 76, Laverna Grandfield 1964 – 75, Phyllis Hurd 1967 – 76, Myrna Bedell 1967 – 74, Gayle Lindsay 1970 – 76, Eleanor Russell 1972 – 75, Dean Guyer 1975 – 76, Mimi Guyer 1975 – 76, Edith Hughes 1967 – 69, and Gunborg Gustafsson 1971 – 72. These nurses served at both Lundi Clinic and Chikombedzi Hospital.

³⁴ An unpublished transcript of a tape recorded interview by Rev. T. Houser and his wife Gwen Houser with Dr. Paul Embree and Esther Embree, Modesto, California, October 19, 1989.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

LUNDI MISSION MEDICAL SERVICE AND THE LIBERATION WAR - 1971–1980

When the celebrated Dr. Paul Embree left in 1967, Dr. Lionel Hurd took over as Chikombedzi Mission Superintendent, director of the mission medical program, and physician at Chikombedzi Mission, making regular medical visits to Lundi and Dumisa Clinics. He efficiently carried on Dr. Embree's work and programs such as "Baby Clinics" and "Prenatal Clinics". Dr. Hurd led the medical programs during the Liberation War.

The first guerrilla activity near Lundi Mission and Chikombedzi Hospital was in 1973, on the Masvingo–Beitbridge highway, at the Mwenezi River rest stop at the bridge. A group of motorbike cyclists were gunned down by the guerrillas. The casualties were brought to Lundi Clinic, while Chikombedzi Hospital had to treat any patients who came. The number of cases from the war victims began to come time and again. The doctor and nurses found themselves in a dilemma. If they did not treat the guerrillas, or if they reported to the security forces that they had treated them, the guerrillas might turn against them. If the doctor did not inform the security forces that he had treated guerrillas, the government could accuse him of treason and collaboration. The doctor had to treat both guerrillas and security forces, if they came in for treatment. Refusing to treat any of these groups would have been a gross violation of the Hippocratic oath. Some guerrillas and security forces never knew, never understood or even cared, about the Hippocratic oath and its code of ethics.

Dr. Lionel Hurd carried out circumcision operations, which endeared him to the local people. It is a Hlengwe tradition to practice male circumcision initiations. An expert, using raw, sharp tools without any anesthetic, does the physical operation or removal of the foreskin on the male organ. This is an ordeal. Dr. Pettengill was the first, and only, white woman who was invited by the Christian Hlengwe elders to carry out the operation in 1953. The lodge was under the supervision of African church elders. This was the case in each succeeding lodge, using missionary doctors as the surgeons. Dr. Hurd was invited to do so in 1974. He used anesthetic to reduce the pain before the removal of the foreskin. There were many traditional circumcision lodges established at the same time. The one in which Dr. Hurd operated, under the supervision of Christian African elders working with missionary doctors, became very popular. This was because they had participated in one of the core elements of the Hlengwe traditions. They had become one with the Hlengwe people. The missionary medical services were of great use since they helped in Christian traditional initiation. The doctors and their medicine had to be protected. They were serving a great community need at a time when traditional methods of circumcision were threatening to spread HIV – AIDS.

Mozambique became independent in 1975, and the Frelimo Government opened its border to ZANLA guerrillas. Chikombedzi Hospital and Lundi Mission were now exposed to the Gaza Front during the Liberation War. Guerrilla incursions began into the Free Methodist areas of Chilonga, Malipati, Chikombedzi, Sengwe, Chiredzi and Chitanga. Tension developed in these areas between Africans and whites, Africans and

missionaries.¹

The murder of Joseph Muzamani Chauke in August 1976 turned the world of the missionaries at Chikombedzi Mission and Lundi Mission upside down. Joseph Muzamani Chauke was a graduate of Lundi Central Primary School. He trained as a high school teacher at Dadaya Mission in Zvishavane, where he left a record of having been a brilliant student.² He was one of the pioneer African teachers at Lundi Central Primary School. He was a senior teacher until he left in 1964 to head Chikombedzi Primary School at Chikombedzi Mission.

Joseph Muzamani Chauke was known, even by his contemporaries, as a brilliant, mild-mannered and well-organized person. He had natural qualities of a leader, being very decisive in his career. He became a leading layman in the church. The Annual Conference elected him its secretary for many years because of his excellent knowledge of church business, command of English, Hlengwe and Karanga languages. He was a spellbinding and persuasive speaker. He often worked for closer communication between the mission, the church, the school and medical institutions. When the government took over all primary schools in 1970 from church control, Joseph Muzamani Chauke was the obvious choice to be manager of former Free Methodist primary Schools.³ Joseph Muzamani Chauke took the place of the missionaries when they released primary schools to the white government. The government concurred and accepted him as manager of all the schools. They assigned Mr. Chauke, a Hlengwe, to the schools whose pupils spoke the Hlengwe as their mother tongue. Many of the schools he managed in Matibi No 2 and Chiredzi also spoke Shona.

One August night of 1976, two hundred meters from Dr. Hurd's residence at Chikombedzi Mission Hospital, a group of guerrillas called Joseph Chauke out of his house in the middle of the night and accused him of reporting their activities to the white government. He was tied to a tree, beaten up, paraffin (kerosene) was poured over him, then he was set on fire. This was horrible. His children were forced to witness the atrocity. His wife was beaten until she became unconscious. The wife was taken to Chiredzi Hospital, where she later recovered.⁴ Joseph Muzamani Chauke's remains, burnt beyond recognition, were buried at Lundi Mission cemetery next to the pioneer white missionary teacher, Daisy Frederick. The death of Joseph Muzamani Chauke had a great impact on the missionaries. What a shock! A man was gone whom they highly respected, an equal in all terms.

The guerrillas accused Joseph Muzamani Chauke for being a "sell-out", and killed him. Was Joseph Muzamani Chauke a "sell-out"? Some information said that before the guerrillas went to Mr. Chauke's house, they knocked at Dr. Hurd's house and briefly queried him on the issue of reporting their activities to the government. One major issue at that time was the large number of young men and girls leaving the areas for Mozambique to join the armed struggle. The area which Mr. Chauke managed was close to Mozambique. In the course of executing his duties, Mr. Chauke was obliged to report

¹ Unpublished transcript of tape recorded interview by T. A. Houser with Clarke DeMille, July 11, 1989.

² Interview with Mr. Mazarire, Mr. Ndovi's Farm, Zimuto, 1977. He was a classmate of Mr. J. Muzamani and was then an education officer Primary Schools, Chibi District.

³ Houser, T. A., The Free Methodist Church and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000.

⁴ Interview with Mrs. Sarah Muzamani Chauke, Lundi Mission, December, 1976.

to his seniors, not that he was “selling-out”. By doing his job, his action was regarded as “selling-out”.

The area that Mr. Chauke managed was remote, and shunned by professionally-qualified teachers. This resulted in his hiring many temporary teachers. When the border with Mozambique opened to the guerrillas, many of these temporary teachers jumped the border for what they thought was a better future. In such cases, it was impossible for the manager to keep ‘mum’ and have “ghost teachers” on the pay sheet. He was obliged to report, but not as a “sell-out”. Some of the teachers, whom he had disciplined for various crimes such as, absenteeism from duty, drunkenness on duty, and illicit relationships with school girls, some of them under age, also jumped the border into Mozambique. Some of the disgruntled former students, temporary teachers, or teachers, returned as guerrillas with a chance to retaliate. If they did not bring revenge in person, they incited others or their colleagues to avenge on their behalf. These guerrillas possibly told many tales about Mr. Chauke. Being an outstanding leader figure in the church and community, naturally he had competitors who were jealous of his achievements. These opponents had an opportunity to get their revenge by poisoning his image to the guerrillas. There was no concrete evidence that Mr. Chauke was a “sell-out”. Insiders have said that some of the guerrillas actually confessed to having acted on hearsay and second-hand reports. A former temporary teacher in the area, who later became a guerrilla, said that the element of revenge was responsible for Joseph Muzamani Chauke’s death.⁵ Whatever the reason, Joseph Muzamani Chauke’s death was a great loss to the Hlengwe people. The missionaries at Chikombedzi Hospital left at once. It was a time for the missionaries at Lundi Mission to prepare to leave as soon as possible.

On Joseph Muzamani’s doomsday, the missionaries were saved, yet could they have been the first to go down the same night. The missionaries had a history of having “sold-out” in 1965 when Gonakudzingwa Camp was set up. Embree was no longer around, but some of the nurses were present. A good number of men had gone to jail in 1965 because of a missionary report. The guerrillas should have started by massacring the missionaries, and some of them could have gone down together with Mr. Chauke. Why were they saved, was the question?

Mr. Chauke became the first African martyr of the Free Methodist Church. Others have an immediate answer as to why the mission and missionaries were spared on the night Mr. Chauke was killed. The missionaries provided medical services which the guerrillas and local people desperately needed. Joseph Muzamani Chauke was only a manager of schools. He could be easily replaced and schools could function without him. The guerrillas desperately needed medical services in the form of medicine, painkillers, malaria quinine, injections, penicillin, and bandages. Missionaries treated the injured or some of the hospital staff secretly treated or delivered the medicine to the guerrillas.⁶ For the time being guerrillas would keep the hospital and missionaries functioning. The missionaries might have had their weakness and faults, but for the time being, the overriding factor was that the guerrillas needed their medical services. The security forces also made use of the missionaries, but they also had their own medical services. They would not mind closing the hospital if the missionaries had been on their side.

⁵ Interview with Vincent Thlabyani, Lundi Mission, May, 1980. Interview with S. Gwalale Chauke, male nurse, Lundi Mission, 1978.

⁶ Interview with S. Gwalale Chauke, male nurse, Lundi Mission, 1978.

In September 1976, just a month after Joseph Muzamani Chauke's murder, Dr. Lionel Hurd, the Chikombedzi Mission Superintendent and in charge of Chikombedzi Hospital, received a letter threatening his life and family. The missionaries had seen it happen to Joseph Muzamani Chauke. Dr. Hurd and his missionaries knew they must leave. They packed their belongings and evacuated to Lundi Mission. Since the horrible death of Joseph Muzamani Chauke, their lives at Chikombedzi were marked by sleepless nights, hallucinations, nightmares, and uncertainty. The threatening letter caused much uncertainty. The threatening letter—who wrote the letter? Dr. Hurd, and the missionaries, immediately concluded that it was from the guerrillas. The memories of Joseph Muzamani Chauke were still very fresh in their minds. After the death of Joseph Muzamani Chauke, security forces moved in and around the mission. They kept a very close eye and ear to the ground as to what was happening in and around the mission. It became difficult for the guerrillas to benefit from the medical services of the hospital when they came to the doctor for medicines. The mission and hospital might as well be closed, because it was of no benefit to them.

Some thought that it was the security forces, which pretending to be guerrillas, threatened the doctor so that the hospital would be closed, and they could move in. The security forces felt the Hospital and missionaries were serving guerrillas, which to an extent was true, so it was better if it was closed. The hospital was an enemy of the government. It was sustaining the lives of people fighting against the government.⁷ They intended to create a “protected village”, or “keep”, around the Mission. The army wanted to use the hospital and mission buildings for their camp. This could only happen if the mission and hospital were closed. This is what happened. After the missionaries left, the security forces turned the hospital and the mission into an army camp. The closure of the mission and hospital would give the army a free hand in the area.

There was no way Chikombedzi Mission and Hospital could survive without missionaries. The missionaries had not made contingency plans for the hospital to survive without them. They had not trained Africans to take over; although a few nurses had been trained, the number was very insignificant. There was not a single African doctor. Chikombedzi Hospital, the medical nerve center of the Free Methodist Church, was no more with the departure of the white missionaries. African nurses and staff remained for a while working sacrificially under very trying circumstances to treat the ill and the war wounded. This was concrete evidence of how much the people valued missionary medical services threatened by the military situation, and the staff had to be brought to Lundi Mission and Clinic by the security forces. Some of the African staff were very adamant that the threats were made by the security forces that wanted to make use of the mission buildings. The geographical position of Chikombedzi Mission was very strategic to the Mozambique border.⁸

The Free Methodist Church Conference Board of Administration requested the government Health Department to operate Chikombedzi Hospital. Dr. Elizabeth Granger, Provincial Medical Health Officer based in Fort Victoria, made repeated air flights to Chikombedzi, Matibi No 2, and the Sengwe areas. Rev. Tillman Houser, who remained and lived in Salisbury to oversee missionary interests in the country, accompanied Dr. Granger on several of her flights. The guerrillas could no longer have

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

access to the hospital. Then it was their turn to advocate for the closure of the hospital. The historical evidence was that the security forces camped in the hospital and mission. The mission and hospital became part of the “protected village” or “keep”. Later the hospital was looted of medicines and much valuable equipment.

“We never found out who did the looting. The military blamed the guerrillas, and the guerrillas blamed the military. Dr. Granger said, ‘Whoever did it, took the very best equipment, books and supplies.’”⁹

Dr. Granger was a white government officer. Her argument that they never knew who ransacked the hospital was a matter of avoiding the truth. The reality was that the security forces moved in and camped in the mission and hospital when everything was still intact.

Whatever remained, as far as missionary medical services were concerned, shifted to Lundi Clinic. The nurses and some of the equipment had to serve the whole of Mwenezi District, parts of Chibi, Mberengwa and Beitbridge Districts. Neshuro Clinic belonged to the government and security forces were stationed there. The linking graveled road from Masvingo–Beitbridge highway to the clinic made its accessibility very hard. Medical services in Triangle and Chiredzi were government controlled, and very far from the local people. The first medical point of call for the guerrillas and local people in the Mwenezi and southern parts of Chibi Districts, and eastern parts of Mberengwa, was Lundi Clinic. Even security forces operating in the area were served at Lundi Clinic. It was logical for the local people, guerrillas and security forces to ensure that Lundi Clinic remained open. Mr. Muhango, the medical officer at Neshuro Clinic, tried by all means to keep some form of services running, but at a very low key.¹⁰ The argument that Lundi Clinic survived as a result of the closure of Chikombedzi Hospital and other mission clinics in the district and surroundings, is quite credible. The people, the guerrillas, and even the security forces were all aware of the importance of modern medical services. If Lundi Clinic was closed by whomever, it would have been as an act of maximum desperation. Of course, acts of desperation in war situations happen.

LUNDI CLINIC 1976 – 1980

Mrs. J. Harinangoni, a State Registered Nurse, came to Lundi Clinic in 1973 when she joined her husband, who was a teacher at Lundi Secondary School. She was not a child of the local community, but her performance when discharging her duties endeared her to the people. When the missionaries left in 1976, she automatically took over the reigns of Lundi Clinic. When Chikombedzi Hospital was closed, the regular visits by the doctor came to an end. It now meant that Mrs. Harinangoni had to combine her own duties, and duties of a doctor, whenever necessary.

Mrs. Harinangoni, with colleagues, such as, T. Mahanya, S. Gwalale Chauke, Mrs. S. Muzamani Chauke, Mrs. S. Moyo-Sibanda (popularly known as Mai Chibwe), Mrs. J. Chauke, Joramau Chauke, Mrs. A. J. Chauke, and many other staff members at the clinic, had their lives always on the line during the war. The three gentlemen, S. Gwalale

⁹ Houser, T. A., The Free Methodist Church and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000, p.86.

¹⁰ Interview with Mr. Mahungo, Neshuro Centre, 1980.

Chauke, Joramau Chauke and T. Mahanya, had to perform duties such as couriers of medicine and treating the injured at very odd hours.¹¹ They continuously received medicine order lists from the guerrillas such as pain killers, penicillin, methylated spirits, bandages, malaria quinine, medicine against snakes, and insect bites and itches. The Lundi Clinic supplies came from the government and General Missionary Board in America. During the height of the war, government supplies were very scarce and irregular. The government was aware that some of the supplies ended up sustaining the guerrillas. They had concrete evidence after the Nine-Band Massacre in 1978 and Dimbiti Hill Massacre in 1979. Some of the *mujibhas* who were caught and heavily interrogated, gave information. The Missionary Board played a very important role in aiding the clinic, but even for them it was not easy. The clinic staff members sometimes carried the burden of meeting the demands of order lists. Some of the injured were always traced to the clinic. The clinic had no choice but to treat both guerrillas and security forces. They were frank with both belligerents. *Povo* caught in crossfire, also reported to the clinic. The number of patients they attended, particularly in 1978 to 1979, was very big, but the clinic staff did their best. There was no doctor, a lack of foresight of the missionaries. The Secondary School was better off. Basic laboratory and X-ray tests were done by Joramau Chauke, who always tried his best. The best equipment that was left by the missionaries was stolen or damaged at Chikombedzi Hospital. Whatever were the weaknesses and shortcomings of the clinic, still it survived throughout the war.

The great question was why and how did Lundi Clinic survive during the war, while many other clinics in almost similar situations closed? Various reasons were given as to why the clinic survived. Lundi Clinic was an arm of Lundi Mission; hence, some of the reasons given to explain the survival of the Mission and Secondary School applied to the clinic. There were reasons unique to the survival of the clinic. The major reason was that during the height of the war, Lundi Clinic remained the only medical center to serve a very wide area. This included the whole of the Mwenezi District, large parts of Chibi, Mberengwa and Beitbridge Districts. The nearest medical centres were Fort Victoria, Triangle, Chiredzi and Beitbridge, all of which were more than 100 kilometres away. These were also inaccessible to guerrillas and ordinary people. The closure of Mnene Hospital in Mberengwa, Chishave Clinic in Chibi, and particularly Chikombedzi Hospital earlier on, placed the burden on Lundi Clinic. Lundi Clinic became the nerve center of medical provisions. For the guerrillas and the local people in their normal view, the clinic had to remain open. It was the first point of call for medical services, even though it could not do everything that was expected.

For guerrillas operating in the Gaza operational area, particularly between the Mozambique border and Mberengwa by 1978, Lundi Clinic was their only hope of medical services. The clinic was almost halfway on their stretch of operations for about a thousand kilometres between the Mozambique border and Matabeleland and Midlands Districts. Medical services were very essential to their operations. They would only close the clinic as a last resort in the war.

The local people valued medical services beyond description. It was in 1939 that these services were first provided among them. By 1960 the services had made a great impact on their lives, and by 1976 there was no way they could live without them. Chikombedzi Hospital had closed in 1976, so the last hope of the Hlengwe people and

¹¹ Interview with T. Mahanya, Morgenster Mission, 1998.

neighbours was Lundi Clinic. Whenever discussions were made with implications to close the clinic, the *povo* were very vociferous in its support. The *povo* strongly voiced at *pungwes*, and even with security forces, that the clinic was one of their few lifelines. Children and mothers could not do without the clinic. Benefits from the clinic were all there for everybody to see. The closure of the clinic meant throwing the lives of people in jeopardy. The unreserved support the clinic received from the *povo* helped to make it survive throughout the Liberation War.

The security forces had other medical options, but even they used Lundi Clinic often. There were many cases when they brought their injured to the clinic. The clinic was along the Masvingo–Beitbridge highway convoy route, which was, time and again subjected to heavy guerrilla ambushes. In such calamities, Lundi clinic was near and afforded the first medical care. Even the security forces could not simply have a “do not care” attitude toward Lundi Clinic.

Mrs. Harinangoni and her staff must be highly praised for their diplomatic methods in handling the sensitive issue. They were able to deal tactfully with the guerrillas, security forces and *povo*. They could have incurred the wrath of one of these groups that could have led to the closure of the clinic. Theirs was an unenviable role that they successfully played. Whatever were the reasons and explanations, Lundi Clinic never closed even for a minute until 1980. The Miracle of the Lundi Mission. Lest We Forget!

The medical personnel, both missionaries and African, responded to the medical needs day and night. By 1976, Africans appreciated the service missionaries rendered and appreciated the loving care of the missionaries’ nursing staff. The care did not stop in the corridors of the medical institutions. Mission medical personnel and African staff was always interested in the spiritual growth of their patients. The Annual Conference of the Free Methodist Church regularly appointed chaplains to assist in the spiritual care of all that came to the hospital and clinic. “The medicine was given with God’s love.”

Lundi Clinic was a people’s clinic. It belonged to everybody. The Miracle of Lundi Mission. Lest We Forget!

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

CONCLUSION - THE MIRACLE INTERPRETATIONS

Students who attended Lundi Secondary School from 1973 to 1980, and particularly 1978 to 1980, constituted the largest portion of the mission population. They contributed very much to the survival of Lundi Mission. The head boys, head girls and their deputies managed to cool down and control student behaviour and activities which could have led to the closure of the mission. Students had their meals tampered with, lessons and studies disturbed, and sometimes personal properties taken, but they managed to remain disciplined. All this could have led to strikes, boycotts, and riots. The students could have abandoned school en masse, or appealed to their parents and guardians for them to leave and close the school. This student body, particularly in 1978 to 1980, carried an unbearable burden, but they remained calm and cool. At some missions, students took advantage of the war situation to become highly undisciplined. They absconded, rioted, and helped to circulate information that led to the closure of the school by the security forces or guerrillas. The students at Lundi Secondary School were a special group, or breed. The Miracle – Lest We Forget! God placed this kind of student body to save His Mission during the war crisis.

THE SECONDARY SCHOOL KITCHEN STAFF

The Secondary School kitchen staff was comprised of the head cook, S. B. Chauke, and colleagues. They cooked and distributed food to students, guerrillas, war refugees and sometimes security forces. This was an unenviable task. They had to manage the food wisely, sometimes serve food at odd times, but the staff remained calm and patient. They became a target of verbal abuse from all directions, yet they always remained sober to avoid a reaction, which could have led to the closure of the school. The cooks could have taken advantage of the war, and created artificial food shortages. Shortage of food could have precipitated closure of the school, particularly by angry students, or very hungry guerrillas. God set up this breed of cooks at this particular time and place. Yet, the Miracle- Lest We Forget!

THE SECONDARY SCHOOL BOARDING MASTERS AND MISTRESS

Mr. C. Chuma and S. Ndalega, the boarding masters, and boarding mistress, Mrs. Tavaziva, did a sterling job. They maintained discipline among the students without stepping on their toes, which could have caused a commotion. During student riots; boarding masters and mistresses often became victims, or were caught in between. There were cases when some boys and girls wanted to indulge in misdemeanors, but the boarding authorities were able to control them without much hassle. Students could have created false information about the boarding authorities to get back at them through guerrillas or security forces. The Miracle was this never happened.

Yet there was a lot of evidence of what happened at other missions. Boarding authorities became the first casualties, mainly because of the nature of their job. They were largely responsible for the welfare of students during the night, when the situation was conducive for student misbehaviour, and guerrilla activity. Schoolboys and girls

were spared the roles of *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos* respectively. God chose these particular ones to serve Him at this hour of need. The Miracle – Lest We Forget!

THE MISSION GENERAL WORKERS

The mission general workers constituted the grounds staff and general cleaners at the school, dining hall, hostels and clinic; the housemaids and gardeners at professional staff residences. The general workers were led by the late Elimon Musariwa, a builder by profession. The driver and mechanic, the late Mr. Samuel Ndlovu, with his Combi's, had a lot of stories to tell concerning distances they traveled and merchandise they carried on tour of duty as a result of the Liberation War. Many of them worked in, and lived outside, the mission station. They were in contact with guerrillas, the local community and security forces. In some missions, for personal reasons, this group of workers provided information to either guerrillas or security forces which led to the closure or ransacking of the mission by the local community. Lundi workers wanted to see Lundi Mission survive. God had chosen them. The Miracle – Lest We Forget!

THE BIBLE SCHOOL

The Bible School was the third, and smaller arm, of the mission. It nearly became the “Achilles Heel” of mission unity and cooperation in 1978 when the war was reaching its climax. Disunity or irresponsible behaviour by some members of this institution led to the abduction and disappearance of its principal, Rev. Naison M. Chauke. After this, there was an exodus and absconding of its members to join guerrillas and security forces. However, under the leadership of N. Nare and those who remained, they were able to cooperate with all those who worked to see the mission survive. The abducted principal's wife must be saluted for having not pursued a course of revenge particularly through the security forces, because it was public information that guerrillas had abducted the principal. The soft-spoken Rev. Nare, who took over leadership of the Bible School, managed to cooperate with other members within the mission. According to Rev. Jacobs and the missionaries, the Bible School was to be the “head” of the mission, and the school and clinic were to serve the Bible School. God made sure that the Bible School, and mission as a whole, was not going to close. His work through the missionary had to be continued by those who remained. The Miracle - Lest We Forget!

THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Lundi Mission is built in the Chitanga area of Mwenezi District on the boundary with Chivi District and directly served the Madzivire and Shindi areas. War records showed that local communities had the lives of missions in their hands. Guerrillas had learnt and understood, that the community was the water, and they were the fish. In most cases the guerrillas heeded the call of the local community. In some cases some members of the local community gave in to the pressure from the security forces, and did the unexpected. There were several cases when the local community was given the chance, particularly by the guerrillas, to decide on the fate of Lundi Mission. The security forces also made offers to the local community to betray the mission, but they were always turned down. It was normal that some members of the community had personal scores to settle with the mission. These failed because they were personal rather than representative of the community.

Since 1939, generations of Chitanga, Madzivire, Shindi and other communities from afar had immensely benefited from the Mission. It is hard to measure religious benefits drawn from the mission. There were also tangible benefits, such as, educational, medical and social benefits from the mission. The local communities in Mwenezi and Chivi Districts had a great stake in the survival of the mission. They may have had certain misgivings and grievances against the mission, but their general attitude towards the mission was positive. At various guerrilla *pungwes*, and confrontations with security forces, the community voted for the survival of Lundi Mission. The Miracle – Lest We Forget. Many people from the local community were killed, tortured, injured, arrested, and abused in various ways by guerrillas or security forces. Victims under pressure exaggerated or falsely told tales about the activities of the mission in relation to the war. However, when the majority of the local community were consulted, they voted by both legs and hands that Lundi Mission must survive. God, through the local community, wanted His work to be evident and preserved. The Miracle – Lest We Forget!

LUNDI CLINIC

Lundi Clinic was a converging point for guerrillas, security forces, members of the local and the remote communities. War casualties and normal illnesses found their way to the clinic. The clinic, led by Mrs. J. Harinangoni, Mr. T. Mahanya, Mr. S. Gwalale and colleagues, wisely treated the sick and dispensed the medicine. It was extremely hard to adhere to the ‘Hippocratic oath’, but they did so with courage and frankness at their own risk. The closure of the clinic would have led to the closure of the whole mission. Apart from dispensing medicine, caring for the war casualties, the general sick and maternity cases, the professional clinic workers also contributed to the Liberation War in the form of finances and property. The clinic staff worked hand in glove with the Secondary School staff, which was the largest arm of the mission institution. The clinic never closed throughout the war. God had chosen His own to serve Him through the clinic. The Miracle – Lest We Forget!

THE SECONDARY SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL STAFF

The Secondary School staff was the largest of the arms of the mission in terms of numbers. Andrew Ndebele was the headmaster and he also acted as the Superintendent of the whole mission. The headmaster and his deputy, Abner Chauke, were God-given to lead the mission in the war crisis. As far as the mission leadership was concerned, they were on the forefront of all events. Their character, personality, behaviour and activity enabled them to awaken the mission during the political storm. Their style of leadership could have easily plunged the mission into darkness. The mission could have been closed either by security forces or guerrillas. Many heads of other missions lost their lives, were maimed or incarcerated during the war. Some heads abandoned, fled or absconded from their missions, which led to their closure, ransacking or destruction.

The extraordinarily good leadership qualities of the headmaster and his deputy were complemented by the teachers and the school bursar – administrator, Mr. D. Gambiza Moyo. The spirit of maximum unity and cooperation, which prevailed among the leaders and their followers, is hard to explain. Disunity and jealousy between headmasters and their teachers played a very significant role leading to the closure of many other missions in Zimbabwe during the Liberation War.

In the Bible, both the Old and New Testament, are accounts of God-Chosen leaders in times of crisis. These leaders had their human weaknesses, but still God chose them to lead. They range from Noah, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Caleb, Saul, David, Solomon, prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the disciples, such as Peter, John, Paul and many others. Throughout human history, God has always chosen leaders to lead. There is no doubt or question, that in spite of their human weaknesses, Andrew Ndebele and Abner Chauke were chosen by God to preserve His Lundi Mission, which He had founded through Rev. Jacobs and the missionaries to be His testimony and symbol among, first the Hlengwe, and finally all people of Zimbabwe, Africa and the world. The Miracle – Lest We Forget!

THE GUERRILLAS AND SECURITY FORCES

The role played by some leaders of the guerrillas and security forces also contributed to the survival of the mission. They definitely had the lives of the mission residents, and the mission itself, in their hands. Destruction could have been done within seconds, or a short time. Superiors and field forces of the two combating groups were sensitive towards the lives of innocent mission residents. Many times they were inundated by reports which could have influenced them to close the mission. They clearly understood what other forces in other parts of the country did not, that the mission was caught in a dilemma, hence, it had to be handled with great care. Throughout the war, time and again mission authorities held frank discussions with both the security forces and guerrillas. God brought a continuous group of understanding and sympathetic security forces and guerrillas to operate in the Lundi Mission area. His purpose was to make sure that His light continued to shine. The Miracle – Lest We Forget!

THE GREATEST OF THEM ALL WAS PRAYER

All the discussions so far as to the reasons for the survival of Lundi Mission are based on human observations and behaviour. Everything has been said concerning The Miracle of Lundi Mission – Lest We Forget! The greatest of them all was **prayer**.

Lundi Mission was founded by Rev. Jacobs' vision, which he received from God. Lundi Mission was founded by prayer. Rev. Jacobs and his mother prayed to God for Jacobs' vision to be fulfilled. Lundi Mission was founded by the Word of God. The Hlengwe Chief Makoti Sengwe Chauke sent a word of invitation to the Free Methodist Church in Mozambique to come and establish a mission in his country. The American Free Methodist missionaries heeded the invitation. Their first mission, Lundi Mission, was not founded in Chief Sengwe's area, but in Chief Chitanga Chauke's area, a relative of the invitee chief. Prayer became the cornerstone of the founding, prosperity and survival of Lundi Mission. Lundi Mission's surname or totem was, and is, God's Prayer.

When the Liberation War broke out, among all the white missionaries who had worked at Lundi Mission, who were associated with Lundi Mission, and some who heard about Lundi Mission and its noble service to the people, prayed day and night for its survival. Even when the missionaries had to leave Lundi Mission in 1976 against their will, wherever they were, they continued to pray for Lundi Mission. The author has testimony of this, through discussions and mail correspondence with some of the missionaries. Some of the missionaries always followed up events at Lundi by telephone, radio, newspapers, letters, and some made brief visits at their own risk. Many

missionaries kept their link with Lundi Mission, wherever they were, through prayer.

Many African members of the Free Methodist Church, devout and ardent Christians, always prayed for their mission. A good number of church members who visited the mission for various reasons, such as medical attention for themselves, or their relatives, at the clinic, and the school for their children, always informed the mission residents that day and night they were praying for the survival of the mission. Some church members and pastors, who were displaced from their homes by the war, became refugees in the mission. These Christians prayed day and night for their last place of safety to survive.

Students, Scripture Union, Christian Youth Movements, and some mission residents always held prayer groups. The major theme was survival of the mission. Throughout the war, not a single church service was not held, or was discontinued. However, some church services, like the lessons, were held in the midst of gunfire sounds from the vicinity. There were instances when security forces or guerrillas would go around the church or peep through the windows when people were praying. They always passed by, leaving the church service to go on their way. Four times when gunfire exchanges sounded too close for comfort, some church attendants took cover, or scattered out of the building. When such incidents happened, they were motivated to pray more.

The Miracle of Lundi Mission to survive throughout the Liberation War was **Prayer!** Lest We Forget! Amen!!

POST INDEPENDENCE 1980

The bond created between the Free Methodist Church and African Zimbabweans since 1939, continued after the Liberation War until today. When the Liberation War dust settled down after independence in April 1980, the Zimbabwe Free Methodist Board resolved to invite the missionaries back to Zimbabwe so as to resuscitate what had been destroyed by the war and begin new ventures in the new Zimbabwe. The invitation was possible, considering the general good relations, which had prevailed before the war and mutual communication which had existed during the war. The American Missionary Board immediately responded through material, moral, prayer and manpower support. Many missionary organizations that left the country during the war, did not return.

Chikombedzi Hospital, the Free Methodist Church medical flagship, was heavily affected by the war. It was turned into a Rhodesian Army Camp and part of the Protected Village during the war. Most of the sophisticated medical machinery, instruments, gadgets and books were looted. Little equipment found its way to safety at Lundi Mission Clinic.

“We never found out who did the looting. The military blamed the guerrillas and the guerrillas blamed the military. Whoever did it took the very best equipment, books and supplies.”

This was said by Dr. Granger, who took care of the hospital immediately when the missionaries left, and shortly before it was closed.¹

The Missionary Board immediately responded by sending Rev. Tillman Houser to check on the needs of resuscitating the hospital. In January 1981, Dr. Henry Church took over the refurbishing of the hospital and Dr. Paul Embree came in April, spent a month

¹ Houser, T. A., Free Methodist and Other Missions in Zimbabwe, Priority Projects, Harare, 2000. P.86.

and re-opened the hospital. In May the Bhaskars took over.² Since then the Missionary Board cooperated with the government to make sure that their medical mission among the Africans continues to be realized.

The missionaries and their support were welcomed back by warm hands because of their previous good record.

Dr. Henry and Bonnie Church were appointed as Associate Missionaries and taught at the Bible School in Zimbabwe between 1974 - 76. After independence, they were appointed Africa representatives, a post they hold until this day.

The headmaster of Lundi Secondary School, Mr. Andrew D. Ndebele, and the author, attended the official opening of Chikombedzi Hospital in 1981. The ZANU PF government was represented by the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, the late Comrade James Bassopo-Moyo. The ceremony was well attended by Free Methodist Church members, government officials and people from many various walks of life. The old people reflected the good old days of Chikombedzi Hospital and Mission. The author vividly remembers what Dr. Henry Church said on behalf of the Free Methodist Church. Its mission was to develop and promote Christian, medical, educational and social welfare of all the people in Zimbabwe. The church did not represent or support any political party. It was colourblind and the hospital prepared to serve all people.

The Free Methodist Church was prepared to cooperate with anybody or organization which accepted and respected its Godly ideals. Dr. Church even mentioned that he was not interested in political sloganeering taking place. This did not go well with the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, who made comments to the effect that there were some people who needed to be educated the ZANU way. Dr. Church was not moved, because his words were a true testimony of what the Free Methodist Church stood for. The Deputy Speaker changed his line of argument and pursued the theme of reconciliation advocated by the government.

Dr. Henry and Bonnie Church, until this day, are a living testimony in Zimbabwe of the symbiotic relationship between the American missionaries and the Africans in Zimbabwe. Seeds sown in 1939 at Lundi Mission, then Chikombedzi and Dumisa Missions, have spread in the rural areas and urban centres. The Free Methodist Church of America and former missionaries have maintained regular contact with the church in Zimbabwe. Material, financial and moral support has continued. Whenever they have had opportunities, they have physically visited the missions and offered their labour. The appointment of Mr. Abner Daniel Chauke as Bishop enhanced mutual understanding and friendship between the two churches. Jacobs' godly vision still continues in Zimbabwe, though forms, shapes and dimensions might have changed. The Miracle of Lundi Mission and the work of the Free Methodist Church still continue. *Jehovah wemabandhla aadumisiwe* – Let the Almighty God be Praised!

End of The Miracle of Lundi Mission in Zimbabwe

² Dr. Henry's Church's e-mail to the author dated June, 17,2003.

BASIC AFRICAN LANGUAGE PRONUNCIATION GUIDE- SHONA (These rules apply to many Bantu and indigenous world languages)

Tillman Houser

These **basic** pronunciation rules usually also apply to languages (written with English letters) in Japan, China, South Sea Islands, India, South America and Central Indian, Mexico, and Central Asia. They do not usually apply to European or North American Indian languages.

I cannot document why these rules have become so universal, but this is the way it seems to me. Early missionaries in the early 1800's all had Latin as a basic part of their education. As they encountered unwritten languages, they wished to teach the Bible to these people. It was natural for them to use the phonetic sounds of Latin for vowels, and to incorporate the familiar consonant letters of Latin as well.

VOWEL LETTERS HAVE ONLY ONE SOUND:

a - as in (a) father (not uh)	Ma/ngwa/n(a)/ni - Good morning.
e - as in th(e)re	Ma/ka/di/ni h(e)/nyu? - How are you?
i - as in mach(I)ne	Nd(i)/r(i)/po - I'm fine.
o - as in (O)K	Ma/ka/di/ni/w(o)? - And how are you?
u - as in t(u)ne	Ndi/ri/po zva/ng(u) - I'm fine also.

When two, or more, vowels are together, **EACH** must be pronounced.

- a - together with - i = ai; sounds like pie in English.
- e - together with - i = ei; sounds like may in English.

Consonant letters are like English. Think only of the unvoiced part of each consonant without the vowel sound.

- "c" or "ch" as in (ch)eck
- "j" as in jet; "g" as in get;
- "m" and "n" are hummed, "ng" as in sing
- "ny" as in ca(ny)on
- "ph" is "p" sound, not "f". It is said with a slight puff of air.
- "p" is made without a puff of air.
- "q" is a "k" sound (except in Zulu related languages)
- "r" is always rolled, or trilled. The same sound as bu(tter) up; a flap of the tongue.
- "th" is "t" sound, not as in (th)ing. Made with a slight puff of air. Hence the "h".
- "t" is made without a puff of air.
- "v" is similar to gently blowing out a candle. (This sound is sometimes written "w" or "b" in some languages.)
- "vh" is like English "v".
- "x" is "sh".
- "y" as in (y)ellow - ("Y" is **not** a vowel sound).
- There are with **no** silent letters. Each letter has a purpose.

SYLLABLES

- Syllables usually BEGIN with **one** or **several** consonants and **END** with a vowel.
- A vowel at the **beginning** of a word is a syllable by itself.
- When two vowels are together, the **second** vowel is a syllable.
- To properly pronounce African words begin by reading each word slowly syllable by syllable.

Examples - Zi-mba'-bwe Ma-sho'-na Chi-ta'-nga a-nó-ti

- The accent is usually on the next to the last syllable.

PRACTICE BASIC VOWEL AND CONSONANT PRONUNCIATION

1 - Combine these vowels with all the consonants of the alphabet

a e i o u

2 - Combine these diphthongs with the consonants of the alphabet

a/i a/u e/i e/a o/u o/i

3 - Say these syllables with all vowels of the alphabet.

(First form each consonant in the syllable using the unvoiced part of each letter.
Then combine the consonants and pronounce with each vowel).

ch	by	bt	bg	dz	dl
ny	nj	nd	ns	ng	nkh
nkW	ndw	nz	h	mdz	mts
mb	mw	mp	mgw	mt	ml
mf	mk	mv	mph	my	
k	kh	kw	khw	p	ph (not f)
bw	dw	gw	sw		
tch	th (not (th)ing)		ts		

Let indigenous speakers be the guide to variations of these sounds.

**JUNE 24, 2004 – TILLMAN HOUSER REPLY TO
HLENGWE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PROJECT**

Dear Happyson:

Ha tsaka ku amukela papila la nwina. Ma tsaka ke? Hina ha tsaka hi ka hi dumisa Hosi ya hina Jesu Kristu.

You were right when you gave me this assignment that it will take some deep thought. I will try the best I can.

I am glad to hear that Chido is able to continue her education. It will stand her in good stead in future years. Thank you for the update about Dumisani and Thandeka that they are doing well.

About the following items you mentioned:

1) When I visited the Museum in Harare on one of my trips to Zimbabwe, I spoke to one of the staff about several rock painting sites and outposts of the Great Zimbabwe that I found in Matibi No. 1 and Maranda. At that time I pointed out the sites on a map. They should have a record of that in formation. I do not remember the exact year I visited the museum, but I think it was about 1995. I also left some Hlengwe artifacts with them as well.

2) I will send you an account of my trip with Mufundisi Jacobs we made in 1951 to look for Lobengula's treasure on Nyamatongwe Mountain. My desire would be that it be completely used for educational or medical purposes. I myself would want no part of it. If it were found, would the Amandebele people consider it theirs?

3) I have written my life story which includes our experiences during the war. I will send you that account which may be helpful.

4) I will have to take some time to see if I can find something about "ku ambisa mahungu". I think I have a tape of the Mavundas in 1953.

This national project is a very worthy project. I feel humbled to be asked to participate in it.

Nimina,



Mufundisi Hauza

Tillman Alexander Houser
Bachelor of Arts Degree in Biblical Literature
from Seattle Pacific University – 1947
Master of Arts Degree in Missiology
from Fuller Theological Seminary - 1978

INFORMATION FOR THE HLENGWE DICTIONARY – OCTOBER 8, 2004

Reply to Happyson Chauke Questionnaire by Tillman Houser

There is a national project to update Shona and Ndebele dictionaries. Then (They wish to) write dictionaries on national minority languages including Hlengwe - Shangaan. The one available is Tsonga written in South Africa. Thus they want one based in Zimbabwean Hlengwe - Shangaan. Hence your assistance and contribution is highly valued. Your missionary duty is still needed in a different dimension. I happen to be in the front of the project. The Free Methodist Church and its missionaries was in the fore front in Christianity, educational and medical matters concerning the Hlengwe - Shangaans in Zimbabwe. Happyson W. Matsilele Chauke

(1) What was the total population of the Hlengwe - Shangaans in Zimbabwe (for) 1939 - 1977 (estimates).

- 30,000 to 50,000

(2) Why did the Free Methodist Church adopt Hlengwe – Shangaan (Tsonga/Xitwa) as official language for church services and Sunday school and as an educational medium of instruction apart from English?

- When Rev. Ralph Jacobs arrived in the Mwanzezi area in Southern Rhodesia to found the Free Methodist Mission at Chitanga, there was no European missionary presence. He came from the Free Methodist Mission work in Mozambique where the Mission used the Tshwa literature medium published by them and the American Methodist Mission. Since the Hlengwe people could understand the Tswaha dialect of Shangaan, it was natural for him to use Tswaha as the only literature available.
- Since Tswaha was the only language the founding missionaries knew, it was used for all communications in church services, school textbooks, and four-year linguistic training of new missionaries.

(3) How did the missionaries learn Hlengwe - Shangaan language?

- The mission instituted a required four-year language course supervised and taught by missionaries. Voting privileges were denied in Mission meetings until the new missionaries completed the four-year course. This course included use of Tswaha grammar books by Persson (a Swiss-French missionary in Mozambique), dictionaries, Bibles and New Testaments, hymn books, and a selection of about fifty books published by the Free Methodist and American Methodist Missions in Mozambique. The Central Mission Press in Cleveland, Johannesburg, South Africa, did the printing. The Central Mission Press operated by the American Methodist Mission also regularly published a Sunday school paper, called the Mahlale (Morning Star).
- Required study of a two-volume work in English titled “The Life of a South Africa Tribe” authored by Henri Junoud of the Swiss Mission in South Africa about Tsonga

and Ronga people living in northeastern South Africa and southern Mozambique.

(4) Up to what level, grade or standard was Hlengwe -Shangaan taught in schools?

- In Matibi I, Maranda, and Matibi II areas, Tswha was taught up to Standard I level. Later on, Chikaranga readers were introduced for all grades in Maranda and Matibi I. I do not remember which years that was done.
- In the Sengwe area, Tsonga was taught to Standard Three from 1950 onwards.

(5) Where did the missionaries get the bibles, other Christian materials, and textbooks in the Hlengwe - Shangaan language which they used?

- Tswha books were bought from the Central Mission Press in Cleveland, Johannesburg.
- Tsonga books were bought from the Swiss Mission in the Transvaal, South Africa

(6) Were there any African non-Hlengwe - Shangaan teachers? How did they teach the language when it was still taught in schools.

All of you were once mission superintendents and school inspectors liaisioning with the government. Thus you are in a position to at least provide official or authentic facts.

- The non-Hlengwe – Shangaan teachers were at a distinct disadvantage with no dictionary or grammar books available. They had to get along as best they could, and quickly learned the language.

(1) When was Hlengwe - Shangaan officially stopped to be taught in schools?

- I cannot recall the year, but probably when Chikaranga was introduced into Matibi I and Maranda.

(2) What were the reasons given when it was stopped to be taught in schools?

- Most of the students were from predominately Karanga speaking homes.

(3) What was the official attitude of the Free Methodist church towards this new development?

- I do not remember any resistance to this move.

(4) What was the reaction of Hlengwe -Shangaan parents, Karanga parents and students, and Church?

- Because the missionaries controlled the administration of the schools, the decision was theirs. I do not recall any consultation of the parents nor Church concerning the shift to Karanga use in the schools. .

(1) In the early days church services and Sunday School were in Hlengwe – Shangaan. Why?

- Since Tswha was the only language the founding missionaries knew, it was used for all communications in church services, school textbooks, and four-year linguistic training of new missionaries.

(2) When did it become a policy that missionaries were to learn Shona instead of

Hlengwe-Shangaan and why?

- When Robert and Kitty Magee, and Gayle Hershberger arrived as new missionaries to live at Lundi Mission on the border of the Karanga speaking area, the Mission decided that they should learn Shona rather than Hlengwe – Shangaan. In 1963 they were sent to Nyadiri Methodist Mission to specifically learn Shona.
 - When the Housers were in Matibi I area, a Karanga woman said we missionaries did not love the Karanga people because we did not speak their language.
- (3) When and why did the Free Methodist church adopt the policy that other languages particularly Karanga could be used in Church services and Sunday school apart from Hlengwe-Shangaan.
- In the late 1950s the Church services in Matibi I and Maranda were using Karanga song books purchased from the Dutch Reformed Mission published at Morgenster Mission. I do not remember of any particular time that a decision was made either by the Church or the Mission to permit the use of Karanga in the services.
- (4) What was the general attitude of Hlengwe-Shangaan members?
- The Hlengwe – Shangaan leaders in the Free Methodist Church opposed the production of the Shona Bumbiro Remitemo of the Free Methodist Church, but were over-ruled by action of the Annual Conference. I was appointed to chair the committee to have African personnel translate certain sections of the English Discipline (Book of Rules) into Shona. The work was done and printed in 1979 by the Baptist Mission Press in Gwelo. The book was not well received by the Free Methodist Church leaders. I saw many copies of the book remaining on a shelf of the Lundi Bible School in 1990 after the school moved to Masvingo.
 - I refer you to the “Chisumo Chekutanga” in the “BUMBIRO REMITEMO” by the Komiti Yokududzira of the Annual Conference.
- (5) When and why was the policy of interpreters (used) during church services?
- Because there was a mixture of Karanga and Hlengwe – Shangaan speakers in the services, it was necessary to have interpreters. This was true especially when so many students in the Secondary School at Lundi Mission accepted students from Shona areas. This policy was begun probably in the early 1960s. Often when the speaker knew both languages, he would shift from one language to the other during his sermon.
- (6) What are the positive and negative effects of interpreters?
- The practice was useful because both groups distinctly heard the message. If the hearers could understand both languages, the message was reinforced.
 - It lengthened the sermon.

After 1980 some primary schools have resumed the teaching of Hlengwe-Shangaan but very few. The National Broadcasting Corporation has also (produced) programmes on

minority languages including Hlengwe -Shangaan.

This vital information is needed to serve as background and justification for the compilation of a dictionary.

You were part of the policy makers, practitioners and men on the spot so your contribution is second to none.

May the Lord Bless you. *Xikwembu ximukatekisa*

Happyson Matsilele Chauke

HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE HLENGWE PEOPLE

“About the History of the Tsonga-Hlengwe little has been recorded and perhaps there has been little to remember”¹. The statement was made by Hammond-Tooke in the book entitled ‘The Bantu Speaking Peoples of Southern Africa.’ Hammond-Tooke was referring to the Shangaan-Hlengwe in Zimbabwe. The truth was not that there has been little to remember, but few if any have made an attempt to write about the history of the Shangaan-Hlengwe in Zimbabwe. One of the earliest historical anthropologists on the Shangaan-Hlengwe people in Mozambique and South Africa, regarding the Shangaan-Hlengwe said, ‘The people themselves are hardly conscious that they form a definite nation and therefore possess no common name for it.’² The fact that the Shangaan-Hlengwe of Zimbabwe speak a particular language, practise male circumcision and female initiation refute H.A. Junod’s statement. Junod probably was led into making such a sweeping statement because very little was documented about the Hlengwe people. A. Wright who for 10 years from 1958 to 1968 was District Commissioner for the then Nuanetsi District, which had the largest Shangaan-Hlengwe population in Zimbabwe had this to say about the Shangaan-Hlengwe. ‘Shangaan-Hlengwe occupy nearly the whole bottom southeastern half of Nuanetsi District. As for their attitude and history very little is on record’³.

A quotation from a letter wrote by the Secretary for the University of Rhodesia Centre for Inter-Racial Studies in 1974 referring to the Shangaan-Hlengwe in Zimbabwe said, ‘There has been nothing written about the Shangaan-Hlengwe peoples apart from a mention of them in an animal book written by someone in Internal Affairs’⁴.

Although some written material about the Shangaan-Hlengwe people do now exist, there is still tremendous scope for further study especially by administrative officials and Shangaan-Hlengwe peoples themselves into the history and culture of these people. Therefore, this particular survey is an attempt to contribute in a small humble way to the written record of the Shangaan-Hlengwe people in Zimbabwe.

FOOTNOTES OF HISTORY AND CULTURE OF HLENGWE PEOPLE

2. HAMMOND-TOOKE, D. W. (ED) – THE BANTU PEOPLES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA pg 69
3. JUNOD, H.A. – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE VOL 1 pg pg 395
4. WRIGHT, A. –THE VALLEY OF IRONWOOD pg 200
5. SPARROW, A. W. – “LOWVELD RITE – A SHANGAAN CIRCUMCISION LODGE”

1
2
3
4

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE HLENGWE

After The Bantu migration into Southern and Central Africa the Tsonga - Hlengwe group of the Bantu people finally settled on the eastern coast of South Africa extending from St. Lucia Bay (28⁰C latitude south) on the Natal Coast up the Sabi River to the North.¹ They were before the early 19th Century wholly located in Mozambique and were Nguni neighbours for a long time.² The Hlengwe were practically located in all the territory of Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) to the South of the great Sabi River (River Save).³ The Tsonga - Hlengwe were confined largely to the west and south of the Limpopo River. They lived in adjacent to the highlands of the interior where they later experienced contact with peoples migrating from the interior.⁴ The Tsonga Hlengwe groups later expanded in lands occupied by mixed Tonga and Shona and then throughout the whole of southern Mozambique. The Tsonga clan of Nwalungu expanded along the Limpopo River while the Hlengwe infiltrated much of the northern territory. According to oral tradition collected by Bulpin, the wilderness between the great Save and Limpopo Rivers from the Rhodesian border down to within the 50 miles of the sea was known to the Shangaans as Hlengwe. Hlengwe meant the place where you needed help. It was a place where terror dwelt, a haunt of the wild animals, of sudden death, of an ancient savagery and nameless ghosts and of strange gods whose lore rites were half forgotten.⁵ Parts of the southeast lowveld, was much of the low lying country and includes most of Mozambique between the Save and Limpopo Rivers, the lower parts of northern Transvaal and parts of Botswana most of the country is below 700 metres above sea level. The lowveld was a meeting place of people. In the south were the Venda and Pfumbi, south and west the Tswana and northern Sotho, in the northwest the Ndebele and Kalanga, the north the Karanga, in the northeast, the Ndau and in the east the Tsonga of whom the Hlengwe are the largest group.⁶

According to the tradition of the Chauke oral tradition, who are the major clan among the Hlengwe, the original home was along the eastern bank of the Limpopo River where they claimed to have lived from time immemorial. Some moved to the Shengane River, others to the Save River and some to the neighbourhood of Sofala. The expansive Hlengwe speaking Tsonga conquered even parts of Teve. By 1760 Hlengwe incursions reached as far as the beaches of Inhambane.⁷ The first large group which moved into present day Zimbabwe had settled south of the Save river under chief Chikovele in present day Mozambique. After his death Chikovele was succeeded by his son Matsena and grandchildren as chiefs, Chinombe, Hokwane, Shingwanze and Ngwena. It was Ngwena who led the largest group which settled south of the Lundi River present day Zimbabwe now inhabited by one of his descendants chief Mpapa.⁸

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

The Anglo-Portuguese border drawn after 1890 split the Hlengwe people between Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The international border paid no attention to tribal areas. On the other hand the Hlengwe people recognized it only as an impediment to normal relations such as marriage and trade transactions. P. Forestall, the first Native Commissioner of Chivi District which bordered Zimbabwe and Mozambique in the southeast was alarmed to find Portuguese flags amongst the Hlengwe as far as chiefs Mpapa and Chitanga areas in the then Matibi portion of the Chivi district in 1897 after the Anglo-Portuguese border was supposed to have been sorted out. As late as 1900 Portuguese native police were threatening chief Ngwenyenye in Zimbabwe for not having paid tax for the simple reason that in pre-colonial times he was sub-chief under Mavhuve the Hlengwe ruler in Mozambique. Chief Shilothela and his people in Zimbabwe had their kraals strung out along the Mozambique border fence for about 15 miles southward from Vila de Salazar (Sango). They enjoyed special relationship with Portuguese at Malvernia, an administrative and railway center. They were allowed to travel freely backwards and forwards across the international border as long as they had Rhodesian (Zimbabwean) registration. Headman Shilothela summed the inconveniences caused by the international boundary "We were born here. Our fathers were born here and our grandfathers were born here—in the days when there was no border fence and no borderline. We have many troubles, sometimes Portuguese worry us, we have no cattle, water is short and arable land is limited. But this is our home and our ancestral spirits are here. We do not want to move and we want the District Commissioner to go to Salisbury with our elders and tell the government this."⁹

Documentary evidence on the Hlengwe is very limited. Mtetwa stated that there was and still is much relationship between the Hlengwe in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. For example, headman Ngwenyenye is related to Chief Mavhuve in Mozambique. Chief Sengwe is related to Chief Chikwalakwala near the junction of the Limpopo – Mwenezi Rivers. Other Hlengwe chiefs along the Save River in Mozambique with close relations in Zimbabwe are Matsovere, Chidoko and Ndlovane. Chiefs Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye in Zimbabwe are closely related to Chiefs Mavhuve, Ximire and Makulunje in Mozambique.¹⁰ Therefore it can be concluded that the geographical location of the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe is a spill over from Mozambique.

Hlengwe Chiefs Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye by the late 18th Century had already infiltrated as far north as the line drawn from the point on the Mtilikwe River just north of the Runde River to the Mkwesine River. These became the main Hlengwe ethnic groups in the lower Save valley. The Hlengwe people of Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye today in Zimbabwe are found in the Ndanga, Chiredzi and Chipinge districts.¹¹ According to oral traditions compiled by R. Mtetwa, the groups led by Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye arrived in the extreme southern portion of the Chipinge and Chiredzi districts north of the Runde River, south of the Mkwesine River, to the east of Mtirikwe River and to the south of southern Ndanga escarpment in areas occupied by Shona people. Banga, the son of Mhingo, established the Hlengwe - Mahenye dynasty in an angle of land between the Save and Honde Rivers in Chipinge District. Tsovani and his group advanced up the Runde and then Chiredzi Rivers and took over areas from the

9

10

11

Duma. By the 1890's Tsovani's Hlengwe had reached the southern escarpment that runs from Nyajena to Matsai. Tsovani Muteyo lived near present day Triangle Hippo Valley Estates.¹² Meredith, the first Native Commissioner at Chipinge definitely identified Mahenye's Hlengwe people after 1904. At the same period the assistant Native Commissioner of Ndanga District identified a population of the Hlengwe in the southern part of the District. The Native Commissioner in Umtali (Mutare) 13th August, 1895 wrote to the Secretary of Native Department in Salisbury reporting about Tshangaani – Hlengwe tribe living in the Melsetter District.¹³ Therefore some Hlengwe people spread into Chipinge and Melsetter District (Chimanimani) where they are found today.

P. Forestall, the Native Commissioner of Chibi District between 14th February and 5th March 1898 compiled a record of Hlengwe people living between the Save, Runde and Limpopo River areas. The Hlengwe groups had arrived in the area during the 18th Century and by the end of the century they had occupied the whole southeastern lowveld of modern Zimbabwe.¹⁴ One Hlengwe group led by Vurumela (Furumela) moved westward into Matibi Pfumbi area. Matibi called for assistance from the Ndebele to repel Vurumela's expansion further to the West. Hlengwe groups under rulers Chitanga, Mpapa, Dumbu, Sengwe, Chilonga, Gezani and Masivamele occupied the area between the Runde and Limpopo Rivers from the Mozambique border to the Masvingo-Beitbridge highway. In the process they assimilated or dominated Karanga people.¹⁵ This is the area now called the Chiredzi and Mwenezi Districts with the largest concentration of Hlengwe population in Zimbabwe.

One large geographical area where the Hlengwe settled and are still found is in South Africa. The greater portion of the African tribe sometimes referred to as Shangane (Hlengwe) is located in South Africa having moved from Mozambique since 1835. They settled and are still found in Natal (Matongaland) and in the northern and Eastern Transvaal, particularly in the Leydenburg, Zontpansberg and Waterberg districts. In these areas they have been in closer contact with Sotho and Venda.¹⁶ The modern spelling Shangane was accepted in South African orthography. The Rhodesian sector of the group was and is usually called Matshangana or Shangaan tribe.¹⁷ However, the current accepted orthography is Shangaans and the official name used not Hlengwe in Zimbabwe.

The creation of the Tsonga – Hlengwe Gazankulu Bantustan (Homeland) in apartheid South Africa was recognition of the strong presence of the tribe in its geographical location. Before the establishment of the international boundary between South Africa and Southern Rhodesia there was a natural logical spill over of the Hlengwe from the Transvaal to settle in Southern Rhodesia. The natural boundary, which later on became the international boundary, the Limpopo River was not a major hurdle between the groups until colonialists and their laws. The natural, cultural and traditional contact between the two groups on both sides of the Limpopo River have made it hard to curb what the modern authorities call illegal contact. In 1896 P. Forrestall the Native

12

13

14

15

16

17

Commissioner who was in charge of the area largely occupied by the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe reported about a high rate of people on both sides of the river crossing to and from for economic and social reasons.¹⁸ This traditional relationship has made it possible for many Hlengwe Zimbabweans to attain South African citizenship and working permits.

When the British South Africa Company occupied the country in 1890 there was a redistribution of the people in various areas. The Hlengwe were living in what are now Chiredzi, Chipinge, Ndanga and Mwenezi Districts. There were pockets of this group in the Beitbridge, Bikita and Chivi Districts. Most of the redistribution took place within the same districts. The Hlengwe were evicted from their areas to give way for European ranching farms, commercial agricultural farms, estates and national parks. In 1890 Tsovani and his people were living in present day Triangle and Hippo Valley Estates. Chiefs Chitanga and Mpapa were living in what is now the European Nuanetsi Ranch between the main Beitbridge Fort Victoria (Masvingo) road and Matibi II Tribal Trust Land. The Hlengwe under Mahenye and Shilothhela who lived in what is now the Gonarezhou National Park along the Lundi River to its junction with the Save River were moved out. Sengwe and his people were organized in the area they lived and moved to parts of the Mateke Hills. Dumbu related to Paramount Chief Chitanga lived north of the Nuanetsi (Mwenezi) River near the present Nuanetsi District Administrative center. In 1896 Stanley Portal Hyatt an English transport driver recorded of a large scale movement of the Hlengwe people by the British South Africa Company in the area between the Limpopo River across the Mwenezi, Runde, Mtirikwi Rivers and the Save River. This was only seven years since British South Africa Company occupation.¹⁹

After the First World War and the introduction of responsible Government in 1923 there was another major relocation of Hlengwe people in the country. However, it must be taken note that this relocation has been going on until at independence though the rate had slowed down. The major reasons for relocation were economic and security. Most of the areas occupied by the Hlengwe were suitable for ranching such as the massive Nuanetsi Ranch, irrigation farming for example the Triangle, Hippo Valley Estates and game parks such as the Gonarezhou National Park. The Hlengwe settled in areas along the international borders such as with Mozambique and South Africa. Hence, authorities for security reasons there was a need to relocate them to what they felt were comfortable distances from the boundaries. Tsovanis' Hlengwe people were moved and some settled in Ndanga District to make way for the Triangle - Hippo Valley Estates known for their irrigation farms of sugar-cane, citrus fruits, cotton and now wheat. Some of these people fell under Duma or Karanga chiefs although with their own headman Magatsi who is related to Chief Tsovani. When Nyajena Tribal Trust Land was extended southwards as compensation of land taken by the Bangala Dam some Hlengwe under headman Magudu were settled here who were moved out of state land near Triangle Sugar Estate. Paramount Chief Chitanga of the Hlengwe was moved from Chivumburu in 1919 and placed in Matibi 1 Tribal Trust Land with his nine headmen to make room for the massive Nuanetsi Ranching farm. Some of his people were placed under Shona chiefs Neshuro and Negari. Chief Mpapa who lived close to his relative Chitanga was moved and separated from Chitanga to Matibi No. 2 Tribal Trust Land for the same reason as

18

19

Chitanga. The Hlengwe headman Chisa, who lived between the Save and Lundi Rivers, was moved to the southern part of Sengwe Tribal Trust Land when his area was made part of the Gonarezhou Reserve. Headman Ngwenyenye and his people were moved from Marumbini area south of the Save -Lundi River junction to Sengwe Tribal Trust Land to clear the area for the Gonarezhou National Park. The construction of the railway line linking Rutenga and Lourenco Marques (Maputo) in the early 1950's caused people to give room, and were moved to a distance away from the line for security reasons.

A. Wright in his personal record entitled 'Valley of Ironwoods' an experience of ten years as District Administrator in Nuanetsi District with the largest Hlengwe population in Zimbabwe confirmed the redistribution of Hlengwe people in Zimbabwe.²⁰ His was a record from 1958 to 1968. It was in 1953 that Nuanetsi District was excised from Chibi District and upgraded to full district status. The size was approximate to that of Swaziland and became Rhodesia's largest district with the largest concentration of the Hlengwe people in the country. It was in this district that the Hlengwe Paramount Chief Chitanga lived and the majority of his chiefs such as Mpapa, Sengwe and Chilonga. In 1980 Nuanetsi District was divided into Mwenezi and Chiredzi Districts.

To sum up, today the Hlengwe people are found in large numbers in the Chiredzi Districts under chiefs Chiilonga, Mpapa, Sengwe, Gezani, Masivamele and Mahenye. The district with the second largest population is Mwenezi under Paramount Chief Chitanga and others under Karanga Chiefs Neshuro, Negari, Mawarire and Murove. A considerable population is found in the Chiredzi District in the Sengwe communal area under Chief Tsovani. In the Chipinge District they are settled in the Ndwoyo communal Area. In the Ndanga District they are found in the Ndanga Communal Area under Chiefs Bota of the Duma and Nyakunhwa of the Karanga although they have their own headman Magatsi. In the Nyajena Communal area the Hlengwe live under their headman Magudu. In the Beitbridge district they live under their own chiefs Chikwalakwala and Furumele. They are also found in the southern parts of Bikita District. There are also notable pockets of Hlengwe population in Zaka and Chivi districts. Therefore the Hlengwe people occupy a considerable geographical area in Zimbabwe today.

FOOTNOTES OF GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

1. H. A. JUNOD - THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE VOL. 1
2. HAMMOND - TOOKE, D.W. (E.D.) – THE BANTU PEOPLES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA
3. H. P. JUNOD - BANTU HERITAGE
4. A. K. SMITH - THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN MOZAMBIQUE
5. T. V. BULPIN –THE IVORY TRAIL

6. BANNERMANN - THE HLENGWE OF SOUTHEASTERN RHODESIA
 7. A. K. SMITH - THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN MOZAMBIQUE
 8. P. FORRESTALL N. C. REPORTS N3/33/8
 9. A. WRIGHT - VALLEY OF IRONWOODS PG. 332
 10. R. MTETWA - TSOVANI
 11. BANERMAN – THE HLENGWE OF SOUTHEASTERN RHODESIA
 12. R. MTETWA - TSOVANI
 13. N.C. REPORTS N3/33/8
 14. P. FORRESTALL N.C. REPORTS TO C.N.C. SALISBURY N3/33/8
 15. D. BEACH – THE SHONA AND ZIMABABWE
 16. H.A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE VOLUME 1
 17. A. WRIGHT – VALLEY OF THE IRONWOODS
 18. P. FORRESTALL – N. C. REPORTS – N3/33/8
 19. S. P. HYATT – THE OLD TRANSPORT ROAD
- A. WRIGHT – VALLEY OF THE IRONWOODS.

CHAPTER 1

THE ORIGINS AND DEFINITIONS OF HLENGWE

A Swiss Missionary, Henri A. Junod, produced ethnographic study on Southern Mozambique and he found six dialectical sub groupings among the clans whom he called the Thonga. He argued that the generic name of the tribe Thonga, was applied to them by the Zulu or Ngoni invaders who enslaved most of the Thonga clans between 1815 and 1830. Henri A Junod also argued that the origin of the name Thonga was probably a Rhonga term, which means Orient (*buronga*-dawn) and by which clans of Lourenco Marques (Maputo) used to call themselves. For example, *kuranza* (to love) in Ronga becomes *thanda* in Zulu and *raru* (three) in Ronga becomes *thathu* in Zulu. Thonga possibly became a nickname in the mouth of the Zulus, almost an equivalent of a slave. The Thongas of the Northern clans of southern Mozambique, especially those of Bileni and Djonga (*dzonga*) groups liked to call themselves *tjongas* (Tsonga) and Hlengwe.¹ However, the name Tsonga later on became more widely used than Thonga.

The six Thonga groups according to Henri. A. Junod were, the Ronga found around Delagoa Bay. The real Rongas were the clans of Mapfumo, Matsolo, Tembe, Matukweni, Mapunju (*Mapunzu*), Mabota, Mazwaya, Shrindja (*Shrindza*) and Masapisa. The Djonga (*Dzonga*) group meaning south, were concentrated between the Nkomati and Olifanti rivers. The major Dzonga clans closely related to the Dzongas were the Bahlabi, Mapisanganyi, Tsungu, Mavundza, Nkwini and Makamo.

The clans of Nkuna, Mavundza and Hlabi migrated into the Transvaal during the wars of Soshangane Manukosi of the Gaza Nguni. During the period which is now historically termed as the Mfecane or Defequane in Southern Africa, the Nwalungu group, meaning North, occupied the area from the Olifant River to the North. The major clans were Baloyi or popularly known as *bakabaloyi* and Maluleke. Maluleke according to oral history were one of a later clan called the Nwanatis whose other group settled near the mouth of the Limpopo River under the names of Makwakwa of Khambane and Ndindane. Later on, large groups of Baloyi and Maluleke moved into the Transvaal where they mixed with the Veda and Nyayi population. The Hlanganu was the smallest of the Thonga (*Tsonga*) groups. The major clans were the Nwamba, Mabila and Hlanganu. The Hlanganu were mainly found in Leydenburg District where they later mixed with clans of Sotho (*Pedi*) and Swazi (*Mbaya*). The Hlanganu dialect was very much similar to Dzonga. The Bila group named after the popular Bila the Great, occupied the fruitful plain of the lower Limpopo Valley. They suffered very much at the hands of Zulu invaders. The Hlengwe group was the largest of Thonga (*Tsonga*) groups. The major clans were the Tshauke (*Chauke*), Mbenzane, Mavube and Magwinyane. The other groups were the Batswa, Hlombengwane, Yingwane, Nkumbi, Nwanatisi, Makwakwa, Khambane and Ndindane.²

It is logical to conclude from the above facts that the Thonga (*Tsonga*) tribe of which the Hlengwe group was the largest was made up of people of various origins,

1

2

which had invaded southern Mozambique from different parts at different times. Then those who invaded the Thonga (*Tsonga*) adopted the Thonga language and did not influence it enough to prevent it following its natural evolution. It was before the Mfecane and European colonization particularly the Portuguese. It must also be remembered that sometimes people call themselves names which give them security particularly so in times of tribal wars. Thus one group was popularly known by one name in the course of its history and another at one time it is not surprising.

Henri P. Junod, the son of H.A. Junod and also a missionary of the Swiss Romaine Mission wrote a good deal about the Tsonga in South Africa and Mozambique. He argued that the name applied to the Thonga (*Tsonga*) tribe was very ancient and it ought to be written VaThonga, which was the orthography, accepted by his father in his monography on the life of the Thonga (*Tsonga*) people.

The Tonga, according to H. P. Junod probably meant “the people of the East.” Europeans of South Africa referred to the Tonga as Shangaans, a name derived from SoTshangana (*Soshangana*) known as Manukosi, an induna of Tshaka who first subdued all the Tonga (*Tsonga*) clans and brought about their unity under his rule.³ However, to call the Tonga (*Tsonga*) people Shangaans may be misleading as the Amatshangana (Shangaans) were offspring of SoShangana and were really of Nguni origin, but the name came to be widely accepted as it referred to the original *Tsonga* groups and those of Nguni origin that the name Shangaans is necessary to use it today.

Some of the earliest written records on the Tonga (*Tsonga*) are found in the Ethiopian Oriental where Joao dos Santos wrote “in some of these lands other tongues are spoken especially the Batonga and it is the reason why they call the Batonga and their inhabitants Batongas. From Sofala to the south is the kingdom of Sabie, which is also called Batonga towards the bay of Inhambane.

In the West one finds the Kingdom of A Butua (BaTswa).⁴ This was written in 1609 giving a description of the peoples inhabiting parts of modern day Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Modern African historians have noted incorrect facts in some of Joa dos Santos’ historical facts. However, Joa dos Santos’ arguments influenced H. P. Junod to adopt the name Shangaan – Tonga when referring to the *Tsonga* (Thonga) used by his father. He also contended that the Thonga and Chopi were both members of one large group which made up to the *Tsonga* and *Tsonga* was another term used to refer to the same people of which the Hlengwe was the largest group. Caetano Montez in A. K. Smith “Peoples of Southern Mozambique,⁵ in agreement with H. P. Junod, proposed that the peoples of southern Mozambique should all be included in one group, the Tonga and that the Tonga had contact with the Chopi, Tswa, Portuguese and Arabs. However, H. P. Junod argued that they must be called Shangaan – Tonga recognizing the impact of the Nguni invasion over these people led by Soshangane during the Mfecane.

In 1729 the governor of Inhambane, Bernado de Castro Soares wrote that “there are three diverse kinds of cafres in the area.” He identified one group as Tonga (*Tsonga*). The names applied to the other two groups did not correspond with *Tsonga* and Chopi, probably because these were of later use dating from the arrival of the Nguni. According

3

4

5

to his information Chopi meant archer and Tsonga meant slave or servant.⁶ The only group which could have used slave or servant to mean Tsonga were the Nguni invaders under Soshangane Manukosi.

The Dutch stationed at Delagoa Bay in the 1720's recorded that the Tjonga (Ronga) recognized the Tonga of Inhambane as different from themselves and viewed the Chopi of the Limpopo valley whom they called *okarange* as inferiors and fit for slavery.⁷ They distinguished the Tsonga from the Tonga as two groups, which regarded themselves superior over the Chopi because the Chopi consumed animals they avoided. Contemporary information from Delagoa area, indicated that the Rjonga (Ronga) recognized a group H. A. Junod identified as the Hlanganu and that visitors from the distant interior spoke a local similar language to that spoken by the people around the bay. Another group within the same geographical location was a sub group of the Hlengwe who bore the same scarifications as the Rjonga (*Ronga*). Later on some of the Tonga were dominated and accepted the Tsonga culture while some fled to the coast. The Tsonga language and culture became dominant although the Tonga were saved from total assimilation because of the contest between the Tsonga and Portuguese for the control of lands adjacent to Inhambane. Initially, the Portuguese were forced to abandon their stations on the mainland by the Tsonga. By 1761 Portuguese reinforcements succeeded in blunting the Tonga initiative of invading the coastal lands. These conflicts serve to show why there is confusion as to who is a Tonga, Tsonga, Shangaan and Hlengwe. In Zimbabwe the Hlengwe because if their relationship with the Tonga or Tsonga of Mozambique have been incorrectly related to the Tonga of the Zambezi Valley. Their link is that they are all members of the large Bantu group.

A survey compiled by Augusto Cabral and published in 1910 provided a list of Kings and brief histories of the people of the district of Inhambane Lourenco Marques (Maputo) concluded that the Tsonga, Chopi and Tonga formed three different groups. However, the oral data used to compile the survey rarely extended as far back as the 18th Century.⁸ Probably it was a result of this confusion that the term Tsonga later on was used to refer to many groups found in southern Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe. However, the Swiss Missionary Henri A. Junod among the groups he labelled Tsonga, he identified six dialectical sub groupings. These were the Rjonga (Ronga), Hlanganu, Bila, Djonga (Dzonga), Nwalungu and Hlengwe. The idea that Tsonga should be considered as one group of peoples has been challenged. Dr Martha Binford argued that H. A. Junod's classification of the Tsonga people and name Tsonga was unacceptable because it was of derivation and had pejorative connotations. According to her research the Djonga (Dzonga) one of the groups classified under the term Tsonga neither accepted the term or recognized a unity with other groups included within the term Tsonga.⁹

Castro Soares and other contemporary Portuguese authors were adamant that they firmly identified the people whom they called the Tsonga. They also applied the name Landins to the Tsonga. However, some have even used the name Landins to mean Nguni peoples. Original Landins may have been a term, which meant to more than Blackman.

6

7

8

9

According to Castro Soares, Landins lived in the neighbourhood of Delagoa Bay and the lands far north of Sofala. Father Santa Thereza, a late 18th Century Missionary recorded about local Landins who traded with other Landins beyond the River.¹⁰ Thus contemporary Portuguese had no doubts about the Tsonga forming one group. Dutch records of the 18th Century included some of the Portuguese information and provided more details about Tsonga chiefdoms.

Hammond – Tooke classified the original Tsonga groups into three tolerably well defined sections instead of H. A. Junod's six dialectical groups. He argued that the Southern clans included the Mapata, Tembe, ad Mapfumo, classified together as the Ronga. The central clans included the Khosa, Nkuna, Mawunda, Valoyi, Maluleke, Mwalungu, Bila, Nhlanganu and Djonga (*Dzonga*) the largest group. The Northern clans consisted of the Hlengwe and Tswa.¹¹ Junod also cited an account of a Portuguese named Perestrello recorded in 1554 as proof that descendants of the above named clans were found in the country around Delagoa Bay.¹²

The Tsonga clans were concentrated in specific geographical locations before the Mfecane and European colonization. The Ronga group was found around Delagoa Bay in Mozambique, the Djonga (*Dzonga*) along the Limpopo River in Mozambique and Eastern Transvaal, the Hlanganu were found between the Delagoa Bay and Lembombo Hills, the Bila in the flood plains of the Limpopo River and the Hlengwe, the largest group of the Tsonga dialects were located in the North and South of the Limpopo River in Mozambique spreading into Southeastern Zimbabwe up to the Save River and Northern Transvaal during the Mfecane.

If language is considered as one of the oldest elements in the life of a group of people and a major unifying factor then this can help in understanding the origins and definition of the Hlengwe people. Until the 19th Century the Tsonga and Tonga languages were dominant in southern Mozambique. They were part of a linguistic group known as the South-East Bantu, including Sotho, Venda and Nguni. The likely location for the development of the proto South-East Bantu language was North Eastern Transvaal. The Tsonga people were to experience contact with other migrating groups mainly from the interior. Oral traditions collected from the area provide information of Tsonga contact with the Sotho and Shona groups, which became instrumental in the formation of Tonga chiefdoms. This process was made complicated in the 16th Century by the arrival of the Portuguese and later the Nguni invasion led by Soshangane Manukosi. Early written records related to the Tsonga came from the Portuguese and Dutch during the 17th and 18th Centuries. Their records refer to rapid expansion of the Tsonga and Sotho speaking peoples throughout the area. The Dutch and Portuguese records must be treated with caution since modern historians have found a lot of discrepancies. The period of accelerated population dispersal was probably produced largely by fissiparous tendencies within their prospective political units. During the 18th Century the Sototo invaded some of the areas inhabited by some of the Tsonga, which H. A. Junod called Dzonga. The Tsonga also invaded areas occupied by the Shona and Tonga. These events were substantiated by Chopi traditions, which maintained that Tsonga cultural practices such as their language and male circumcision were brought to

10

11

12

their area.¹³ Early in the 19th Century there was renewed expansion by the Tsonga groups in the North, completely assimilating the Tonga and moving into the Chopi lands. The Tsonga invasion of Inhambane was halted by the Portuguese acting in concert with African allies. Portuguese military actions unaware in a large part were responsible for the preservation of differences among the Tsonga and other peoples of Southern Mozambique. On the other hand invasions and counter invasion among the African groups influenced each other's language as a lot of similarities are found within these languages today.

During the same period the Hlengwe group of the Tsonga infiltrated the northern sector of the Tonga assimilating them. It was because of this process that speakers of the Hlengwe dialect occupied virtually as much territory as was occupied by speakers of all other Tsonga dialects combined. The Tonga remained confined in a semi-circle area of Inhambane and the Chopi to the south. The remainder of Southern Mozambique by the 20th Century became a domain of the Tsonga groups of which the Hlengwe was the largest group.

The above arguments are an attempt to demonstrate that there was a common historical experience shared by the Hlengwe and other groups of the Tsonga largely in southern Mozambique before some of the Hlengwe moved to Zimbabwe. It appeared as if incipient state formation occurred among the Tsonga groups before it did among their neighbours. One result of this phenomenon was to enable the Tsonga to resist subsequent cultural influences such as the Nguni under Soshangane, even when they were unsuccessful in the battlefield. The Sotho speaking Pedi abandoned their Pedi customs and language, married local women and were assimilated by the Tsonga. There was a tendency of Tsonga expansion illustrated by the Hlengwe, Nwalunga and Ronga which dispatched vanguards of conquests. The Tsonga expansion to a large degree was responsible for changes, which occurred, in the ethnographic map of Southern Mozambique, the Transvaal and South-Eastern Zimbabwe.

Apart from the Hlengwe being referred to in a blanket term of the Tsonga dialect, many other terms have been used to describe the Hlengwe particularly in Zimbabwe. This was a confirmation that the identity of the Hlengwe as a group was confusing. One term used to describe the Hlengwe was the hyphenated Tsonga-Hlengwe. D. Beach wrote about the Tsonga-Hlengwe advancing slowly across the Lowveld in the first half of the 19th Century from the southeast, taking up the territory that had previously belonged to the Shona in Zimbabwe.¹⁴ By the end of the century the Hlengwe section of the Tsonga had reached the lower Save Valley while other Hlengwe groups had begun to conquer the south-eastern lowveld of Zimbabwe from the small Shona speaking groups. Hlengwe rulers such as Chitanga, Mpapa, Dumbe, Vurumela, Sengwe, Tsovani and Mahenye took vast lands of the southeast Zimbabwe lowveld and advanced far up the Chiredzi, lower Runde and lower Mwenezi valleys. In the process some Shona speaking groups were assimilated and the Tsonga-Hlengwe language became dominate in the lowveld of south-eastern Zimbabwe.

Knobnose was another term used to refer to the Hlengwe people although its use was confined to very few authors. Bulpin gave an interesting tale of how the Hlengwe came to be called the Knobnose. He claimed to have gathered the information in 1916

¹³

¹⁴

hunting in the territory of Hlengwe headman Masava, the son of Masivamele in south-eastern Zimbabwe. Knobnose meant that the people sported a particular disfigurement consisting of a giant wart on the tip of the nose. The wart was artificially induced. These people had suffered from slave raiders and a young man who had been mauled by a leopard and grew a wart on his nose was left by slave raiders. Thus other members artificially induced their own warts to be left alone by the slave raiders. The people believed the whole incident and idea was from their Shikwembu – the Great Spirit of Providence. It was better to be ugly and free, rather than handsome and a slave. The raiders now used them as carriers and never tried to slave them for their grotesque appearance destroyed their value in the slave markets. For generations they continued to disfigure themselves as a form of negative defence.¹⁵ Later on there was evidence that some Hlengwe men tampered with the natural appearance of their noses for some reasons. As to the veracity of Bulpin's story what can only be vouched for was that the Hlengwe had been referred to as the Knobnose. The incident quoted Bulpin probably might have happened to one small group of the Hlengwe people because slave trade is not evident in either oral or written records of the Hlengwe people in Zimbabwe. It is also more probable that Bulpin's story was a folk tale. According to H. A. Junod, the name Knobnose or Knobneusen was given to the Hlengwe by the Boers from Spelonken meaning tattoos on the forehead, nose and cheeks which the Hlengwe cut themselves and a few still do it even today. Men were tattooed on the middle of the face from the forehead to the chin and women on both the face and belly.¹⁶ The tattooing operation was painful and people prepared themselves by eating a special medicine called in Hlengwe, (nabyala khuri). It has been argued by others that tattooing was a custom of primitive populations, but the interesting fact is that tattooing is still observed by some people in modern times. An extreme suggestion was that Hlengwe tattooed themselves because they regarded flat noses as not right. However, the idea that the Hlengwe had a name for tattoos (tihlanga) and that tattooing was done by skilled people in a systematic way involving certain taboos and rules confirmed that it was part of their culture. Those who conquered some of the Hlengwe people like the Nguni adopted the custom and those conquered by the Hlengwe the custom was imposed upon them. The rules show that in former times tattooing had a deep meaning and ritual value which more or less has now disappeared. It was one feature, which identified the Hlengwe and probably earned them the name Knobnose.

P. Forestall the first Native Commissioner of the then Chibi District where the majority of the Hlengwe people lived in Zimbabwe in his early reports about the Hlengwe also referred to them as Knobnose. For instance, in his report to the Magistrate Clerk in Victoria dated August 17, 1897 he referred to Paramount Chief Chitanga as paramount of the Knobnose tribe.¹⁷ Chitanga is the title used by the paramount chief of all the Hlengwe people in Zimbabwe. Forestall also recorded about Chief Chikwalakwala of the Knobnose tribe who had several kraals along the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border between the Mwenezi and Bulyebe Rivers. He referred to Chief

¹⁵

¹⁶

¹⁷

Mpapa and his people as of the Knobnose tribes.¹⁸ Both Chikwalakwala and Mpapa were and are still Hlengwe chieftainships.

Many other terms were used to refer to the Hlengwe and some derogatory or bordering on insult. Unfortunately some of them were regarded as official or semi-official in some cases incurring public wrath from the Hlengwe people. In his yearly report to the Chief Native Commissioner in Salisbury, P. Forrestall the Native Commissioner for Chibi District referred to Paramount Chief Chitanga of the Mabachwa or Knobnose who came to greet him at his Chibi station.¹⁹ When the Nguni led by Soshangane Manukosi established the Gaza kingdom he exacted tribute and drafted Tsonga-Hlengwe young men into his military ranks as *mabulundhlela*, literally meaning 'Road Openers' euphemism meaning front line expendables.²⁰ This was a disregard to Tsonga-Hlengwe humanity. Although others argue that it was a term bestowed upon the young men as an honour and that some of the groups took it as their name. Although others argue that some of the groups took it as their name. However, many Hlengwe people regard the name *mabulundhlela* as derogatory. The Hlengwe groups which moved into the Transvaal in the Spelonken area were called *magwamba* by the Vendas and *bvesha* meaning refugees.²¹ It was true that they were refugees of the Mfecane, but the Hlengwe disliked it and regarded it as derogatory. When the Hlengwe groups occupied the southwestern areas of Zimbabwe they took land from the Shona groups particularly the Karanga and some of the Karangs were absorbed. The Karanga referred to the Hlengwe as '*mambwende*', meaning cowards. According to oral tradition the name was derived from the methods used by the Hlengwe to conquer the Karanga. Hlengwe armies using the Nguni style, raided or ambushed Karanga villages at dawn or dusk avoiding direct confrontation whenever possible. As far as the Karangas were concerned these were cowardice and unconventional methods of warfare. This was a term very unacceptable to the Hlengwe people. However, this term can be often heard even today when tempers between people of different tribes are high.

The above arguments have in a way related the Hlengwe to the Tsonga and Tongas. There was also an attempt to reveal some of the terms used to refer to the Hlengwe people. These factors help to explain why the identity of the Hlengwe people sometimes is not clear, particularly for those who are now residing in Zimbabwe. Some oral traditions claimed that the once wilderness between the Save and Limpopo rivers, from the Zimbabwean border down within 50 miles of the Indian Ocean was known to the local people as Hlengwe. The term Hlengwe meant the place where one needed help. It was a place where terror dwelt, a haunt of wild animals, of sudden death, of an ancient savagery and nameless ghosts of strange gods whose lore and rites were half forgotten.²² The description of the origins and meaning of the term Hlengwe can only be substantiated when the harsh conditions of the lowveld, characterized by incessant droughts are taken into consideration. These were the areas largely and still inhabited by the people called the Hlengwe.

18

19

20

21

22

H.A. Junod, although he strongly argued that the Hlengwe were a major group of the Tsonga-Tonga dialects, he also identifies the Hlengwe as a group with its own peculiar characteristics. He wrote that in 1913-14 members of the Hlengwe clans living near the Save River in the entrance north of the Thonga territory because of drought sent Messengers to Myali (Mwari) the Kalanga god who dwelt in a cave in Mashonaland in order to regain prosperity.²³ Some of the early written records in Zimbabwe were able to identify the Hlengwe as a particular group. S. P. Hyatt wrote about the 'Mhlengwi, a very low race suiting its surroundings.'²⁴ Karl Mauch on his journey to Inyati in 1868 in his record he recognized three major tribes in southeastern Zimbabwe. These were the Bahloekwa (Hlengwe), Vanyai (Venda and Pfumbi) and the Makalaka (Karanga-Shona). He further on stated that the language of the Hlengwe was between that of Zulu and Vanyai.²⁵ The truth was and still is that similarities are found between these languages.

The Hlengwe proper, according to oral traditions and written records collected from oral traditions by early researchers such as H.A. Junod and A.K. Smith, were the clans of Chauke, Mbezana, Mavube and Magumane. In Zimbabwe the Chauke clan is the largest and provide the paramouncy of the Hlengwe chieftainship. According to oral tradition the original home of the Hlengwe people was along the eastern bank of the Limpopo River, where they claim to have lived from time immemorial. From there they moved eastwards toward Shengane River. They were engaged in a power struggle with another Tsonga-Hlengwe clan the Sono (Hlungwani). The Hlengwe were victorious so the Sono moved eastward toward the coast and settled in the lands adjacent to Bazaruto islands. By the middle of the 18th Century Tsonga expansion occurred through the interior of southern Mozambique. During this time most of the Hlengwe activities were centred on the area near the Save River. They grabbed land from the Tonga and moved to the neighbourhood of Sofala and even parts of Teve. The general expansion of the Hlengwe during the course of the 18th Century appeared to have been at the expense of the Chopi, Tonga and Shona preceding the Mfecane by 80 to 100 years. However, the Mfecane quickened Hlengwe advancement into Zimbabwe during the last quarter of the 18th Century and the process continuing into the early years of the 19th Century. In Zimbabwe Hlengwe oral traditions refer to finding Vanyai people of the Shoko totem in the areas they occupied in Southeastern Zimbabwe. *Vanyai* meant foreigner and one wonders who was foreign in the land between Hlengwe and Vanyai. Areas north of the Limpopo were called Banyailand by whites before and after the 1890's. However, the name Vanyai might have referred to the Shona, Venda or Pfumbi or both. Today when the Hlengwe speak about Vanyai they mean the Karanga.

Most of the early written records about the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe were written by Native Commissioners in their reports after 1890. They relied largely on oral tradition. As such, the information must be carefully analysed. Interesting was the fact that the Native Commissioners identified the Hlengwe as a specific group and that the Hlengwe groups identified themselves as Hlengwe. However, the term Shangaans was assumingly in wide use and currently it is the term widely and officially used to refer to the Hlengwe. In 1903 Ekstein, the Native Commissioner of Ndanga district in a report to the South African Native Affairs Commission, reported that the southern part of the

23

24

25

district was occupied by the Hlengwe people with a sprinkling of Shangaans among them. The Hlengwe chieftainship was Tsvovani, totem Moto and country Hlengwe.²⁶ The Tsvovani dynasty is one of the Hlengwe dynasties found in the Chiredzi area. In the 1890's Peter Forestall, the Native Commissioner of the then Chibi district contributed much written information on the Hlengwe since most of them fell under his administration. In his official reports he referred to the Hlengwe as *Bushlangwe* of *Bashlungwe*.

He also made a distinction between the Hllengwe and Shangaans. When he recorded the history of the Neshuro dynasty he stated that the Bushlangwe (Hlengwe) under Chief Ndarega tried to take Neshuro's stronghold Zhanje Mountain and failed. Neshuro was also attacked by the Shangaans of Nyamande (Mzila) who did very little damage.²⁷ Nyamande or Mzila was the ruler of the Shangaani-Nguni Gaza state who time and again from Mozambique sent raiding armies into Zimbabwe. Forestall wrote about Paramount Chief Matibi an offshoot dynasty of the Rozvi who followed the system of succession as the Bushlangwe (Hlengwe) and was attacked by the Hlengwe under Chief Vurumele (Furumele) who finally settled in Matibi's country at Tshirume (Chirume) Mountain. There was a succession dispute when the first Hlengwe Chief Mateke of the Vurumele dynasty died. One of the claimants to the chieftainship by the name of Maimi with the assistance from Mzila's Shangaans managed to become chief. One time there was a dispute between the Karanga chief Shindi and his uncle over chieftainship. The uncle called for assistance from the Hlengwe, under Paramount Chief Chitanga across the Runde River.²⁸

A special account of the history of Paramount Chief Chitanga of the Hlengwe was recorded by Forrestall for the Native Affairs department. He collected oral tradition and recorded it down. Paramount Chief Chitanga and his people had originally come from the East towards the coast in present day Mozambique into Zimbabwe and one of the major aspects of economy was hunting. Ngwena was the Paramount Chief who led the first Hlengwe large groups into Zimbabwe, a result of the Mfecane. Ngwena paid tribute to a Karanga Chief Madzivire living on the Mwenezi River. Some time after settling Mirimbi and Maere chiefs under Madzivire attacked Ngwena's people. Ngwena raised an army, which drove Mirimbi and Maere and their people out of the area, which he now controlled, by force. After his death Ngwena was succeeded by his son Ndalega, whom when the first European settlers arrived was the paramount of the Hlengwe. Ndalega, or Balani his real name, unsuccessfully tried to drive out Neshuro and his people from their country. When Ndalenga's armies were beaten off he adopted the policy of co-existence and mutual respect towards Neshuro. In a succession dispute between Chitanga and Mpapa after the death of their father Ndalega, the latter appealed for assistance from Mzila and his Shangaans and killed many of Chitanga's people. Chitanga in turn appealed for assistance from the Ndebele under Lobengula and killed many of Mpapa's people. At the end a gentleman's agreement was reached where the chieftainship was shared although Chitanga was regarded as paramount. This agreement is still operating today. The Native Commissioner also gave an account of another Hlengwe group under the chieftainship of the Zengwe (Sengwe) dynasty. Sengwe and his people paid tribute to

26

27

28

Mzila and his Shangaans.³⁰ Thus Native Commissioner P. Forestell gave an account of the Hlengwe dynasties located between the Runde and Limpopo Rivers in Zimbabwe. These dynasties still exist today. He was also able to make a distinction between the Hlengwe and Shangaans.

Paramount Chief Chitanga of the Hlengwe and his people were moved away from Chivumburu Hills in 1919 by the Chartered British South Africa Company, and his country declared a white commercial ranching area. The chief and his nine kraals were settled in Matibi 1 and some of his people placed under the rule of Karanga chiefs Neshuro and Negari. This is an incident, which the Hlengwe people cannot forget and forgive the White settlers. Until the 1950'S the Runde River roughly marked the boundary between the Karanga and Hlengwe areas.

The other Hlengwe dynasties in Zimbabwe settled between the Runde and Save Rivers or across the Save River towards the Chipinge District. Early Native Commissioners and historians such as Mtetwa attempted to document these dynasties. The major Hlengwe dynasties located in this geographical area were Tsovani, Chisa, Mahenye and Ngwenyenye. R. Mtetwa stated that by the late 18th Century the Hlengwe had already infiltrated as far north as the line drawn from the point on the Mtilikwe River just north of the Runde River to the Mkwasine River. The infiltration appeared to have been largely peaceful and the area populated mainly by the Duma and on their subjects.³¹ Geographically they were nearer to Mzila and later Gungunyana's Gaza capital at Mossurise with all the probability of falling under the Gaza Nguni influence. The Gaza Mangas or *impis* also raided the Duma, Manica and parts of Mashonaland. According to oral tradition when Gungunyane moved to Bilene many Hlengwe and Ndau people accompanied him voluntarily or involuntarily. After 1889 the Gaza Nguni influence was very much reduced in the affairs of the southeast Zimbabwe.

Between the last quarter of the 18th Century and the early years of the 19th Century a group of Hlengwe people led by Mhingo advanced up the west bank of the Save River reaching Mkwasine River. He conquered and absorbed many of Chivonja people although some of them fled. Banga son of Mhingo established his own dynasty in an angle between Save and Honde Rivers in Chipinge after moving across the Runde River from Marumbini area. Some accounts claimed that the Mahenye or Banga Hlengwe people were given the land by Makoni or Garahwa's people instead of conquering it. It was possible that some of the land was conquered and some given.

After the Second World War Tsovani's Hlengwe people were moved from the Hippo Valley area when it became a commercial estate area and settled in the Ndanga District some of them falling under Duma and Karanga chiefs. They had their own headman called Magatsi who was related to the Tsovani chieftainship. The Hlengwe of Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye are today located in Chiredzi District. The Hlengwe under Chief Magudu were moved out of the state land near Triangle Sugar Estate and settled in the Nyajena area, which was extended south as compensation of land taken away when Bangala Dam was constructed.³²

The name Shangaan was used to designate the Thonga or Tsonga of which the Hlengwe were and are still the largest component. Shangaan spelt Sshangaan in current

30

31

32

orthography is now the official term used to refer to the Hlengwe people in Zimbabwe and which they have generally accepted. This orthography has gone through a process of many changes and it is not only in Zimbabwe that the Hlengwe are widely called Shangaans, but also in Mozambique and South Africa where they are found in great numbers. The origins of the word Shangaan or Tshangaane has various explanations. It was probably one of the surnames or names of Manukosi the Nguni leader who subjugated the Thonga or Tsonga people during the time of Chaka the Zulu King. Another explanation was that the name was older than Manukosi founder of the Gaza State and that it belonged to a chief who lived in the valley of the lower Limpopo River before the arrival of Manukosi. Manukosi simply adopted it as his name. There was a valley where Manukosi settled called Katschangana and the inhabitants Matshangana. Some of the conquered Tsonga groups such as the Ronga and Hlengwe did not accept to be called Shangaans because they regarded it as an insult.³³

Soshangana Manukosi's Nguni did not adopt the Tsonga language. They kept their Zulu-Nguni dialect and most of the Tsonga men learnt and used it together with their local dialects. The Gaza-Nguni were an aristocratic race and considered their language superior. They ruled their subjects by fear and sword, imposed their own culture and purposely remained aliens amongst the enslaved tribes. They had not such an ideal of vast domination, operated on much smaller scale, satisfied to take chieftainship and quickly mingled with the conquered. Although the Gaza Nguni imposed their military terminology and the Tsonga men accepted to be called Shangaans, women who are the best safeguard of the purity of the language, did not accept and learn the Nguni language. The Tsonga language and its various dialects were already spoken and together with some of its major customs formed the great bond, which bound the Tsonga clans and made them to survive the total Gaza Nguni assimilation. Even when the name Shangaans was imposed upon them the Tsonga never lost their identity. In fact some Gaza Nguni submitted themselves to Tsonga customs, such as tattooing may be out of admiration, but at one point to hide the Nguni-Zulu nationality when Chaka sent his *impis* to kill them.

One account was that the Gaza Nguni state, which was established by Soshangana Manukosi, claimed sovereignty over all people between the Limpopo, Zambezi and the Zimbabwean highveld. The kingdom had a control core of Tonga clans or later called Shangaan clans organised into regiments and dependent on cattle economy, but other periphery subject peoples and client states merely recognised Gaza overlordship and paid tribute. Some of the Hlengwe clans were some of the periphery subject peoples who also came to be called Shangaans. In 1884 when Mzila, who succeeded Manukosi, died much of the periphery states had fallen away and the old Nguni core of the state had begun to dissolve. In 1889 Gungunhana (Gugunyane) who had succeeded Mzila moved the head kraal south to Manjaccase in the Limpopo Valley.³⁴ This situation enabled the subject peoples such as the Hlengwe who had been controlled by the Shangaans to revive some features of their old identity although the name Shangaan placed on them did not die.

Soshangane Manukosi 1800 – 1859 belonged to the Ndwandwe Nguni group entered southern Mozambique after 1819 when the Mfecane started in Zululand. He sacked Maputo and went on a rampage all over Mozambique and parts of Zimbabwe. He

33

34

founded the Gaza Nguni State and assimilated many Tsonga people such as the Hlengwe and non-Tsonga such as the Ndaus of Southern Mozambique and parts of southeastern Zimbabwe. Nguni customs were imposed upon people, for example piercing of ear lobes, which many Hlengwe people have practiced for a long time since then young men were recruited into the Gaza Mangas (impis). Soshangane died in 1859 and was succeeded by Mawewe who was ousted by Mzila also called Nyamande after a civil war. Mzila established his royal kraal on the Mossurise River south of Espingabera in Mozambique and adjoining present day Chipinge District in Zimbabwe. Mzila left behind a record of raids in Zimbabwe over the Hlengwe, Ndaus and Shona groups. Some of the Hlengwe who had avoided earlier assimilation by the Gaza Nguni state of Mzila's predecessor were either conquered, made to pay tribute or pushed further into the southeast interior of Zimbabwe. Mzila died in 1884 and was succeeded by his son Gugunyana who ruled for few years at Mossurise. Gugunyana felt the urge to be near his ancestors so by 1889 he moved the royal kraal to Mandlakazi on the plains of the lower Limpopo valley in the Bila country. Many Hlengwe and Ndaus people voluntarily or involuntarily moved with the Gaza Nguni to the new royal kraal. After this date others argue that the Gaza Empire and its influence faded from the Zimbabwean history.

The truth was that it left a deep imprint on the people and the simple proof was that the Hlengwe and Ndaus people in Zimbabwe are now widely and officially referred to as Shangaans, a name that they have now accepted.

According to tradition some sections of the Rozvi settled east of the Save River in what is now Chimanimani District. They assumed the name Wasanga, under chiefs with hereditary title of Mutema. Others occupied the Dondo District under Chief Musikavanhu and were known as Wadondo. Besides these there were also other small communities all of which were said to be of Rozvi origin. All these people became very mixed with the Vandaus, or more properly the Wadanda, who extended from the Save River in the west to the Indian Ocean. The name Vandau was alleged to have been caused by the Shangaans from the fact that their greeting the Wadanda exclaim 'Ndawuwe'. Owing to the long settlement of the Shangaans in the Wadanda country, these inhabitants were disciplined and ruled according to Nguni methods and imbedded the spirit of their conquerors, preferring to call themselves Shangaans. The Wadanda language became much corrupted by the use of Nguni words, though many especially of course those of the subsequent generations, spoke only the language imposed by their conquerors.³⁵

Portuguese written records described the Wadanda as the people who formed the southern province of the Mutapa Empire and called them Sedanda. They were related to people living on the escarpment between the Mzilizwe and Rusitu Rivers whom they called Batomboto while those occupying the low country were known as Wadanda or Bagwasa or the forest people.³⁶ Oral traditions and Portuguese written records brought forward the fact that more probably the Ndaus were a group of a Shona cluster which owing to great migrations caused by the Gaza Nguni wars mixed to a large extent with the Shangaan-Tsonga of the south. In the Gaza Nguni State the Ndaus element was quite obvious among the Tsonga and a good illustration of impression made by the Ndaus people on the Shangaans. The Gaza Nguni lived in the Ndaus country for roughly 30

³⁵

³⁶

years and their capital was in the Ndau country. The Ndau as they had much closer contact with the Gaza Nguni, adopted many more Nguni customs and totems than the Hlengwe. For example, Ndau totems were changed to Nguni names, Dziva became Mlambo, Moyo to Sithole and Soko to Simango. In Zimbabwe today there is confusion as to who are the Shangaans between the Hlengwe and Ndau. However, it appears as if the Ndau are better known as Shangaans rather than the Hlengwe.

Bantuists of South Africa at one time adopted as standardized spelling for the name of the Tsonga tribe as (Shangaan-Tonga), some form of a compromise between the two tribes after their long time contact. H. P. Junod divided the Shangaan-Tonga into three main complexes. The Hlengwe-Tswa in the North, the Tonga in the Central and Ronga in the South. He acknowledged that although the Hlengwe had their own identity it was more appropriate to call them Shangaan.³⁷ A view that was later adopted by many historians and government officials, even in Zimbabwe.

The colonial Native Commissioners in Zimbabwe after 1890 have contributed much in form of written records, which they collected through oral traditions in providing information concerning the relationship between Gaza Nguni Shangaans, Ndau and Hlengwe. However, in some cases they failed to make a clear distinction between the three groups. In some few cases the Native Commissioners had first hand information when they observed or had interviews in matters concerning these groups. Meredith, the Native Commissioner of the then Melsetter District presenting his report to the acting Chief Native Commissioner in 1903 stated that south of the district was mainly inhabited by natives who spoke the Shangaan language which was of practically recent importation by that time. He listed chiefs such as Musikavanhu, Mutambara, Mapungwana, Ngorima, Chikukwa, Mutema, Sagwenzi, Garahwa and Saurombi of having been time and again raided by Shangaans under Mzila and Gungunyane up to the time of the British South Africa Company occupation of the country.³⁸ The Native Commissioner of Umtali (Mutare) District also reported that areas of chiefs Mutasa, Zimunya and Marange were common raiding grounds of the Shangaans and Ndebele, looting cattle, goats, sheep, women, children and men were killed.³⁹ A. Ross, the Native Commissioner for Makoni District on December 2, 1903 wrote to Acting Native Commissioner reporting that the Shangaans from the south used to come yearly raiding cattle, women and children until the time of occupation.⁴⁰ Native Commissioner Edwards of Murewa in December 1903 wrote to the Acting Chief Native Commissioner in Salisbury about Nyamande (Mzila's Shangaan armies) which had raided Mangwende, Nyandoro, Svosve and Murewa areas until the time of occupation in 1890.⁴¹ These extensive raids by the Gaza Nguni Shangaans on the Ndau, Manyika and Shona groups added another element on the complex definition of Shangaans. The original Shangaans who consisted of the Nguni-Zulu, later on the Tsonga-Hlengwe and later the Ndau was now added to it Shona elements.

The Native Commissioner for Chibi District, Peter Forestall, gave an account of the Gaza Nguni Shangaans and Hlengwe raids in the area between the Limpopo, Runde

37

38

39

40

41

and Save Rivers. He reported that the Shangaans subjected Gororo's people to three raids in the early 1890's and many were killed.⁴² South of the Mutirikwe River in the lowveld Gaza power reached Mwenezi and Buby Rivers and that most of the Tsonga-Hlengwe people in the area came under the Gaza sway so that the Hlengwe became known as Shangaans. According to Hlengwe oral traditions it was Chief Ngwenya who led the first major Hlengwe group into present day Zimbabwe. The Hlengwe groups moving away from Gaza Nguni raids penetrated the southeastern lowveld of Zimbabwe raiding and conquering some of the Shona groups especially the Karanga.

Oral traditions collected and recorded by Native Commissioners in the early days of settler colonization must be treated with extreme care. This was well presented by the Native Commissioner for Melsetter District, named Meredith, in 1903 when writing to the assistant Commissioner in Salisbury on the topic "The History of Native Tribes" required by the South African Native Affairs commission. He concluded his report by saying, "I do not vouch for the correctness of the information contained in this report. The natives become very suspicious when questioned on their past history and it is most difficult to get them to enter into the matter at all."⁴³

It is necessary to assess the reasons why the name Hlengwe became shadowed by Shangaan, and why the Hlengwe today have generally accepted it. The greater portion of the African tribe referred to as Shangaan today is located in the Republic of South Africa and Mozambique and a considerable population of more than 80,000 in Zimbabwe. The mode of spelling 'Shangane' and 'Shangaan' is accepted in the South African and Mozambique orthography. The Zimbabwean orthography has gone through a process of changes such as Tshangana, Changana, Vakachangana, Machangana and Shangaans. The official Hlengwe-Shangaan orthography adopted after 1980 is Shichangana although Shangaan is still widely used in writing. There are those who feel strongly that the name Shangaan and Hlengwe must be distinguished and that the name Shangaans should refer to Nguni followers or descendants of Soshangane Manukosi founder of the Gaza Nguni Empire. In Zimbabwe the Shangaan-Hlengwe occupy nearly the whole bottom of the southeastern half of the country. The reality is that the term Shangaan has definitely overshadowed the term Hlengwe.

The Hlengwe language during its course of development has now absorbed many foreign words from other languages. The Hlengwe language belongs to the Southeast Bantu groups. The group includes other Tonga dialects such as Ronga and Dzonga to which the Hlengwe language is closely related. H. A. Junod proved this by producing a detailed chart of words with similar meaning found in the four dialects.⁴⁴ The Nguni-Zulu language had a large impact on the Hlengwe as a result of the Gaza Nguni state control over the Hlengwe. Sotho, Xhosa, Swazi, Ndebele, Venda and Chopi have certain words similar to the Hlengwe. The Hlengwe language in Zimbabwe today has assimilated many Shona words especially Karanga. Before the Hlengwe people settled in Zimbabwe the relationship between the Hlengwe and Shona languages was very limited and basically that all were Bantu languages. In the early days of contact the Hlengwe language became dominant but today it is almost the reverse. The colonial educational system, settlement patterns, inter-marriage and capitalist economic system have made the

42

43

44

Hlengwe adopt Shona customs, Shona names of rivers, mountains and places. Some Hlengwe chiefs adopted Shona names, which became more popular than their real names. For example, the Hlengwe paramount chief Balani, a great raider of the Shona people became well known by his Shona nickname, which was also used officially by the settler colonial government. He became well known as Ndarega shortened from “*Ndarega vukoma ndichawuda*,” meaning that ‘He had prematurely abandoned raiding which had made him a hero’ because of the arrival of settlers in the country. In the early days, when the Hlengwe settled in Zimbabwe, intermarriage with the Shona was very much discouraged and almost a taboo, but today it is something normal. In fact the last three Hlengwe paramount chiefs were married to Shona women. Formal education after 1961 made the learning of Shona at primary level compulsory. Xitswa a dialect closely related to the Hlengwe language was taught in schools until 1961, and then stopped. Although Shishangana had been introduced in certain schools after 1985 it is taught as an optional subject.

The years 1952-61 witnessed the re-settling of Karangas from Chikwanda in Gutu and Charumbira areas among the Hlengwe in Matibi No.2 Reaerve. The European politico-economic-socio system has introduced a high rate of mobility in the country resulting with more contact among the various groups and this was the case with the Hlengwe and Karanga people. Their geographical vicinity encouraged their close contact even further. There is also evidence that the Hlengwe adopted the Karanga Mwari rain cult. In fact it is common today to hear Hlengwe elders complaining or rebuking their children for speaking what they term Shonalised Hlengwe. Shona influence on the Hlengwe had contributed to erode the definition Hlengwe and help to enhance the term Shangaan that has also a wide use outside Zimbabwe. However, the Hlengwe and Shona still maintain their major distinct characteristics of identity.

Reverend T. Houser’s research revealed that in the past to be a MuHlengwe was the highest honour one could have.⁴⁵ The situation has greatly changed today. An attempt has been made to produce what had been termed as Hlengwe characteristics. It has been claimed that Hlengwe people are obstinant, arrogant, honest, fierce, proud of themselves, their language and history. Some have said that they were conservative, very primitive and scorned trappings of civilization. It would suffice to say that these characteristics might have grains of truth, but open for debate. Many foreigners who have lived among the Hlengwe have said they did not tolerate thieves and people who revealed secrets. For example, A. Wright, who was District Commissioner for the then Nuanetsi District for ten years in an area with the largest Hlengwe population in Zimbabwe, confirmed that he could leave his car open with contents inside and return to find them undisturbed. He quoted an incident when two Hlengwe chiefs confided in him when non-Hlengwe people were settled in the district that they complained that ‘their children are teaching our children to steal’.⁴⁶ T. Houser, a Christian missionary among the Hlengwe for more that twenty years, once asked the Hlengwe elders what they regarded as the greatest sin in their society and they replied him that it was stealing.⁴⁷ The District Commissioner strongly argued that the Hlengwe did not steal from him because he was a white officer, but that it was their custom, and this argument has been

45

46

47

supported by many non-Hlengwe whites and blacks. However, some of these Hlengwe characteristics have now disappeared,

There is strong evidence as shown from the above analysis to show that the Hlengwe people had a specific identity as a group although the situation has changed today. Many people of Hlengwe origin if asked today to what tribe they belong their simple and quick answer is that they are Shangaans. Only few elders would attempt to explain that they are Hlengwe-Shangaans and chances of somebody saying that he or she is Hlengwe are almost nil. Many other non-Hlengwe groups in Zimbabwe when asked about the Hlengwe people usually raise their eyebrows or open their mouths in surprise. The name Shangaan is generally associated with the Ndaus rather than the Hlengwe. For, instance, the first Minister of Information in independent Zimbabwe, after touring the southeastern Lowveld of Zimbabwe, one of his places of call was Rutenga. The Minister was asked as to why the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation was not broadcasting the Hlengwe or Shangaan language like what was happening in Mozambique and South Africa. The Minister's reply was to seek for clarification between Ndaus, Shangaans and Hlengwe from the audience. In fact he stated that all along he had believed that Ndaus and Shangaans were one language let alone Hlengwe.⁴⁸ If it was true that the learned Minister did not know the difference, what about the peasant worker or street person very far away from the southeastern lowveld? The reality is that today in Zimbabwe the name Hlengwe has been blurred or shadowed by the name Shangaan.

The name Shangaan was a praise name and associated with the heroic part of the Gaza State. 'To be *Umtshangana* was considered an honour, and these Tsonga clans with the circle of Zulu rule began to conceive contempt for those without it.'⁴⁹ Thus, during the time of the Mfecane non-Shangaans were secure if they called themselves Shangaans, so no wonder some Hlengwe people accepted the name.

When commercial mining was introduced in South Africa, Shangaans developed a good reputation as miners on the Rand and even in Zimbabwe. The term Shangaan became popular in Johannesburg referring to all workers from the East Coast. Many employment seekers called themselves Shangaans in order to get jobs. Many former or present migrant workers in South Africa confirm this reason. Evidence in form of national registration certificates, passes, birth certificates or other identity documents which were forged, changed, or tempered with, acquire a Shangaan identity, which is very common. The late 19th and 20th centuries southeast coast labour from Mozambique who identified themselves as Shangaans acquired a good reputation in Transvaal. Therefore, in order to secure work non-Shangaans and the Hlengwe without exception called themselves Shangaans. In fact it was very easy for the Hlengwe to pass as Shangaans considering their long and close contact with the Gaza-Shangaan Nguni state.⁵⁰

During and after the Mfecane much of the Hlengwe history became tied to the Tsonga and Gaza Nguni in Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The Hlengwe of Bila who lived near the lower Limpopo River were early incorporated in the Gaza State and came to be known as Mabundela, meaning those who are scouts and opened the way for the Gaza Nguni. Groups, like the Bila might have abandoned calling themselves

48

49

50

Hlengwe for Shangaans at a very early stage. The Hlengwe groups who crossed into Zimbabwe and settled in the southeastern lowveld were raided or paid tribute to the Gaza Nguni State. For example, Mzila intervened in the succession dispute of the Hlengwe chieftainship of Chitanga and Vurumela. Sengwe one of the Hlengwe chiefs paid tribute to the Gaza Nguni State. The Hlengwe chiefs such as Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye lived fairly close to Mzila's royal kraal and sometimes they had to pay tribute or raided. In such a situation, the Hlengwe were secure if they identified themselves as Shangaans

Soshangane Manukosi had led about 10,000 wifeless warriors into the Limpopo (Vembe) valley and on to Mozambique. He found three main tribes, the Hlengwe, Ronga and Tswa. The largest groups noted by the Portuguese explorers, which occupied most of the land, was the Hlengwe. Soshangane's warriors settled, married, and convinced the Hlengwe that to be Shangaans was an honour. Some of the Hlengwe were convinced and are adamant that they are Shangaans and proud of the name.

As the 20th Century rolled on, old ties are breaking up, and the European political, economic, social and religious system exerting itself upon the Hlengwe people, the word Hlengwe is fading whilst the term Shangaan becomes more in use. Even when the Hlengwe language was officially taught in schools in Zimbabwe, it was mainly the Shitswa dialect, not really Hlengwe, and was called Shangaan not Hlengwe. Most of the literature and history taught was about the Gaza Nguni. For example, at primary level pupils were taught the heroic exploitations of Mzila and Gaza Nguni traditions not Hlengwe. Therefore, the education system helped to instill the importance of Shangaans not Hlengwe people. Although today the Hlengwe call themselves, and other people call them Shangaans, this is incorrect, and not always the case. The Hlengwe, called themselves the Hlengwe people, and the first settler Native Commissioners called them Hlengwe.

Although other terms, even derogatory ones were used to name them, they remained and officially were called the Hlengwe. Researchers on the Hlengwe strongly suggest that the term Shangaan should only be applied to the original Nguni followers of Soshangane Manukosi and have also concluded that the Hlengwe people had their own identity. A detailed study of grammatical terms and vocabulary by H. A. Junod, the Reverend S. Malale, American and Swiss missionaries revealed that the Hlengwe language was related to other Tsonga dialects such as Ronga, Dzonga, Hlanganu, Bila and Nwalungu. Gaza-Nguni-Shangaan influence though great came later on. The most important on going current process in Zimbabwe is the contact between the Hlengwe and Shona. The Hlengwe in Zimbabwe today still retain some of their major characteristics. However, for practical reasons it is logical to speak, write and refer to the Hlengwe as Shangaans. For tribal patriotism one can speak or write about Hlengwe-Shangaans.

FOOTNOTES OF ORIGINS AND DEFINITIONS OF THE HLENGWE

1. H.A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE
2. IBID
3. J. P. JUNOD – BANTU HERITAGE

4. FREI JOA DOS SANTOS – ETHIOPIA ORIENTAL 1609 IN H. P JUNOD – BANTU HERITAGE pp. 43-44
5. CAETANO MONTEZ IN A. K. SMITH – PEOPLES OF SOUTHERN MOZAMBIQUE JOURNAL OF AFRICAN HISTORY XIV4 1973
6. BERNADO DE CASTRO SOARES IN A. K. SMITH - “PEOPLES OF SOUTHERN MOZAMBIQUE” – JOURNAL HISTORY XIV4 1973 p 568
7. IBID
8. IBID
9. IBID
10. IBID
11. HAMMOND-TOOKE, D. W. (ED) – THE BANTU PEOPLES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA
12. H. A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE VOL 1
13. SMITH, A. K. – ‘PEOPLES OF SOUTHERN MOZAMBIQUE’ –JOURNAL OF AFRICAN HISTORY XIV 4 1973
14. D. BEACH – WAR AND POLITICS
15. T. V. BULPIN – THE IVORY TRAIL
16. H. A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE
17. P. FORRESTALL, N.C. – CHIBI TO MAGISTRATE CLERK – VICTORIA 17TH AUGUST 1897 NVC/1/1/1
18. P. FORRESTALL N.C. – CHIBI TO C.N.C. SALISBURY – END OF YEAR REPORT MARCH 1897 NVC/1/1
19. P. FORRESTALL N.C. – CHIBI TO C.N.C. SALISBURY END OF YEAR MARCH 1898 N9/1/1
20. HAMMOND-TOOKE D.W. (ED) – THE BANTU SPEAKING PEOPLES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA.
21. H.A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE VOL I

22. T. V. BULPIN – THE IVORY TRIAL
23. H. A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE VOL 11
24. S. P. HYATT – THE OLD TRANSPORT ROAD pg. 127
25. K. MAUCH – THE JOURNALS OF KARL MAUCH 1869- 1872
26. N. C. EKSTEIN – NDANGA TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIVE AFFAIRS COMMISSION 1903 N3 33/6/8
27. P. FORRESTALL N.C. – CHIBI TO C.N.C. SALISBURY CHIBI TRIBES 1903 N.V.C. 1/1/1
28. IBID
29. IBID
30. IBID
31. R. G. MTETWA – THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE DUMA PEOPLE OF THE SOUTHEAST OF RHODESIA FROM THE EARLY 18TH CENTURY TO 1954
32. IBID
33. H. A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE VOL 1
34. M. NEWITT – PORTUGAL IN AFRICA
35. F. W. T. POSSELT – FACT AND FICTION
36. IBID
37. H. P. JUNOD – BANTU HERITAGE
38. MEREDITH N.C. – MELSETTER TO A.C.C.C. SALISBURY 1903 N1/11-12
39. N.C.MUTARE TO C.N.C. SALISBURY REPLYING C.N.C. CIRCULAR NO 62/03
40. A. ROSS – N.C. MAKONI TO A.C.N.C. SALISBURY 2 DECEMBER 1903 N1/11-12
41. EDWARDS – N.C. MUREWA TO A.C.N.C. SALISBURY DECEMBER 1903 N1/11-12

42. P. FORESTALL – N.C. CHIBI TO C.N.C. SALISBURY YEARLY REPORT
1898 N33/6-8
43. MEREDITH – N.C. MELSETTER TO A.C.N.C. SALISBURY 1903 N3 33/6-8
44. H. A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE VOL 1
45. T. HOUSER – SOCIAL ORGANISATION – CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
11TH NOVEMBER 1969
46. A. WRIGHT – VALLEY OF IRONWOOD page 201
47. INTERVIEW WITH REV. T. HOUSER – 12 DUNSTABLE CIRCLE,
AVONLEA, HARARE
48. INTERVIEW WITH JUSTIN CHAUKE – LUNDI MISSION 1984
49. STEVENSON-HAMILTON – THE LOWVELD, ITS WILD LIFE AND
PEOPLE pg. 168
50. H. A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE VOL 1

REASONS FOR HLENGWE MOVEMENT INTO ZIMBABWE

There are various reasons for the Hlengwe incursion into Zimbabwe from Mozambique. This was a process sometimes gradual, and at times fast, depending upon events. Before 1850 the Shangani-Hlengwe were practically settled in Portuguese East Africa (now Mozambique) in the then districts of Lourenco Marques (now Maputo and Inhambane). There are no specific records concerning dates of Hlengwe advancement into Zimbabwe. However, by the time European settlers arrived in Zimbabwe in 1890 the Hlengwe were generally occupying the areas they are occupying today. The geographical area covered the North of the Runde River, the southern parts of Chipinge District and as far west as the Buby River to where it joins the modern Beitbridge – Masvingo Road. In simple reference the southeastern areas of modern Zimbabwe.

During the 17th and 18th Centuries the Tsonga-Hlengwe as they were sometimes named and the Sotho expanded rapidly throughout the southern parts of Mozambique. It would appear that this period of accelerated population dispersal was produced by fissiparous tendencies within their respective political units. That is, as the number of peoples within a chiefdom increased it was common for minor lineage clusters to break away from the main branch and seek independence in a new location. This often involved conquest of new territory, and in turn obliged some of the residents of the recently invaded land to seek refuge elsewhere. Thus within a relatively short period of time the ethnographic map of southern Mozambique experienced profound alterations. The course of the 18th Century appeared to have been of general expansion of the Hlengwe at the expense of the Chopi of Inhambane, the Tonga and Shona of (Teve and Nda). This expansion appeared to have preceded Mfecane by 80 to 100 years. The turn of the 18th century witnessed a lot of movement in inland parts of southern Mozambique. This was partly caused by expanding dynasties. There were reports of Hlengwe also referred to as Landins as far north as Sofala by 1729. There are records of Hlengwe conquest of parts of the ancient Kingdom of Teve and their expansion in the area of Mambone Prazo near the mouth of the Save River by 1770. There were also reports of Sotho movement into Mozambique at the same time.¹

During the 18th Century the area occupied by Hlengwe clans of Makwakwa and Baloyi in Mozambique was invaded by people of Sotho origin. The immigrants adopted a dialect of Tsonga similar to Hlengwe called Dzonga. Some of the Hlengwe people pushed out of this area in turn invaded areas in which mixed groups of Shona and Tonga lived. The invasion was confirmed by Chopi oral traditions who referred to the invaders as Hlengwe groups of the Makwakwa who had been scattered by the Sotho and brought with them such cultural practices as circumcision and the use of assegais.² The Chopi adopted male circumcision from the Hlengwe and the Hlengwe practise it to this day.

Therefore, natural expansion of population, invasions and counter invasions definitely led some Hlengwe groups to move towards the direction the direction of Zimbabwe. The movements must have been a gradual process before the Mfecane.

The nature of environment and linked to natural expansion of population has always played an important role as a factor in influencing population immigration. The lands

1

2

occupied by the Hlengwe in Mozambique generally received inadequate rainfall and the soils were incapable of preserving water for a long time. As a consequence of this semi-arid environment the land could only tolerate low population densities. Thus the ecology of the area would seem to have served as a stimulus to the rapid dispersal of peoples. Hlengwe immigrants fled from overcrowding; some of whom sought new land in southeastern lowveld of Zimbabwe. The factor of environment in this case was closely related to perennial droughts. The areas occupied and still occupied by the Hlengwe in Mozambique and Zimbabwe were and are still very prone to droughts. Oral and written records agree that roughly after every four years there is always a severe drought. Some of the major landmarks in Hlengwe history are marked by memorable years of famine. Long series of droughts time and again visited areas, which were occupied by the Hlengwe. Thus famine was a contributory factor in the movement of some Hlengwe groups from Mozambique into Zimbabwe. In 1875 what was known as the Famine of Magandigele left behind a record of death and bad memories among the Hlengwe. In 1894 another major famine was recorded. The years 1912 to 1914 became part of Hlengwe oral tradition in Mozambique and Zimbabwe.³ Oral traditions, which were later, documented give a detailed account of the Hlengwe responded to the great famine of 1912 to 1914. During this period one of the Hlengwe clans living near Save River in the extreme north of the Thonga territory seeing that crops were bad, game wanting and that even honey was scarce, made its male adults to each contribute a small sum of money, about ten pounds, and sent messengers to Mantonjeni at the Matopos the headquarters of the Shona Mwari cult. The messengers were sent to plead with the god for redemption from famine. The messengers were well received by the priests of Mwari, who introduced them to the god they served. A voice greeted them in Zulu. The Hlengwe messengers were given a pouch full of snuff tobacco with instructions to blow their noses, and spread the nasal mucus in their fields. They were promised abundant harvests. The Hlengwe messengers returned home and did likewise, and the precious drug, the snuff tobacco of “murimi” as it was called, had a marvelous fate. The tobacco found purchases among the Hlengwe and their neighbours. During the next four years all the Hlengwe clans performed the new rite. The rite of ‘Murimi’ probably was a conviction that a new era had set in to bring about famine to end.⁴ The historical evidence related to this event is that when Hlengwe people settled in Zimbabwe they accepted and recognized the Mwari cult to whom they paid homage, and some still do this today. The importance of this event, whether it is true or not, was that it highlighted the extent to which the Hlengwe people went in trying to find means of fighting against famine. They were prepared to pay a price, venture into the unknown and accept other people’s god as a solution against famine. The Mwari’s dwelling place was believed to be the Matopo Hills, still a sacred religious place in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the stories of the Mwari cult, its association with rain, abundant harvests and environmental reports of the messengers naturally attracted certain Hlengwe groups to Zimbabwe.

Hlengwe language is very rich in vocabulary, expressions, proverbs, idioms and sayings associated with famine. For example:- *‘nkondzo wahlengana shipopokwana’* – the traces of the little antelope recall the year of famine. *‘Lembe randlala ahe ngume*

3

4

kusuhe' - during famine we reach very far. For some Hlengwe groups, moving into Zimbabwe was one way of trying to free themselves from the scourge of famine.

The major contributive factor to Hlengwe incursion into Zimbabwe, and at a fast rate, was the Mfecane represented by Soshangane Manukosi and his successors. The events of the Mfecane are a record of oral tradition and early documents mainly based on oral tradition. In the 1830's and 1840's Mozambique south of the Zambezi River was overrun by at least three different Nguni armies. Only that commanded by Soshangane Manukosi settled and established a great sprinkling of the Gaza State with claims to sovereignty over all peoples between the Limpopo, Zambezi Rivers and the Rhodesian high veldt. The kingdom had a central core over Hlengwe territory and the Shangaans who absorbed some of the Hlengwe people were organized into regiments and dependant on cattle. The periphery subject peoples and client states merely recognized Gaza overlordship and paid tribute. Thus, the history of the Hlengwe people in the 19th Century was dominated by invasion and migrations of the Nguni Zulu conquerors who had left Tshaka during the Mfecane. The Nguni led by Soshangane Manukosi found the Hlengwe clans living according to their old Bantu style without much national unity, easily conquered them and tried to impose on them the military nation system. Many Hlengwe groups migrated into the Transvaal and Zimbabwe between 1835 – 1840's a process, which they had already started, rather than submit to Manukosi's rule. The Hlengwe clans which moved into the Transvaal when Manukosi invaded their area such as the Nkuna, Baloyi and Mavunda were fairly left undisturbed because Manukosi feared a war with the Boers who had also moved into the Transvaal. According to the chronology collected by H. A. Junod from Shinangana, an Hlengwe man of Spelonken area in the Transvaal in 1905, it was about 1838 or 1839 that Manukosi moved into the Hlengwe area and many fled away from him. Many Hlengwe people were unwilling to submit to Nguni rule so they fled to the east and northeast of the Transvaal, and some crossing the Limpopo River into Zimbabwe in the period 1835 – 1840's.⁵

When Soshangane Manukosi entered southern Mozambique after 1819 because of the political heavals in Zululand he had also sacked Maputo, and went on a rampage all over Mozambique and southeastern parts of Zimbabwe. He founded the Gaza State and assimilated many of the Tsonga, Hlengwe, Ndaui and some of the Shona people in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The conquered people were forced to accept Nguni customs such as piercing the ear lobes, and were recruited into the *Gaza mangas* or *impis*. Mzila who succeeded his father Manukosi as the new ruler after a civil war, established his royal kraal on Mossurise River south of Espungabera in Mozambique and adjoins present day Chipinge District in Zimbabwe. Mzila raided much and also received tribute from Hlengwe and Shona chiefs in Zimbabwe. Some memories of Mzila's raids among the Hlengwe people have been turned into folk tales. Ngungunyane who succeeded his father Mzila continued the raids and collection of tribute until his defeat by the Portuguese and the collapse of the Gaza State in 1899.

The Hlengwe lived in fairly close proximity to the Gaza State. As a result its influence on them was very deep. Even those Hlengwe who had moved into Zimbabwe time and again were raided or paid tribute. For example, Hlengwe chiefs such as Sengwe, Mpapa and Vurumela paid tribute to the Gaza State until the arrival of European settlers. The Hlengwe people under chiefs Tsovani and Mahenye were raided and forced

to move their crops and villages away from the main rivers to keep clear of the Gaza State.⁶

Apart from the Gaza Nguni, the Nguni of Nxaba invaded the Hlengwe people who had settled in Zimbabwe. Nxaba, according to oral tradition arrived in the area ahead of Manukosi fleeing from Zululand during the Mfecane. He had moved to the land of the Pedi in what is now Eastern Transvaal, and then across the Limpopo River into Zimbabwe because of conflict with the Boers. He raided Hlengwe clans on the lower Mwenezi River before the Boer trek under Potgieter visited the same area in 1836. Nxaba moved further north across the Runde River, and then up the Save Valley where he raided the Hlengwe people under chiefs Tsovani and Mahenye. Soshangane Manukosi expelled Nxaba and his followers from the area in about 1836.⁷

The Hlengwe groups who had moved into the Transvaal soon discovered that it was another warring ground. The Boers and Ndebele under Mzilikazi were time and again at each others throats, and Hlengwe groups were sometimes caught in the middle.⁸ Some of the Hlengwe groups decided to cross the Limpopo River and settled in the Mwenezi district. A good number of the clans in the district confirm that this was the route taken by their forefathers.⁹

The Mfecane military activities were largely responsible for the movement of many large groups at a fast rate who finally settled in southeastern areas of modern Zimbabwe.

There were also other factors associated with the Mfecane, which contributed towards Hlengwe movement in Zimbabwe. As in dynamic politics anywhere in the world, problems of succession caused conflict among the Hlengwe dynasties and contributed to some groups moving into Zimbabwe. In pre-colonial times these conflicts often led to either civil war or fissiparous tendencies within a dynasty, the unsuccessful faction of the dynasty broke away, and found its own lineage elsewhere. The Hlengwe had a special word for civil war in their language – “*mubango*”. The Hlengwe history of succession was that the eldest son of the first wife became the heir to the chieftainship. This theory did not always work in practice, so succession disputes developed. The civil war in the Gaza State from 1856 to 1862 had great ripples on the Hlengwe people. In an attempt to escape from disaster many groups moved towards Zimbabwe. According to oral tradition it was a long war of succession among the Shangaan Gaza, and only brought to an end by a general called Magugu. The chronology of Shinangana, an Hlengwe resident of Spelonken recorded in 1905, the civil war broke out after the death of Soshangane Manukosi in 1856. His death ushered in as a succession dispute between his two sons Mzila also called Nyamande and Mawewe. Mzila in the early stages of the war fled to Spelonken in the Transvaal, and later returned to win the war in about 1862.¹⁰ According to Portuguese documents Mzila won with the support of a half – caste Portuguese called ‘Albasini’.¹¹

Soshangane Manukosi after establishing the Gaza State had reigned for twenty years generally in peace in the Limpopo Valley and as far as Mosapa, the area of the Nda

6

7

8

9

10

11

people north of the Save River. It was after his death in about 1856 that the war between his sons Mzila and Mawewe started. The war of succession raged for six years in the whole area occupied by the Hlengwe people and other Tsonga groups. Oral traditions claimed that Mzila was the legal heir according to the Hlengwe and Tsonga law whose absorbed members made up the majority in the Gaza State. His brother Mawewe not of the same mother, but the same father, according to Nguni law was the legal heir. In the early stages of the war Mawewe won and he was proclaimed the King. Mzila and his followers fled to Spelonken in the Transvaal. The new king behaved in a despotic manner and became unpopular with the majority of his subjects. This opened the way for the Portuguese, especially the half caste Albasini and Ronga warriors launched an attack on Mawewe. Mzila decisively defeated Mawewe on the Save River in August 17 to 20, 1862. Mzila became the new ruler of the Gaza State, but with increased Portuguese influence among the Shangaans, Tsonga and Hlengwe, especially the role of Albasini. The civil war, which affected the Limpopo valley and the Transvaal, resulted with some Hlengwe groups scattering towards different directions and the direction towards Zimbabwe was the most popular one.

Hlengwe oral tradition collected in Zimbabwe claim that the Hlengwe chief who led the first large group into Zimbabwe by the name of Ngwena had been driven into the country from Mozambique by his elder brother in a succession dispute. Ngwena belonged to the direct line of succession, and he came to settle in Zimbabwe in the area south of the Runde River presently inhabited by Mpapa one of the Hlengwe chiefs.¹²

Succession disputes or civil wars in the Gaza State and Hlengwe groups were made more complicated or encouraged by Portuguese intervention. Hlengwe –Portuguese relationships that started in about the 16th Century was unmarked with general uneasiness, which finally exploded as the Portuguese – Gaza War of 1894. The Portuguese became involved in the internal affairs of the local people. According to Portuguese documents, their first major involvement in local affairs was during the civil war between Mzila and Mawewe in 1856 – 1862 after the death of Soshangane Manukosi founder of the Gaza State. Albasini's influence on Mzila was noticeable when he appointed indunas, and helped to resettle the people after the civil war. Albasini's policemen and white Portuguese and Boer protégées got involved in politics, served as levies and were rewarded at the expense of the local people. Like all displaced people and those who could not tolerate the new setup, some Hlengwe groups moved further into Louis Tritchardt, Pietersburg, Potgietersrus, Nylstroom, Warmbard and southeastern Zimbabwe.¹³

In 1894 war broke out between the Portuguese and the Ronga one of the Tsonga groups closely related to the Hlengwe. H. A. Junod gathered information of the Portuguese – Ronga war from his informants Mankelu, Tobane, Mboza and Vignet. He also witnessed some aspects of the War.¹⁴ Another example of Portuguese involvement in local affairs was during the Mubvesha – Mahangule war. Mubvesha called for Portuguese help and won the war.¹⁵ These military activities took place in areas settled

12

13

14

15

by the Hlengwe and their neighbours. Military activities displaced people and made people insecure. Thus, weaker groups had to move away from the center of events.

Portuguese active military involvement in internal affairs was well illustrated in their relationship with the Gaza Nguni State. It was during the reign of Gungunyane that Portuguese presence in Mozambique became a major threat to the Gaza Nguni State. A number of factors contributed to the sour relationship between the Portuguese and the Gaza State, which finally broke out into an open war in 1894. It must be remembered that by this time European partition and colonization of Africa had started in earnest after the Berlin Conference ten years before. In 1885 Gungunyane had signed a treaty with the Portuguese, which appeared to guarantee his independence and sovereignty of his state. In 1889 he moved his royal kraal to the south at Manjacasse in the Limpopo valley. Among other factors this was attributed to his desire to regain control over southern people who were gravitating towards the Portuguese port of Lourenco Marques (Maputo) and the allurements of labour tours to South Africa. The occupation of the highveld by Rhodes' British South Africa Company complicated the situation for Gungunyane. The situation was made worse by the rivalry between Rhodes and the Portuguese. The demarcation of land between Rhodes and the Portuguese left most of the Gaza State in Portuguese territory. Gungunyane was also deprived of his tributary Hlengwe chiefdoms of Sengwe, Mpapa, Mahenye, Tsovani and even Shona groups now under Rhodes' rule. On the other hand the Portuguese were uncertain of how to deal with the formidable military Gaza State. There was also conflict of interest when both the Portuguese and Gaza State continued to collect tax or tribute from the same people. Some people took advantage of the situation by appealing for protection from both the Portuguese and Gaza State. When war finally broke out some of Gungunyane's people sided with the Portuguese, including one of his advisors who was also his uncle named Nkunzu. It was a war between modern firearms versus traditional weapons, so Gungunyane was defeated. The Gaza State capital Mandlakasi was burnt and Gungunyane was sent to exile at the Canary Islands where he died.

After the defeat and capture of Gungunyane the Gaza State made an attempt to regain their sovereignty through a revolt led by Magigwane, the commander-in-chief of Gungunyane's *impi* (army). However, the Portuguese relying on superior weapons and local support managed to suppress the revolt. They divided the Gaza State into military zones and districts of Lourenco Marques and Inhambane. Although the Portuguese – Gaza War took place when large groups of Hlengwe people had already moved into Zimbabwe it was relevant in that more people came and pushed those who were already in the country further into the interior. However, the situation of more Hlengwe people coming was controlled by the British South Africa Company.

According to oral tradition documented by P. Forestall, the Native Commissioner of Chibi District on from the early 1890's the first Hlengwe chief to cross from Mozambique into Zimbabwe with his followers was Chikovele, who settled south of the Save River on the boundary between Mozambique and Zimbabwe. He was succeeded by his son Matsena. After Matsena's death his son Chigombe took over, then Hokwane, Shingwanza and Ngwena. Ngwena was driven further into the interior by his older brother after a succession dispute, although it was claimed that he belonged directly to have led the first Hlengwe large group to settle in an area south of the Runde River at present occupied by the Hlengwe chief Mpapa and his people in modern day Zimbabwe.

Another large Hlengwe group was led by Chief Mateke son of Hokwane who left with a portion of the tribe from Mozambique and settled in the Karanga area of Chief Chirongedze in modern Zimbabwe district of Beitbridge. He established the Vurumela Hlengwe chieftainship.¹⁶

By the end of the 18th Century other large Hlengwe groups had reached the lower Save valley. The Hlengwe led by Zhari, probably from an area of upper Chengane River between the Limpopo and Save Rivers had taken a northwesterly direction. The line of Zhari's advance took his Hlengwe people across the Save, Runde, Chiredzi and Mkwazine Rivers conquering or assimilating the Ndau, Duma and Rembetu groups whom they called Vanyai or foreigners. The split of the Zhari group probably led to the establishment of other Hlengwe dynasties such as Tsovani, Mahenye, Chisa and Ngwenyenye now located in the Chiredzi District in modern day Zimbabwe.¹⁷

Other Hlengwe groups conquered the southeastern lowveld from small Shona speaking groups by the end of the 18th Century. In the end Hlengwe clans under their rulers such as Chitanga, Mpapa, Dumbu, Vurumela, Sengwe and Chilonga took much of the land between the Mwenezi, Limpopo, Runde and Save Rivers. In these areas the Shona (Karanga) were assimilated or dominated. The Hlengwe language became dominant in the Zimbabwean lowveld.¹⁸ The root cause of the Mfecane was an environmental crisis, which brought about military and social changes, which lead to a dispersal and resettling of people of Southern Africa. Recent researchers such as T. Houser have confirmed that the southeastern parts of Zimbabwe since the end of the 18th Century and even today has been occupied by large groups of vaHlengwe people driven into Zimbabwe by Nguni war parties from Zululand.¹⁹

Therefore it can be concluded that there were various reasons, which contributed towards Hlengwe settlement in Zimbabwe, but the most important was the Mfecane and its ripple effects.

16

17

18

19

FOOTNOTES FOR HLENGWE MOVEMENT INTO ZIMBABWE

1. J. H. BANNERMAN – ‘TOWARDS THE HISTORY OF THE HLENGWE
2. A. K. SMITH – PEOPLES OF SOUTHERN MOZAMBIQUE
3. H. A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE VOL 11
4. IBID
5. IBID
6. EKSTEIN – N.C. NDANGA TO C.N.C. SAILSBUY NAZ N3/33/8
7. VAN DER MERWE – NOOG VER NOORD
8. IBID
9. INTERVIEW WITH MASUNGWINI MATSILELE CHAUKE – MWENEZI
DISTRICT
10. H. A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE VOL. 11
11. IBID
12. P. FORRESTALL – N.C. CHIBI TO C.N.C. SALISBURY DECEMBER 1903
N/3/33/8
13. H. A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE VOL 11
14. H. A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE VOL 1
15. IBID
16. P. FORESTALL – N.C. CHIBI TO C.N.C. SALISBURY DECEMBER 1903
N3/33/8
17. N.C. NDANGA TO SOUTH AFRICAN NATIVE AFFAIRS COMMISSION
1903 N3/33/8
18. D. BEACH – THE SHONA AND ZIMBABWE
19. T. HOUSER – MISMANAGED STRATEGY REASONS FOR HLENGWE

HLENGWE POPULATION

Population statistics are a factor for a group of people to be recognised in any society or nation. Therefore it is necessary to give an account of the Shangaan-Hlengwe population particularly in Zimbabwe, a gradual expansion appear to have been the rule for population, since evolution of agriculture in the world. However, it has been very difficult for a long time to ascertain the population of African communities until the introduction of colonisation and literacy. In fact, among the Shangaan-Hlengwe it was regarded as taboo to count people. One of the earliest census to be taken among the Shangaan-Hlengwe was in April 1904 in the Transvaal and an estimation of 82,325 to 100,000 was made. The census officials also noted that many young men were not in the kraals, but working in the mines and farms¹. At the same period estimates were made of the Shangaan-Hlengwe in Mozambique, these were recorded in the Mozambique Year Book. The figures were compiled from the Lorenzo Marques districts of Morakweni, Manyisa, Sabi, Mapundzu (Khoseni) and the old region of Gaza, which included Bileni, Makwakwa, Baloi and Hlengwe. The approximate figure was that the Shangaan-Hlengwe in Mozambique at the beginning of the 20th century numbered about 750,000². In Zimbabwe many books have made estimates for African population of 350,000 to 500,000 in 1890. No census was arrived by projecting backwards, an apparent increase from 1901 of 489,600 to 692,921 in 1911. A population figure of 750,000+ or 100,000 would represent a relative accurate of the period 1911 to 1926. About 20,000 Ndebele would represent the actual Nguni - Sotho immigration of the 18,405 and a few thousand of the southeastern Lowveld the Hlengwe would represent the immigrant stock³. The earliest census population figures were made by the Native Department through the Native Commissioners at the tax collection. The early census figures must be cautiously accepted. There was a natural tendency by the people to avoid being counted because census officials were also tax collectors. However, with the passing of time and the Native Commissioners growing familiar with districts, language and customs census efficiency also improved.

P. Forrestall the Native Commissioner of Chibi District between 1896 to 1921 submitted yearly population statistics to the Native Department. The largest population of Shangaan-Hlengwe in Zimbabwe, then Southern Rhodesia, was found in his district. The format in which he presented his population figures was to indicate the name of the chief, tribe and statistics. He was aware of the problems he encountered at arriving at exact figures so he sometimes made estimates. P. Forrestall's first official census figure of Shangaan-Hlengwe in 1904 was 6,429. The second census done in 1907 was 8,500 and in 1911 it was 10,000. After 1921 he estimated that the Shangaan-Hlengwe population throughout the whole country after liaisoning with his colleagues in the Ndanga and Chipinge district was about 10,500. He described the increase in population since the beginning of the century and that there was an improvement in the efficiency of the Native Department⁴. In 1931 C. M. Doke made a presentation to the Southern Rhodesia

1

2

3

4

Legislative Assembly on the African Dialects in the country. He recorded the district and population figures Bikita - 750, Victoria - 900, Chibi – 5,000, Matibi No 1 – 4,032 and Matibi number 2 – 1,466.

Therefore the total population of the Shangaan-Hlengwe was estimated to be about 165,598⁵. In 1938 H. P. Junod estimated that the Shangaan-Hlengwe population in Mozambique, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia numbered 209,000 located in Southern Rhodesia⁶.

According to the Tabex Encyclopaedia Zimbabwe published in 1987 the total number of Shangaan-Hlengwe speakers in Zimbabwe was 63,169⁷. Recent estimates of the Shangaan-Hlengwe population are dated back to 1990. In 1990 the District Administrator for Mwenezi District, T. Chigiga, was reported by The Herald as having said that the population of the district was 11,000⁸. The Shangaan-Hlengwe make about a quarter of the total population and this would give a figure of 27,500. Mwenezi District is the second area in Zimbabwe with the largest Shangaan-Hlengwe population. However, in an article entitled ‘Mwenezi Businessmen Overcharging Villager’s’ a Herald reported estimated the population of Mwenezi District to be nearly 250,000 people⁹. This would give the Shangaan-Hlengwe population to be 62, 500. Chiredzi District has the largest Shangaan-Hlengwe population in Zimbabwe today. In a Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation’s television interview on the third of January 1991, the then District Administrator of Chiredzi District estimated the population of the district to be 75,000¹⁰. Three quarter’s of the total population were Shangaan-Hlengwe, giving a figure of 56,250. The Chiredzi District Administrator Mr Michael Tavaruva in the Herald of April 1995 in an article entitled ‘Masvingo-Beitbridge Round Up, Bridge set to stimulate development in Chiredzi’ said that the newly amalgamated Chiredzi Rural District had 80,000 people living south and 70,000 living north of the Runde River. The total population of the district was 150,000 people¹¹. If the Shangaan-Hlengwe made up half of the total population this would give a figure of 75,000.

If the Shangaan-Hlengwe population in Chiredzi, Mwenezi, Beitbridge, Chipinge, Bikita, Chimanmani, Chivi and Nyajena districts are added together an estimation of a population in Zimbabwe today of about plus or minus 80,000 would not be far from being correct. Therefore, if population statistics are a factor for a group of people to be recognised in a nation, then the Shangaan-Hlengwe people as a group has its own identity. For example the Shangaan-Hlengwe language is now officially recognised as one of the minority languages, it can be taught in primary schools where the majority of pupils are Shangaan-Hlengwe speakers and is has been allocated time in the Zimbabwe Corporation Radio services. However, one major handicap in promotion of Shangaan-Hlengwe identity is the lack of adequate, reasonable and well-researched material.

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

FOOTNOTES – HLENGWE POPULATION

- 1) JUNOD, H. A. - THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE Vol. 1
- 2) IBID
- 3) BEACH, D. - THE SHONA AND ZIMBABWE.
- 4) FORRESTALL, P.
N.C. CHIBI TO C.N.C. SALISBURY 1896 - 1921 NVC 1/1/1 - NVC 1/1/9
- 5) DOKE, C.M. - UNIFICATION OF THE SHONA DIALECT.
- 6) JUNOD, H.P. - BANTU HERITAGE.
- 7) TABEX ENCYCLOPAEDIA ZIMBABWE.
- 8) THE HERALD 'MWENEZI HIT BY FOOD SHORTAGE'.
19-12-90.
- 9) THE HERALD 'MWENEZI BUSINESSMEN OVERCHARGING
VILLAGERS'
24-04-92.
- 10) PFUMOJENA, L. DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR CHIREDDI Z.T.V.
INTERVIEW CHIREDDI 3.01.91.
- 11) THE HERALD 'MASVINGO-BEITBRIDGE ROUND UP'.
26.04.95

HLENGWE POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Hlengwe political system had its own hierarchy and peculiarities before the introduction of European colonialism. The family village (*muti*) with its family head formed the bases of the social and political organism. The clans, roughly a gathering of all villages (*miti*) reproduced all the features of the village life under the administration of the sub chief or headman (*hosana*). The highest political level and authority on the heirarchy was the tribe under the chief (*Hosi*), who ruled an area of any size (*tiko*) country. It must be noted that the areas ruled by the different political rulers had no definite drawn boundaries although physical features such as rivers, streams or range of mountains served as recognised boundaries. The chief possessed great authority, but he was not to become a tyrant or dictator. He was expected to govern for the benefit of his subjects.

The idea of a nation before European colonialism among the Hlengwe is open to argument. One argument is that the nation (*tiko*) was not a big tribe numbering many thousand people, but a special clan to which the Hlengwe belonged. There was no feeling of national feeling unity in the tribe as a whole. Its unity consisted only in a language and certain customs, which were common to all clans. Thus the true national unit was the clan or tribe. The Nation was an enlarged family and everyone depended on the headman and the chief.¹ Political ties might have been loose among the Hlengwe, yet there was still a definite loyalty to the clan and tribal ties under the chief. Although H.P. Junod accepted that the Hlengwe nation was like a family in a large scale, he also argued that the clan and tribe in times of peace were a combination of monarchy and democracy.² Another argument is that the Gaza Nguni brought a wholesale militarisation among the Hlengwe, which represented a type of society quite different from the past. This created the centralisation of the chief's power.³ Before European colonialism the chief was the earth and supreme judge. He received from his subjects tribute in form of labour, portion of certain game and in kind. Counsellors who were usually close relatives checked his power. He could not go against the majority of counsellors and was not above the law. Possibly, the powers of the chief were close to what is now described in modern times as democratic centralism.

Before the impact of the Mfecane the death of the Hlengwe chief was surrounded by mystery. His counsellors took his place in management of affairs. It was after a year that his death was officially announced. He was buried at night, without any lamentations. After the burial, all those who washed and anointed his body, the gravediggers and his wives went through a process of traditional purification. The fire of the royal hut which was a symbol of the chief's power and loyalty of his subjects was not kindled in the usual and ritual way, but was kept on burning. The cause of the death was formally announced to the heir and counsellors. However, the truth would have leaked out although not openly spoken about. The chief's grave did not differ from that of ordinary people. Sometimes the grave was levelled to prevent the body from being exhumed by enemies to make charms. The long silence before the announcement of the

1

2

3

death of the chief was purported to prevent enemies from taking advantage of the confusion. It also gave chance to the counsellors to prepare for the installation of the new chief and prevent bloody contests. However, this was not always the case, sometimes succession disputes took place. The Gaza Nguni and the Mfecane introduced new aspects in the burial and coronation of the Hlengwe chief. The time span between the death of the chief and the official announcement of his death were greatly reduced. During the time of the Mfecane it was illogical for a tribe to go on for a long time without a leader. It was an era marked by fighting. A tribe needed a leader to mobilize and rally around. The Mfecane introduced a lot of royal ceremonies in the burial, mourning and coronation of a chief.

Religious ceremonies and taboos accompanied the coronation of the chief. These began from the death of his predecessor. It must be pointed out that some of these ceremonies have been changed or abandoned with the passing of time and largely as a result of the impact of European colonialism. By Hlengwe tradition, the death of the chief was kept a secret among the great counsellors and his wife for a month. However, adult members of the royal family and community could imagine correctly that the chief was dead. The great counsellors, mature sons, his first wife and mature nephews, that is, sons of his aunts and sisters, did the burial in secrecy. Then the death was officially announced and the mourning period would last for a month. During this time people were not allowed to work in their fields, all other major ceremonies were suspended and the beating of the African drum with singing was prohibited. The idea that people abandoned farming activities for a month spells economic disaster to a modern person. However, it must be noted that farming among the Hlengwe was not the only means of survival. Large numbers of cattle and goats, hunting and gathering of fruits heavily supplemented it. The coronation of the new chief would take place after a year. A regent, who was the late chief's nephew, his aunt's son ruled during the time when the chief was officially pronounced dead and when his successor was crowned. According to tradition the Hlengwe chiefs were buried in sitting position unlike the common people. They were buried in caves if available or on anthills. White settler rule has made it impossible not to announce the death of the chief immediately. Some chiefs have died in hospitals, clinics or while they were receiving medical treatment at home. They are now buried in coffins. The only traditional aspects left are that the mourning still lasts a month and the appointment of his successor after a year or more. The long time span between the death of the chief and the coronation of the new chief was a deliberate procedure. It was an invitation to the potential candidates to campaign. The campaigning was not public as in modern times. It was done secretly with the potential candidates consulting the influential healers, spirit mediums and the regent. According to Hlengwe tradition the eldest son succeeded his father and this would render campaigning irrelevant. However, this was not automatic because of other intervening factors. There are many concrete examples of these intervening factors. In some cases the eldest son proved to be highly irresponsible or a criminal while the father was still alive so he was disinherited. So when the chief died, this kind of a situation provided room for campaigning. There were many cases when the rightful heir was very young to take over when the regent's office expired. For instance, when Paramount Hlengani Ndongo Chitanga died the rightful heir Feleni was very young. Thus, two of his brothers were to

become chiefs before Feleni could take over the chieftainship.¹ The regent had a given time because a long time would give him an opportunity to consolidate his position to begin a new dynasty. After the introduction of the European capitalist economy some of the chief's sons went to work in the cities or mining centers. When their father died, particularly after a short illness, it was hard to locate them or their hearts might have been stolen by the new life. For example, when Paramount Ndarega Balani died, his eldest son, the rightful heir had gone down to South Africa with Reverend Joseph Mboweni in 1895. He was not located and his other son Hanyani became the chief.² Some disgruntled claimants to the chieftainship left with their followers or alone before the coronation day having gathered through daily or general discussions that their chances were nil. They believed that they had been deprived their right, and such an occurrence was not rare owing to irregularities which sometimes took place in succession. For example, after the death of Paramount Chief Hanyani Chitanga in 1935, one of his eldest son's by the name Hlayisi who was a claimant to the chieftainship decided to leave for South Africa for ever. He had learnt that his chances of becoming a chief were almost nil because of the status of his mother compared to the other sons from the chief's other wives. The coronation procedure reduced chances of succession disputes developing into serious wars.

The long period between the death of the chief and the coronation of the new chief offered adequate time to prepare for the coronation. The coronation of the new chief was and still is one of the greatest ceremonies of the Hlengwe people. The ancestral spirits had to be consulted together with the spirit mediums and traditional healers to diagnose the death of the chief. The organisers had to make sure that there was plenty of food, meat and beer. It was to be a ceremony of the people, that is, his subjects and neighbours. A few days before the coronation day, sacrifices were made to the gods and ancestors for their blessing in choosing the right person and for the ceremony to be successful. The royal family council composed of the first wife, uncles, older relatives, nephews, traditional healers and spirit mediums who presided at the coronation ceremony. The regent who was the nephew played a very important role because he had to hand over the powers. Those who play specific roles at the ceremony are known. For example, at the coronation of every new Paramount Chief Chitanga, the Mpapa chieftainship who are their relatives, after considering all other factors finally decide who is to be the Paramount Chief. The Mpapa chieftainship are called 'papa' by the Hlengwe, meaning father because they anoint the paramount chief. However, today the role of the traditional council at the coronation ceremony is overshadowed by officials of the Ministry of Local Government and National Housing. After 1897 and before independence in 1980 it was presided by the Department of Native Affairs.

After contact and influence of the Gaza Nguni a military element was introduced in the coronation ceremonies. The new chief would wear a military uniform and accoutrements. These comprised ostrich feathers on his head, strands of hair from cows' tails on his biceps and calves of his legs. The army participated in the war dance called (*gila*), brandishing their weapons, jumping and imitating acts of prowess on the battlefield. The coronation appeared to be a purely military affair. It was a sort of an oath of loyalty taken by the people to their new chief and by the chief to his people. This

1

2

was accompanied by singing, dancing, eating and drinking.

The military aspect, according to oral tradition, disappeared with the introduction of European colonialism. The climax of the coronation ceremony today is the dressing of the chief with the chieftainship regalia including the gown, hat and insignia introduced by the European colonialists. The Minister of Local Government and National Housing or his representative does this. However, feasting still takes place even today.

Before the impact of the Gaza Nguni and European colonialism the Hlengwe chiefs were generally scantily attired as were their subjects. Their life style was simple. The regal paraphernalia of the Hlegwe chiefs became more brilliant when the colonialists dressed them in robes or gowns, helmets or hats and metal insignias after 1897. However, the new official dress for the chiefs was accompanied by the loss of their traditional powers.

Royalty in the minds of the Hlengwe before European colonialism was a vulnerable and sacred institution. Respect for the chief and obedience to his commands was universal. His prestige was maintained not by a great display of riches and power, but by the idea that as a body lives by nourishment taken through its head so is the life of the nation which was sustained through its chief. The Hlengwe expressed their belief in their chief by images, which were very striking not abstract words. The chief was the earth. He was the rock by which his country was sustained. He was the bull; without him the tribe could not bring forth. He was the husband; the country without him was like a woman without a husband – a widow. If a dog barked, if there was no man, nobody will dare to go out of the hut and ascertain the danger. A clan without a chief had lost its reason (*hungukile*) and it was dead because nobody could call the army together. The chief was the great warrior (*nhenha*). He was the forest from whom the people hid and from whom they asked the laws. The counsellors (*tinduna*) could not proclaim laws.

In return for the respect and position he held the chief did his best to maintain and increase his prestige. He was not supposed to be too familiar with his subjects. He did not eat with his subjects except with certain favourites. When an ox was slaughtered the chief chose amongst the various joints those which he preferred. Some of the Hlengwe chiefs went out of their way to demand public reports from their subjects and symbolic acts of loyalty. In the Tembe capital men crawled on their knees before the chief shouting '*ngolanyama*' meaning the great lion.¹ Paramount Chief Maranele Chimamise Chitanga 1960 – 1981 made all men who entered his home to pronounce at his gate "*Hlezana – Mlilo*" a clan praise name. The chief was the only one who was addressed by the royal salutation "*Hlezana*" and it was an offence for anybody to accept the salutation. Visitors at the chief's capital were supposed to sit at the gate and then loudly salute "*Hlezana – Mlilo.*" Then one of the counsellors charged with affairs of visitors would also echo the same salutation. If there was no echo from the court, visitors did not enter. The counsellor after echoing would then go to the gate to welcome the visitors and announced them to the chief. The chief often received visitors affably, provided them with food and accommodation when necessary. This was one major reason why subjects paid tribute or taxation to the chief in form of grain and meat. These were used to feed numerous visitors at the chief's court. The enforcement of protocol of salutation at the gate depended on particular chiefs.

1

It was taboo to shake hands with the chief. A true event is related of a boy of five years old who received a thorough hiding from his mother for having innocently stretched his small hand to shake the hand of Paramount Chief Risimati Chitanga.¹ Probably the taboo was based on the fear that the chief possessed special medicines with which he rubbed himself or swallowed to protect himself against enemies. He was dangerous.

According to oral traditions, in order to increase this salutary fear some chiefs had the curious custom of disappearing from the public for some time known as (*tuba*) in Hlengwe. They deliberately went into hiding. They disappeared to some unknown destination during the cover of darkness. This was intended to create a deep impression on the imagination of the people. The current political and social order can not allow this to happen.

Some Hlengwe chiefs were known for their democratic ways of dealing with their common subjects. For example, Nwangudzwana, chief of the Mwamba group used to eat with all his men who came at the court.² Chief Muchini Risimati Chitanga 1954 – 1960 left behind a record of humility and easy contact with his subjects.³

Before the influence of European colonialism, the village of the Hlengwe chief was the tribe's nerve center. The chief's village was called (*tsindza*) meaning capital and it was larger than the ordinary village (*muti*). Sometimes the chief's huts were built on the same lines as his subjects and it was possible for the chief's village to be smaller than those of his subjects. The young men of the tribe contributed to the building of the chief's village and maintenance. A new chief was expected to build a new capital or renovate his old village into a capital. In most cases a high, and or thorny circular fence surrounded the chief's capital. A Portuguese document written by a military commandant to the prelate of Mozambique at the end of the 18th century described the life style of the Hlengwe chiefs in the vicinity of Delagoa Bay in Mozambique in grandiloquent terms. "They are very powerful, very rich, most honorable, generous and respected."⁴ The account may have a good deal of truth, yet on the other hand it might manifest exaggerations. When the Hlengwe moved into Zimbabwe, and raids were the order of the day, chiefs and headmen established their capitals on hills, mountains or kopjes. The Hlengwe chiefs took these mountains from defeated Karanga's mountains that were hard to climb, or with large caves, became popular as capitals for security reasons. In most cases the chief or headman with members of the royal family built their huts on top of the mountain. In times of an attack possibly by the Ndebele or Gaza Nguni, subjects would join their masters on the top of the mountain or inside the caves. These were very isolated cases because the Hlengwe paid tribute or raided the Karanga. The location of the chief's houses on the top of the mountain became a symbol of authority compared to his subjects. All the Hlengwe chiefs and headmen are associated with certain mountains, hills or kopjes in Zimbabwe where they were dislodged by white settlers in 1890. A special place was created at the capital where the chief's men loved to meet in the morning and afternoon. They came to pay respects to the chief, (*kuya bandla*), meaning to go to the court. It was at this spot where they discussed various

1

2

3

4

issues during the presence of or absence of the chief. It was the same spot that cases were tried and judgement passed. This place was never short of food, particularly meat and beer. What the subjects paid in form of tribute or taxation and fines a lot of it was consumed at the court. This partly attracted the daily visits of some men rather than serious business.

Before the introduction of robes, hats and metal insignias as symbols of chieftainship by European colonialists, chiefs possessed objects or items, which they personally kept and passed to their successors. These were the symbols of chieftainship, and only the reigning chief possessed the objects. The public did not see these objects since members of the royal council, his traditional healers or magicians, took them away from the chief at his deathbed. The objects of chieftainship were secretly passed to the new chief on the eve of the coronation after if had been treated by medicine by the traditional healers.

The mystery and taboos that surrounded the objects of chieftainship made the subject people believe that the chief possessed it when they had not visibly seen the object. Hlengwe oral tradition is rich with tales concerning mysteries, magic and powerful objects possessed by chiefs. The major purpose of the objects was to protect chiefs against their enemies, and to give them a long life. It was also believed that these objects particularly the (*mphulo*) was a collective possession and powerful magic that was a means by which the clan or tribe resisted its enemies and conquered them. The (*mphulo*) before European influence occupied the very center of Hlengwe national life.

The Hlengwe Shiluvane chieftainships kept a powerful medicine called (*ritlhatlha*) which was bequeathed from predecessor to successor. Among the Hlengwe clan of Khosa, the chief possessed a (*mhamba*). This was a mysterious object that the clan had always possessed from time immemorial, “when the Ba-Xhosa emerged from the reed”. Nobody might see it except the chief who kept it hidden in a hole amongst rocks. His uterine nephew (*ntukulu*) was the only other person who knew the place. When it was necessary to use it the chief and his nephew were the only ones who approached the place. At the beginning of the 20th century the then chief Ntshongi, Paramount of the Khosa clan, reported that he had never seen it since it got lost somewhere in the passage of history.¹

The most common object possessed by the Hlengwe chiefs, even among those who settled in Zimbabwe, was a type of a stone, which they swallowed at coronation and vomited when they died. According to Hlengwe oral tradition and folktales, which were imparted to every child, particularly boys, the stone, which was swallowed by the chief, was found in the stomach of a crocodile. It is believed that crocodiles swallow a stone each year when the rainy season comes on. A long time ago, according to oral tradition a crocodile was cut open, one of the stones was chosen, smeared with special medicines and swallowed by the first chief. Then it became a tradition to be passed, strongly believed, and even today some still believe, that the stone remained in the body of the chief. It was his head and life. When the stone was passed in his stool for the first time this was a premonitory warning. When it occurred for the second time this was a clear announcement that the chief was about to die. One version of the oral tradition was that there was no warning, but when the chief was about to die he vomited the stone. In both cases members of the royal council, the uterine nephew and the medicine man quickly

took it. Then it was treated with medicine and passed to the next chief on the day of coronation.

In other Hlengwe clans, for example the Chitanga Chauke who holds the Hlengwe paramouncy in Zimbabwe and the Nkuna, the crocodile stone in the course of history was replaced by what was called (*ndzalama*). In the Hlengwe language the word (*ndzalama*) designates a kind of a bright copper button which the Pedis (Sotho) of the Palabora Mine in South Africa used to make and sell. (*Ndzalama*) also means a large size bead of gold. It also denotes anything very precious. Whatever, it was, chiefs swallowed the (*ndzalama*) which protected them against their enemies, gave them long life and protected the tribe. They vomited it out when they were about to die, and it was passed on to the next chief. If there was any mishap in the process of the vomiting and swallowing, whoever convinced the people that he had swallowed the (*ndzalama*) was accepted as the new ruler.

The Hlengwe tribe is dominated by the Chauke totem name or clan found in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa. In Zimbabwe, the Hlengwe paramouncy chieftainship, all the Hlengwe chiefs and headmen are all Chauke's. Therefore, it is necessary to explain the Chauke chieftainship. According to oral tradition, before the creation of totems, a daughter of a Hlungwani chief was married to a would-be Chauke man. This was in an area called Swikhundwini “Ka Bileni”, in modern day southern Mozambique. At a very advanced stage the chief became very ill. It so happened that his sons, members of the royal family (Sono) and royal council neglected him during the time of his illness. His daughter, who was married to a would-be Chauke man, was the only one who nursed him until the day of his death. When the chief vomited the precious stone (*ndzalama*) and breathed his last breath, the daughter was the only one present. She took the (*ndzalama*) and hid it in the shell of the country snail. Country snail shells were commonly used as containers of valuable small items in those days. After putting the precious stone in the shell she then placed on top of it a burning wood charcoal with an excuse that she was taking it to start a fire at her own home. By the time the word went around that the chief was dead, it was too late for the members of the royal family to locate the precious stone. The daughter denied any knowledge of the (*ndzalama*). The members of the royal family searched everywhere possible until they gave up. The dead chief's daughter later on confided with her husband and made their baby boy to swallow his grandfather's precious stone. The husband consulted his kith and kin, who in turn consulted traditional healers and magicians. The mother's relatives were informed of the new development, and they had no choice since it was a result of their known gross negligence. This was also supported by the great traditional healers and magicians in the area. Hence the Hlungwani (Sono) lost their precious stone and chieftainship to their nephew. The family of the young baby boy who became the chief and paternal relatives called themselves (*chioki cha ndilo ke chinyori cha humba*). Literary translated – (*chioki*) – one who carries fire (*ndilo*)-fire (*chinyori*) – inside of a shell, (*humba*) – country snail ‘One who has carried fire in a country snail's shell). This was shortened to CHAUKE.

Tradition has it that fire was a taboo to the Chauke's before this eventful day. Their use of fire was very minimal or nil. From this day onwards fire and the country snail became very valuable to the Chaukes because they brought to them chieftainship which they still hold until today. The boy who became the first Chauke chief is referred

to as (*Chimita Ndzalama*)– one who has swallowed the precious stone is historically known as (*Chinyori cha humba*). This is oral history; the true facts are that the Hlungwani today are culturally regarded as traditional matrimonial uncles of the Chauke's, and the Chauke's the patrimonial nephews of the Hlungwani. The Hlungwanis are no longer chiefs and the Chauke are chiefs. However, at coronation the Hlungwani's play a special role of mothers and they are greatly respected.

The Hlengwe paramount Chief Hanyani Chitanga who died in 1935 is believed to have been the last one to swallow the (*ndzalama*). When he died his eldest son Hlengani had joined the Native Department Police and all his mature sons were away. The impact of the White Settler colonialism had destroyed the old Hlengwe political structure. However, his uterine nephew by the name of Ngazi Mashimbwe who became a regent before the next chief was crowned was present when the chief died. The members of the Chitanga royal family even now believe that Ngazi was responsible for the disappearance of the (*ndzalama*). Unfortunately, he could not imitate the procedure taken by the first Chauke chief because the political order had changed. The White Settler colonial government through the Department of Native Affairs was now responsible for the installation of chiefs. Thus with or without swallowing the precious stone Hlengani who had already a good record as a police sergeant in the Department of Native Affairs was installed as the next Hlengwe Paramount Chief Chitanga in Zimbabwe in 1936.¹ Others believe that apart from the new political order Ngazi failed to become the new chief and he had no backing of traditional healers and magicians. For a longtime there was animosity between the royal family members and Ngazi, even their descendants. From 1936 – 1997 five chiefs reigned as paramount Chief Chitanga. An average of about 12 years of reign. The same period from 1935 going backwards had only 3 paramount chiefs an average of 30 years per chief. It has been argued that the short reign of Hanyani's successors was that they had not swallowed the precious stone that was partly responsible for longevity. The current last Paramount Chief Tonia Chitanga who died in November 1997 had ruled only for a year. In spite of the fact that the swallowing of (*ndzalama*) a precious stone, is against the scientific laws of digestion, the Hlengwe people believed that it was swallowed and stayed in the intestines of the chief. They also believed that it was taboo to be swallowed by any subject people for no genuine reason. They would certainly die because it was regarded as '*buloyi bya hosi*' – the magic power of the chief. The precious stone enhanced the people's respect and loyalty to the chief. It must be inferred that Christianity and European colonialism have contributed to the idea that the system of swallowing (*ndzalama*) or crocodile stone was or is a fairy tale surrounded by Hlengwe mysticism and superstition.

On account of the powerful and dangerous charms and objects possessed by the chiefs it was regarded as taboo for chiefs of different clans to stay in each other's company unnecessarily. They were afraid lest they might be killed by the magical power of their colleagues. However, the White Settler political order changed all this. The chiefs have no longer the powers they used to have. There are many tasks, which they are ordered to carry out without questioning.

The Hlengwe chief was the political, military, judicial and religious head of his people. He also had many prerogatives. The chief held in trust, controlled and distributed on behalf of the ancestors the major means of production, that is land. He

presided over many rituals, which surrounded relations between the ancestors and land. The Hlengwe reference, that the chief was the earth, explains it all. The relationship between the chief's power and land was and is demonstrated at burial ceremonies. When the body of the deceased is finally placed in the grave, the first person who puts soil in the grave is the chief or his representative. Failure to follow this protocol results in the culprit paying a fine. The Reverend P. Maluleke cited an incident where he was strongly rebuked, and later on fined a goat, for having put in soil saying his Christian rites over the dead person before the chief.¹ In fact, permission to bury a dead person is given by the Hlengwe chiefs. However, the power to distribute land was taken away from the chiefs by White Settler colonialists, and for this, Hlengwe chiefs never forgave them. The Hlengwe chiefs in Zimbabwe, together with other chiefs since independence in 1980, one of their major appeals to the government is the restoration of their power to distribute land to their subjects. This has not been redressed.

The principal prerogative of the Hlengwe chief before European colonialism was the rite of (*luma*). The literary meaning of (*luma*) is to bite and its ritual sense was to remove the injurious character of a given food by a ceremony. It was one of the greatest laws of the Hlengwe that the chief must officially eat first the products of the year before his subjects. This is still theoretically recognized, but not practically observed. It was believed dangerous to one's health to eat products from the fields before the chief. The first mouthful taken was to be seasoned with the royal drug. The gods, chief and elders had a prior right to enjoy products of the soil. It was, and is still, against the Hlengwe culture for a junior to precede seniors when eating together. It was believed that this would bring misfortune to the juniors. The hierarchy was absolutely respected.

The ceremony of (*luma*) might have applied to all kinds of food in former times. Later it was observed strongly for the black kaffir corn and (*vukanyi*) – marula wine. The kaffir corn was probably the most ancient cereal amongst the Hlengwe. The (*nkanyi*) tree is one of the most common in areas inhabited by the Hlengwe and it has always existed among them. This is the reason why the kaffir corn is traditionally used for brewing beer for religious ceremonies and the marula wine is officially not allowed to be sold even today.

The (*luma*) ceremony of the kaffir corn (*mabele*) was very important among the Hlengwe. The first grains reaped were ground and cooked by the first wife of the chief and mixed with royal medicine. The chief offered some of the food to the gods and ancestors through a ritual performed on the main entrance of the royal kraal. After this, the chief would distribute the medicine and inform his people according to hierarchy to do the same. The chief handed this down to the sub chief, counsellors, warriors, headmen and finally family heads. Women, children and strangers were not allowed to eat the food mixed with the magic powder. Anybody who violated the procedure was heavily dealt with. It was regarded as a direct challenge to the chief, punishable by death or eviction from that land. This practice of the (*luma*) ceremony ceased to take place because of the new political and economic order introduced by White Settler colonialism supported by Christianity.

The (*luma*) ceremony of (*vukanyi*) – marula wine was a great national feast. Although today it has lost its national aspect it is still the season of wining, drinking, singing and dancing. It was the most characteristic of all ceremonies associated with the

first fruits. *Nkanyi*, whose botanical name *sclero carya caffra* and generally is known among the English as kaffir plum, is a large tree common in areas occupied by the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa. Apart from the wine it has a variety of uses such as making wooden plates, bowls, containers to store milk and mortars for pounding grain. The nuts from the fruits are used as butter or body oil, or they can be simply eaten as they are. The shells from the tree are burnt and used as a flavour for snuff tobacco. The sap from the bark and roots is used as medicine for headaches and stomach ache. The bark is also used to make sandals and bark cylinder beehive. The religious importance of (*nkanyi*) among the Hlengwe is that when offering their snuff and beer to their ancestors they do it under a particular chosen (*nkanyi*) tree. The multiple uses of (*nkanyi*) made it to qualify for the ceremony. The (*nkanyi*) fruit season begins at the beginning of January to the end of April.

The first ripe fruits were gathered and brewed into a sour wine. The chief would take the first pot, consult the traditional healers and together they would pour some of the contents on the tomb of deceased chiefs under one of the sacred marula trees. The marula tree has male and female trees. Male trees do not bear fruits and they are the ones under which rituals are carried out. The chief would invoke spirits of the dead to bless the New Year and feast that was to be celebrated. The gods having (*luma*) first, the chief would follow. Then the (*luma*) ceremonies would take place in order of precedence; sub-chiefs, headmen and then the people would drink freely in their villages. The last major event in the marula wine (*luma*) ceremony was the great day of feasting. The chief would set a particular date that all his subjects gathered at his kraal. Each village head brought a big pot to the headmen. Then each headman selected three quarters of the total pots, which were taken to the chief's kraal. The chief would provide a beast, a number of goats to be slaughtered and food for the great feast. This was a great day in the calendar of the Hlengwe people that most of the mature people looked forward to. On this particular day, the chief was feted and acclaimed. The amount of wine pots, which came to the chief and the number of his subjects who attended the feast was a gauge of the chief's popularity. The question of loyalty and popularity was relative since many came to drink and eat. It was a day of feasting, drinking, singing and dancing.

During the whole period of the (*vukanyi*), most business was at a standstill as it was time for drinking, merrymaking and dancing. The Free Methodist Church, which operates mainly among the Hlengwe, one of its Christian doctrines is to abstain from any intoxicating drink. However, it allowed its Christian members to drink marula wine. This shows the importance and peculiarity of marula wine among the Hlengwe. The (*vukanyi*) or marula wine feasts are the saturnalia bacchanalia carnival of the tribe. The Hlengwe satisfactorily worship Bacchus, the Greek God of wine during this time. The drinking, singing and feasting ceremonies still take place even today minus the elaborate religious rituals. It is one of the few occasions when traditional Hlengwe songs are sung and traditional (*muchongolo*) dance performed. Their military experience during the Mfecane and before the arrival of the European settlers is remembered.

The (*luma*) rites of the first fruit seemed to have primarily religious origins. Possibly, the Hlengwe did not feel that they dared to enjoy the products of the soil unless they had first given a portion of them to their gods. The rites were evidently dictated by the sense of hierarchy. A subject must not precede his chief or a young brother his elder or else they would die. The custom seemed also to have been actuated by the idea of

passage. However, colonial masters generally suspicious of African rituals or ceremonies for political and economic reasons have interfered with the rites of the first fruit. This was summarized in the words of one elder “Now we have no longer any first fruits feast. White people have killed it. Everybody eats greedily in his home according to his own pleasure. Formerly we used to take the oxen of the man who dared to steal the New Year.”¹

The payment of tax or tribute by subjects to their ruler is an old custom in all human societies. One of the oldest written records of tax payment is found in the New Testament. The chief priests and scribes asked Jesus if it was lawful for them to give tribute to Caesar. Jesus gave them a simple answer that they were to render to Caesar and to God what belonged to Him.² Tribute or taxation is a symbol of loyalty by subjects to their ruler and a source of revenue for the benefit of the subjects in times of need. The Hlengwe rulers were no exception as to receiving tribute or taxes from their subjects.

The Hlengwe language is rich in vocabulary expressing relationship between the chief and his subjects. The chief governed and one principal function of his subjects was to pay taxes. He was regarded as the representative and mediator between the living and the ancestor’s spirits and gods, hence his right to tax his subjects. He was the soil, and so his subjects had a duty of sharing the products of the soil and hunting with him. There were four major ways through which the subjects paid tax. The chief took regular portion of his subjects’ harvest. This was used for the benefit of the needy subjects in times of drought, to feed those who attended the chief’s council and foreigners. The royal court always had numerous guests, genuine or otherwise. Each household at harvest contributed a bucket (*chirundzu*) of corn and this was a regular tax.

Those who brewed beer sent a pot to the chief or somebody drank it on the spot on behalf of the chief. The pot was known as (*chiwizo*), literary meaning the pot to inform. This was common during the times of tilling the fields, harvesting or thrashing of grain when families brewed beer then called relatives and neighbours to help them. A pot of (*vukanyi*) – marula wine called (*chirwalwa*) literary meaning that, which was carried to, was sent to the chief by all his subjects during the festive marula wine season. Failure to deliver the bucket of grain, a pot of beer and a pot of marula wine was regarded as a sign of disloyalty to the chief and punishable by paying a heifer. Taxation of the products of the soil has been interfered with by the European colonial order, except the marula wine pot to the chief.

After settling in Zimbabwe the Hlengwe kept large numbers of cattle. The core-herd was a result of raids and tribute from the Karanga. However, before and after the imposition of White colonial rule the Hlengwe became known as cattle herdmen. The southeastern areas of Zimbabwe inhabited by the Hlengwe were suitable for keeping cattle despite other negative factors. In fact, it is one of the major commercial ranching areas in Zimbabwe today. Cattle played a very important role in the lives of the Hlengwe people. Cattle provided the Hlengwe with meat, milk and hides. They were used as sacrifices for major religious ceremonies. For social reasons, all marital transactions are made concrete through payment by cattle. Cattle lived and grazed on land. Land was entrusted in the chief, thus the chief had a right to a portion of meat from every cattle killed. For every cattle killed the chief received a portion as a sign of loyalty from his

1

2

subjects. On the other hand it was the chief's means of sourcing food for the many visitors and officials at the capital. It was also a security measure against stock theft. It was publicly known who killed cattle, where and when. Failure to send a portion of meat to the chief after one had killed a cow was punishable by a goat. This practice has since ceased with the introduction of White colonial rule who became the masters.

The southeastern parts of Zimbabwe before the advent of White Colonial rule teemed with a variety of wild animals both herbivorous and carnivorous. Some of the big national game parks today in Zimbabwe including the Gonarezou National Park are located in this area. The region is not suitable for the cultivation of crops in a large scale and the Hlengwe had no knowledge of irrigation farming. Hence the influence of the environment made them to take hunting as a serious economic venture. Animals lived and grazed on land. They were a creation of the gods and ancestor's spirits. The chief held the land on behalf of the gods and ancestors. Therefore the chief claimed a portion of most wild beasts killed and certain animals were regarded as royal game. The chief's right over wild beasts killed was not the same for all game. The buffalo, eland, giraffe and antelope had parts that were removed and given to the chief. The skin of the lion, panther and leopard were also given to the chief. The elephant's tusk, which scratched the soil when it fell, was called the tusk of the soil. The chief was the soil, so that tusk was given to the chief and the other one belonged to the hunter. After killing the hippopotamus it was a crime for the hunter to skin it before sending the word to the chief. The hunter was supposed to skin the hippo during the presence of the chief's representatives who collected half of the meat for the royal court. The major reason why it was criminal for a hunter to kill and cut a hippo without the chief's knowledge was that it was believed that the hippo's brain was poisonous and anybody irresponsible would misuse it against others. However, there is no scientific truth that the hippo's brain is poisonous. Game rangers have dismissed it as untrue. The Hlengwe believed in witchcraft and a good number still do. It was believed that the hippo was one of the animals used by witches and wizards as a means of transport during their diabolic trips under the cover of darkness. Therefore, the chief was supposed to know about the death of every hippo and circumstances of its death. The crocodile was supposed to be opened by men of the court. Although its meat was not eaten, it contained (*ndzalama*) swallowed to give power and longevity to chiefs. Articles such as bracelets were also found possibly from human eating crocodiles. The skin was very useful for the chief and the scale shells were used by traditional healers as lots. The brain and gall bladder of the crocodile are poisonous, so the chief made sure that they did not fall in wrong hands. There were many certain animals, which were wholly given to the chief such as the pangolin. Hunters believed that it was taboo to eat portions of meat or meat of animals regarded as royal meat.

Apart from the fact that the chief had a constant supply of meat at his court his sharing of game meat was also a sign of loyalty from his subjects. It was also a way of keeping administration after 1897 made hunting illegal. This stopped one of the oldest practices of taxation among the Hlengwe. The Hlengwe never accepted it. It only ushered in a relationship of hide-and-seek between the colonial authorities and the Hlengwe people.

The chief's statute labour was another main form of taxation and source of revenue for the royal family. People performed various jobs during the course of the year

for the chief especially those related to the production of food. Subject people led by their sub-chiefs or headmen came to the royal court to perform various duties. They tilled the chief's fields, weeded, harvested and thrashed the grain. Young men were always at the disposal of the chief to clean the court, build and repair huts, take care of the cattle and organise the chief's hunting expeditions. The subject people performed these duties as a sign of respect and loyalty to their chief. It was one way of contributing to the national granary, to be used in times of famine. This also enabled the chief to feed the numerous visitors and attendants at the royal court. The White colonial economic order has brought this practice to an end.

The geographical proximity of the Hlengwe areas to South Africa exposed them earlier to the capitalist economy of mining and commercial farming. The Hlengwe people became one major source of labour for the capitalist South African economy. It became a culture that Hlengwe men at one point in history became migrant labourers. The chiefs took this new economic order. Migrant labour brought a new method of royal revenue. Everytime the migrant labourers returned home from their stint in the mines or commercial farms they paid a fee to the chief. It varied from one chief to another, but generally it started from five British shillings to one British pound by the time this tradition was invaded by the new order in the late 1950's when the chiefs began to lose their powers. It was a crime for the returning migrant labourer not to pay the fee. The fee was a sign of his loyalty to the chief and compensation for duties done by other subjects during his absence from home. As a way of luring labour some whites had verbal contracts, legal or illegal to reward chiefs who allowed or encouraged their young men to work for the Whites. There were some cases of greedy chiefs who demanded exorbitant fees from the migrant workers. The system was interfered with when capitalist companies and government actively participated in the recruitment of labour.¹

One source of the chief's revenue was found in various forms of fines imposed in judicial cases. Chiefs were supreme judges advised by the royal council. Those who were convicted and found guilty at the chief's court were required to pay fines in form of cattle, goats, sheep or bags of grain. All major criminal and civil cases were dealt with at the chief's court. Before the dawn of European colonialism the maximum sentence was death. Part of the fine was given to the victims, part used at the court and some were left in the custody of the chief for the benefit of the tribe. The colonial authorities have removed most of the judicial powers from the chiefs. Chiefs can only impose minor fines when they act as judges in some civil cases or cases which fall under customary law. The question of judicial powers soured relations between chiefs and colonial authorities. It is one area in which chiefs are demanding restoration of power after independence.

It was only the chief who had the right to tax the people. His subordinates, such as sub-chiefs or headmen brought to him products of taxation or a clear account of petty fines. The chief was not supposed to use the tax selfishly, but for the benefit of his subjects. Chieftainship carried with it dangers and difficulties. The chief occupied an unenviable position sought by many. It was the highest reward of virtue or wisdom. It required much fact, ability and patience to be a chief. Chiefs were not supposed to be autocratic, despotic or tyrants, but fathers of their people. Before colonial administration a council of the royal family deposed unpopular chiefs, and not a single incident of this nature is known in Hlengwe history.

1

The legislative, executive and judicial powers were all in the hands of the chief aided by counsellors. Justice is not universal, it has varied throughout ages. The Hlengwe have a strong sense of justice and the basic idea of Hlengwe justice probably was that of collective responsibility. No obligation ceased with death. The question of intention was paramount. The fine was for the court and the injured party. The Hlengwe law was unwritten, but sanctioned by usage. They were fond of litigation and a longtime was spent at the court. The Hlengwe word for law is (*nawu*) and the verb (*kulaya*) means to reprimand, to warn or to admonish. These laws were not written, but they were universally and perfectly well known. The law was custom that which has always been done.

The old men, counsellors and particularly counsellors of the royal court could speak authoritatively on the law. Every adult male was welcomed in the (*hubo*) or (*bandla*) meaning court, where matters were discussed. Even strangers were allowed to take part in discussions. There is a Hlengwe saying “No one is excluded if he speaks mightily, only fools, those who do not know anything.” Participation in discussions at the (*hubo*) or (*bandla*) –court has developed the sense of law to a wonderful extent amongst the Hlengwe. They were all born advocates and judges, as some would like to boast. All males took great interest in this business. No wonder, the Hlengwe vocabulary possesses a rich store of judicial expressions. The most common are (*nawu*)-meaning law or custom, (*kuthula nawu*) – transgression, (*nandzu*) – fault, (*kudyoha*) – to wrong, (*kupala mhaka/nandzu*) – to commit a crime, (*kuriha*) – to pay a fine, (*rihisa*) – to impose a fine and (*kugweja*) – to pass a sentence or judgement. The presiding judge, who was one of the leading counsellors, allowed anybody to participate during court proceedings. This led to several hours being spent on listening to evidence. Others have regarded the procedure as a waste of time and dwelling on irrelevance. On the other hand others have hailed it as the height of democracy in judicial procedures.

The general setting of the Hlengwe court was a circle. The complainant sat on one side of the circle and the counsellor set between him and the chief. A proposition was put forward to the accused by the presiding counsellor, generally in short interrogative sentences. The assembly listened in silence until the mover concluded. Then another counsellor took over elaborating the matter more to the chief as a way of seconding the motion. The complainant was given the floor and then the accused. The witnesses of the complainant and then the witnesses of the accused followed this. The debate was then opened to everybody. After everybody present at the court has said his piece of mind, the counsellors discussed the matter among themselves, passed judgement and sentence, which they referred, to the chief. All this time the chief was literally listening and saying nothing. The chief made the final decision whether he agreed or did not agree with the counsellors. In most cases the chief’s decision was in line with the voice of the majority. However, the voice of the majority was not ascertained by any show of hands, but it was generally perceived by intuition in a remarkable way. It was rare for cases to be postponed or postdated. The chief was the supreme authority and his decisions were without appeal. His judgement (*kutsema mhaka*) was pronounced by some short sentences. After which everybody shouted the royal salutation ‘Hlezani Mlilo’ and dispersed.

Reverend T. Houser who ministered for almost three decades among the Hlengwe attended and recorded many Hlengwe court sessions. He reaffirmed that everybody

present was given all the opportunity to speak and the absence of great pronouncements that are characteristic in modern courts.¹

A different court procedure was used for a foreigner. After the accused foreigner had stated his case one of the counsellors would report words of the foreigner sentence by sentence. Then another counsellor would in turn communicate with the chief repeating the same story as if the chief had not heard a word of it before. By the time the information reached the chief it would have been repeated enough times to give the accused a chance to check whether he had been misquoted. The chief's decision in due formality would be given through the same channels. These precautions that seemed eminently superfluous or ridiculous to a person unacquainted with the Hlengwe etiquette evidently might have proceeded from the fact that there were no stenographers or secretaries to furnish any written record of the proceedings. Therefore it was necessary to have as many witnesses as possible who thoroughly understood the matter under consideration.

In fact, a foreigner who witnessed this procedure might have thought that the chief was deaf and dumb, until when the chief opened his mouth to pass judgement and procedures explained to him after the court session. It has been noted that the Hlengwe did not make a distinction between civil and criminal cases. They were judged by the same tribunal and called by the same name (*milandzu*). However, there was a distinction between civil and official cases. Private cases were those settled by the concerned parties without the intervention of the chief. The chief settled major cases, most of the civil cases involved marriage affairs such as *lobola*, divorce and cattle disputes. The common judgment was paying back compensation to the grieved part.

Adultery matters were considered criminal cases together with murder. They received the highest forms of punishment. According to Hlengwe oral tradition adultery was punishable by death for both male and female. They were tied and thrown in a pool or burnt on a stake of fire. This form of punishment was replaced by paying a good number of cattle to the husband and sometimes accompanied by eviction from the area. As for murder, there was a distinction between involuntary and voluntary murder. Involuntary murder known as (*mhang*) was settled between the families concerned without the involvement of the chief because the law was known. The accused compensated the family of the deceased with a girl. The principle at the base of the custom was not that a human person was a natural compensation for another human person, but that the diminished family was given a means of making good its loss. In fact as soon as the girl gave birth to a child to the relatives of the deceased she was free to go. However, the most practical result was that she remained permanently in the family. Deliberate murder was punishable by death in the same manner as adultery. In some cases there was also a remittance of a woman. It may be argued that as regards punishment of murder, the Hlengwe had reached quite a civilized stage in their judicial procedure and probably in advance to other tribes. The colonial administration removed absolutely the power of passing death sentence from the chiefs. However, they still preside over adultery cases particularly of customary marriages.

One of the greatest crimes a man or woman could commit was witchcraft (*vuloyi*). The Hlengwe believed very strongly and some still do believe in witchcraft. It was regarded equivalent to assassination, even worse than murder. Various methods were

1

used with the blessing of the chief such as divination by casting lots, interrogation by a magician and various ordeal exercises to uncover witchcraft. Witchcraft carried the maximum sentence of death. The penalty was death by being burnt on a stake of fire or drowning in a pool. There are many Hlengwe stories or tales and songs relating to witchcraft. The White colonial administration introduced the Witchcraft Act that declared witchcraft illegal. However, this did not eradicate the custom, but drove it underground. Many chiefs still deal with cases of witchcraft and make the accused pay heavy fines under the cover of darkness. The accused would prefer doing that rather than publicly reporting to the government authorities fearing that their lives can be miserable. Those who were accused of witchcraft faced eviction from the area and they tended to become perambulators from one place to another because communities who learned about their status did not want to welcome them permanently.

Theft was universally condemned. According to oral tradition going back to time immemorial it was punishable by the removal of arms and legs. This was based on the value of the property stolen. This was greatly improved when fines became the form of punishment for stealing. Only major cases of theft such as stock and grain theft were brought to the chief's court. Theft was so much condemned for its immoral character as also the fact that it rendered a normal social life impossible.

There were some cases, which were brought to the chief's courts, but today they are regarded as superstition. Pointing at any one with the index finger or to predict one's death during verbal insults was associated with witchcraft. These had serious judicial consequences at the chief's court. The fine was usually a cow.

Revolt against decisions of the chief's court was very rare. A revolt was regarded as contempt of the court and it was punishable by public flogging by a *sjambock* (whip). However, women and children were not allowed to witness the event.

Paraphernalia of royalty were found at the chief's court. The most important was the big drum of (*muntshintshi*) found in every royal capital or sub-chief's village. The instrument was subject to some taboos. For instance, when its skin cracked it was forbidden to look inside. The big drum was sounded when announcing a great fatality such as the death of the chief, the mourning of the chief, a bush fire or summoning warriors when war was imminent. The big drum was also used in special dances accompanied by the small drum called (*shikolombane*). There was also a regular band at the court called (*bunanga*). The word (*nanga*) meant trumpet. Trumpets that composed the (*bunanga*) were made from the horns of sables (*mhalamhala*) or impala, (*mhala*). There were also the trumpets of assembly used to summon subjects to the capital. These were made from the horns of (*mhalamhala*), (*nyala*) or (*pfila*) – kinds of antelopes. The paraphernalia had disappeared from the chief's courts with the impact of the European colonialism.

Among the Hlengwe of Zimbabwe the chief's wives did not play any public roles in the system of the government. However, their role might have been more effective as private advisors to the chief. For diplomatic reasons chiefs got married to daughters of other royal or influential families. For example, the last four paramount Chitanga chiefs were married to daughters of Karanga royal or influential families.

Both oral and written history do not mention any woman who was called to the dignity of chieftainship among the Hlengwe. There is not a single case of a foreigner who became a chief through marrying one of the Hlengwe princesses. However, sons-in-law

or uterine nephews have been known to be very influential at the royal court. They never became chiefs, but remained in the prime court.

Chiefs consolidated their positions by appointing close relatives or sons to influential subordinate positions such as sub-chiefs, headmen or counsellors. There were some cases of ambitious sons or brothers, but counsellors closely monitored these. One political safety valve was to give the potential claimants to chieftainship their own areas to rule. This limited civil wars, but did not absolutely prevent them. For instance, there was a bloody civil war between Chitanga and Mpapa after the death of their father paramount Chief Ndalega. There was also a serious civil war for the Vurumela chieftainship between his son and younger brother. It must be noted that all the Hlengwe chiefs in Zimbabwe and the majority in Mozambique and South Africa are related. All the chiefs in Zimbabwe are related to the Paramount chief. They all belong to the Chauke clan or totem. These are paramount Chief Chitanga, Chiefs Mpapa, Chilonga, Sengwe, Furumela, Gezani, Tshovani, Mahenye, Masivamele, Gezani, Ngwenyenye and Magudu. This arrangement kept the chieftainship and clan intact. However, the colonial system tempered with it creating boundaries, upgrading or down grading some of them. The Hlengwe chiefs re-defined their relationship although they are still bound by the same family ties, origin, language and culture.

The Hlengwe political hierarchy and customary law showed clearly that below the chief was the headman or hosana. Colonial officials have used various names such as petty chief or sub-chief referring to the same position. The sub-chiefs or headmen were simply addressed as (*bava*) –father rather than (*hlezana*) or great, a salutation for the chiefs. Some headmen were closer to the chief and more powerful than others because of their family ties with the chief. The headman was master, but father of his subordinates and their provider. He watched over the village. He was true justice amongst the inmates of the village doing his best to maintain good relations among them. Justice began in the family and the headman of the village was the justice of peace. The headman tried petty offences since he had no instruments to enforce the law. If a plaintiff was not satisfied by the judgement he appealed to the chief. The headman had the right to impose statute labour in his fields or village, but at a lower level compared to the chief. He was not supposed to extract too much from his people, and forget to feast them with beer or meat when work was finished.

The headman presided over all discussions that took place in the village. All matters that pertained to the village were discussed in the central square of the village called (*hubo*) or (*bandla*) in Hlengwe. (*Hubo*) literally means a square and in Hlengwe political jargon it meant the council of men of the village which headmen summoned to settle matters. Every mature man in the village was welcome to take part in discussions.

The headman was more or less responsible for all claims lodged against his subjects. Since the headman controlled members of close families there was a strong bond of keeping each other. The headman could pay fine for his subjects as a loan. This was in line with the custom that parents and children could pay debts for each other even if they had not inherited anything from them. This did not proceed from any moral sense of the family or village dignity, but chiefs held them responsible. All these rules clearly illustrated the communalism of family or village life and property under the supervision of the headman. If a headman absolutely failed to govern his village his council consisting of relatives could depose him and put another man in his place. Such cases

were very far between.

When the Hlengwe population increased, clans grew larger and some members ended living far distances from the chief's capital. Headmen who lived far away ended up with more power than those who lived close to the royal family. These were the headmen who assumed the title of sub-chiefs or petty chiefs (*hosana*). In some cases the chief decided that his chiefdom had grown large, and he needed some relatives who could represent him. Hence he raised the status of some headmen although major decisions remained to be made by the chief.

Polygamy played an important role in creating the position of sub-chiefs or petty chiefs. Sons of a chief in a polygamous marriage who were unsuccessful claimants to the chiefdom were appeased by being made sub-chiefs or petty chiefs. These members of the royal family needed special recognition. In fact, most of the Hlengwe chiefs had several wives, even the paramountcy of only the last two had monogamous marriages. However, a successful headman or sub-chief was one who was able to keep the whole village together.

The counsellors (*tinduna*) or (*madota ebandla*) in Hlengwe language constituted a cabinet which assisted the chief in carrying on the functions of royalty. There were several grades of these functionaries. The principal counsellors (*tinduna leti kulu*) whose province was to discuss and decide on more serious questions that affected the country. These were generally the uncles of the chief or men of ripe age from the collateral branches of his family. This was one way of recognizing the importance of some members of the royal family who could not become chiefs in their lives. The counsellors watched over the chief and had the right of accusing him if they were not satisfied with his conduct.

They presided at the burial, mourning and coronation of the chief. The military counsellors, generals of the army (*tinduna ta nyimpi*) directed fighting operations. These counsellors became prominent among the Hlengwe as a result of the Gaza Nguni military impact. Otherwise, before the Gaza, Nguni influence and after the introduction of European colonialism the military counsellors ceased to be an independent or distinctive separate body. Depending on the size and power of the chiefdom if the chiefdom was very large and powerful there were counsellors who were entrusted with business of adjoining chiefdoms. These officially formed an indispensable link in the diplomatic and matrimonial relations between one chiefdom and another. Some of these men sometimes acquired great influence on the chief and acted as useful counterpoise to the autocratic power of the chief. There were also counsellors who were appointed by the chief. The headmen, sub-chiefs or petty chiefs were members of the chief's council. Counsellors were a complete organization necessary to the chief as they were to the orderly development of tribal life.

Diplomatic relations were very carefully conducted with each of the neighboring clans having one counsellor entrusted with the care of its affairs. However, this was effectively done through marriage relationships. In times of war, friendly clans frequently made alliances called (*shinakulobye*).

Unofficial counsellors of the chief who played a very important role were his peers. More often some of them were also official counsellors. The chief gathered around him a circle of personal friends of his own age from childhood who were called (*tinxekwa*) or (*tinyumi*) in Hlengwe. They had partaken in the games and feasts with their

royal comrade, but when he became chief they had no recognized offices.

According to oral tradition there was an official called in Hlengwe – (*mbongi ya kupfusha*) – meaning the Herald. In a different manner he acted as a counsellor to the chief. At about 4 a.m. every morning before sunrise this royal flatterer came to the chief's capital. He sang glorious deeds of the chief's ancestors, recalling their names and acts of powers. In his praises he mentioned the chief's weaknesses compared to his predecessors. He awakened the chief by an extraordinary sound, at a very high key, words were sung, volubly shouted and production of peculiar music. The Herald was an individual with "the chest developed," as they say in Hlengwe – a man of great eloquence. He also accompanied the chief on his trips and sung the praises on the coronation of the chief. The (*mbongi*) – the herald was allowed great licence even to insult the chief without provoking his anger. On the contrary he was highly respected and when royal meat was shared a special portion was reserved for him. Anyone could aspire to the office of the heralds, provided he was eloquent. The herald represented one of the best examples of Hlengwe poetry and a characteristic piece of unwritten literature. To an extent he was a prototype of a poet laureate of European courts. In a light note and in a comedian way the herald counselled the chief. However, the role of this official has since disappeared with the passing of time. The new political order particularly when Gaza Nguni introduced militarism as an element of state organization the herald might have been considered a security risk to the chief.

The public interpreter (*shitale sha tiko*), a kind of a court jester, was another official who performed as a counsellor to the chief. He had the right to insult both the chief and his counsellors except strangers. The origins of the court jester appeared to have been of Hlengwe and other Tsonga groups. The position was officially recognized and hereditary. In a way, the public vituperator acted as a public censor to the tribe. He was entrusted the privilege of calling attention to facts which others would not dare to bring to the chief's light. Like the (*mbongi*) the office of (*shitale sha tiko*) ceased to be.

It can be argued that the various official and unofficial counsellors using different methods aided the chief to rule his chiefdom and curtailed any dictatorial tendencies.

The Hlengwe political system from the chief down to the headmen had a great impact from European colonialism and Christianity. The colonial laws of the Portuguese, British and Boers interfered with the Hlengwe judicial system, which was not separated from politics. In Zimbabwe it was British Colonialism championed by Cecil John Rhodes and his British South African Company that had a great influence on the Hlengwe people. Independence in both Mozambique and Zimbabwe and the majority democratic rule in South Africa so far have done little to undo what has been done by colonial administration. In order to change some aspects of the existing political order, (certain) aspects which resisted the introduction of European colonialism, had to go, and this was largely through recommendations made by colonial agents – men on the spot. Oral and written reports of colonial agents who worked among the Hlengwe in the early days were negative as far as position, role and status of the chiefs for the most part were concerned. "They regarded chiefs for the most part as a drunken crowd of sorts, their brains pickled in spirits, brutal and by nature wholesale debauchers of women. The chiefs were always surrounded by diviners, witch doctors and herbalists who flourished in every royal capital".¹

The Native Commissioners were the European colonial administrators who directly dealt with the chiefs. As far as the Hlengwe chiefs in Zimbabwe were concerned the first Native Commissioner they were in contact with was Peter Forestall nicknamed *Ndambakuwa*. Forestall assumed his duties in 1897 as Native Commissioner of Chibi District in which the majority of the Hlengwe people in Zimbabwe were located. He assumed and carried out his duties with the background of the Anglo-Ndebele War of 1893 and the First Chimurenga of 1895 – 1897. When the two wars took place the Hlengwe were not actively involved although the Hlengwe Paramount Chitanga before European colonialism paid tribute to the Ndebele. Oral tradition claims that geographically the Hlengwe were a bit off from the areas which were centres of events, but more likely was that they were aware of the effects of the gun fire possessed by the Whites. Before these wars some of the Hlengwe who had now moved into Zimbabwe had been in contact with the Boers in South Africa and were familiar with the consequences of gunfire. However, the Hlengwe had accepted the (*Mwari*) cult, which was also central in the First Chimurenga, were suffering as a result of forced labour and loss of land. Therefore even if they were not so much involved in the war, the colonial administrators knew that they sympathized with the so-called rebels. Forestall had to implement the government policy of destroying all rebels and preventing an outbreak of another Chimurenga. The African political system was centered on chiefs so their position in a new political order dominated by the Whites had to be re-defined. The bottom line was that the powers of the chiefs were to be reduced and their activities closely monitored.

Forestall like any other Native Commissioner was to submit his first official assignment, which comprised of a list of chiefs and sub-chiefs to the government. On April, 1899 Forestall submitted his official list of chiefs and sub-chiefs to the Native Commissioner in Salisbury. The recommended and officially accepted chiefs and sub-chiefs were to receive an allowance of 3 pounds per month. The government allowance automatically made chiefs civil servants or employees of the government. The chief's political autonomy came to an end. This was the beginning of erosion of the traditional role of the chiefs. The following were the Hlengwe chiefs on the Native Commissioner's first list – Chitanga, Chilonga, Chihosi, Masivamele and Ngwenyenye.¹ From hence onward the Native Commissioner had to update and submit an annual list of chiefs and sub-chiefs. Interesting and confusing were dramatic changes in the annual lists where some chiefs in one year would be referred to as chiefs, paramount chiefs, sub-chiefs or headmen or even missing in one year to re-appear in another year or vice-versa. The fact was that chiefs like any other government employee they had to offer maximum loyalty to the government or face the consequences of demotion if they failed to do so. The Native Commissioners never bothered to understand traditional laws of succession and ambitious men took advantage to impose themselves to be accepted as chiefs or otherwise. The colonial policy of recognizing African traditional rulers affected the relationships and status of the chiefs towards each other.

In the Native Commissioner's annual report of March 1900 Chitanga, Chilonga and Ngwenyenye were referred to as paramount chiefs; Chigohi, Munengwani and Mpapa were listed as sub-chiefs.² The Hlengwe had only one paramount chieftainship in

1

2

Zimbabwe, the Chitanga paramouncy. A typical example of interference in African affairs by Native Commissioners was during a dispute over paramouncy between Mpapa and Chitanga. In August 1898, Forestall ordered Mpapa to recognize Chitanga as his paramount chief.¹ In the Native Commissioner's list to the superintendent of Natives in Victoria in 1910 the Hlengwe chiefs were re-listed as; Chitanga, Gezani, Vurumela and Sengwe. Mpapa and Chisa were listed as sub-chiefs. In the same year subsidies per annum were recommended by the Native Commissioner for chiefs Chitanga, Vurumela, Sengwe, Chilonga, Chihosi and Ngwenyenye were to be paid 10/- each per month.²

The position of headman or petty chief was designated kraal-head or *Sabhuku* by the colonial administration and received an allowance after the collection of poll tax. Kraal-heads are related to the chief and are partly of the extended royal family. The current position and status of Hlengwe chiefs is that Chitanga is the nominal paramount chief, Sengwe, Chilonga, Vurumela, Tsovani and Mahenye are chiefs. The sub-chiefs or headmen are Mpapa, Ngwenyenye, Gezani, Masivamele and Magudu. Today chiefs, sub-chiefs or headmen and kraal-heads receive government allowances and fall under the Ministry of Local Government.

When Forestall assumed office as Native Commissioner at Chibi station on January 7, 1897 he immediately summoned all the chiefs and sub-chiefs to come and pay homage. He made it very clear to the chiefs that their powers had been reduced and that it was owing to their loyalty to the colonial government that they were not taxed that year.³ In his yearly report to the Chief Native Commissioner of May 1898 he reported that on the 7th of May 1897 Chitanga, paramount chief of the Mabachwa or Khobnose natives, nicknames for the Hlengwe, came to greet him as Native Commissioner at Chibi station. During their conversation the Native Commissioner explained to Chitanga the necessity of obedience to the mandate of the colonial government, any disputes between chiefs were to be brought to the Native Commissioner for settlement and that chiefs could settle only minor disputes between their people.⁴ When chief Chitanga came to pay homage he brought with him his son who was to be trained as a colonial policeman in the native department.⁵ It became government policy to recruit sons of chiefs or close relatives into the colonial system to reinforce loyalty for the future. The mentioned paramount chief was Hanyani who died in 1935 and his son was Hlengani Ndondo who became a policeman and then paramount Chief Chitanga 1939 – 1954. His brother Simati Maranele Chimamise attained the rank of a sergeant in the British South Africa Police. When he retired he assumed the paramouncy as Chief Chitanga from 1960 – 1981. At the first meeting between Chitanga and the Native Commissioner the chief was advised to discourage his people from their tradition of going to seek jobs in the Transvaal, but to seek work within the country through the Native Commissioner's station.

On June 22, 1897 the Native Commissioner gathered at Chibi station the entire chiefs and subjects. About 1500 natives turned up and three cattle were killed for the Diamond Jubilee celebration of Her Majesty the Queen Victoria. The occasion provided

1
2
3
4
5

the Native Commissioner an opportune time to inform the chiefs and their subjects as to who was now the supreme authority.¹ As a follow up to this incident in November 1897 the Native Commissioner took with him 80 chiefs from his district both Karanga and Hlengwe to Salisbury in order to greet his Excellency the High Commissioner. The Chiefs did this on the 12th of November 1897.² On January 30, 1902 the Native Commissioner gathered all the chiefs, sub-chiefs and headmen in the district at Chibi station. He announced to them the death of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and that her eldest son had been made king. The heir intended to follow in his mother's footsteps. The Native Commissioner claimed that the chiefs expressed deep grief and sorrow at the sad loss of their sovereign. They were also curious to follow in the footsteps of the White chiefs of the country and rendering obedience to the present majesty the king. The Native Commissioner also stated that several chiefs who had failed to come on the exact date but came later.³ On May 17, 1910 once again Forestall wrote a letter to the superintendent of Natives in Victoria informing him that he had held a meeting with the chiefs and headmen. At the meeting he had informed them about the death of King Edward VII and the proclamation of King George V as the new ruler. The chiefs and headmen according to Forestall's letter asked him to convey their deep sorrow at the death of King Edward VII and their loyalty to his successor.⁴ The question of African chiefs expressing grief and sorrow concerning the death of White rulers in a remote place, whom they had never seen and in whose name their powers were usurped, is open to argument.

In 1902 the Native Affairs Department was formally established and with it the bureaucratic framework through which African areas were administered and in most cases still administered. "The Native Commissioner's authority extended over the African people. The most powers, which the African chiefs had traditionally exercised, were transferred to Native Commissioners. Native Commissioners allocated land to African people, issued them with cattle permits and at the same time procured labour for European settlers. They decided who was to settle in a chiefdom and who controlled the African's contact with missionaries and businessman."⁵ This was underlined in 1910 when Native Commissioners received both criminal and civil jurisdiction over Africans through the High Commissioner's proclamation. The same proclamation defined the powers and duties of chiefs to be the same as those of police constables in their areas. It must be emphasized that the effective replacement of chiefs by Native Commissioners as local rulers and the consequent decrease in prestige and power of chiefs had its origin in the suspicion and fear that Europeans had of Anglo-Ndebele War of 1893 and the First Chimurenga in 1895 – 1897. The Native Commissioners were called by the Hlengwe word for chief – (*hosi*).

The extensive powers granted to the Native Commissioners were deliberately intended to limit the traditional powers of chiefs among their people. The Africans were directly dependent on colonial administration. However, one way of winning the support of chiefs was to allow them to carry firearms. All the registered Hlengwe chiefs were

1
2
3
4
5

allowed to possess guns, the common Henry-Martin in those days.

The success of the Native Commissioner's policy in reducing the powers of chiefs was recorded in the Chief Native Commissioner's Report. 'Chiefs complain that they no longer control their followings as they did in the past and that the young people are gradually breaking away from tribal control. The increased powers granted to Native Commissioners materially assist breaking up these tribal methods of control and I am glad to say results have so far proved satisfactory.'¹ On the other hand there were so many cases of Hlengwe chiefs displaying arrogance or resistance against usurpation of their traditional powers. Unfortunately, cases of them winning against the policy were almost nil. In order to re-inforce the new policy, African chiefs were ordered to register with the nearest Native Commissioner's office. It seems as if several chiefs refused to present themselves and some ambitious leaders who were not traditionally recognized took advantage and registered as chiefs. Apart from the fact that the Hlengwe chiefs were very far from the Native Commissioner's station at Chibi, Forrestall noted that there was a general deliberate reluctance by the Hlengwe chiefs to register until he visited their areas. In fact, all European Native Commissioners who dealt with Hlengwe chiefs in more than one incident came across attitudes of arrogance and apposition. In 1897 native detectives reported to the Native Commissioner that chief Mpapa had stopped Chief Chitanga's people and his own carrying out Native Commissioner's orders by guarding footpaths. He had prohibited people from moving into larger kraals. Mpapa refused to pay tax claiming that he belonged to the Portuguese as he had their flag which must have been given to him by the Portuguese before the British South Africa Company came into the country.² However, the Native Commissioners well observed that Mpapa was trading on the issue to remain free from colonial restraint. The Native Commissioner took time before meeting Chief Mpapa directly because he avoided visiting his area and Mpapa refused to come to the station giving flimsy excuses or sending his representatives. It was in August 4, 1897 that Forrestall visited Mpapa and held an *indaba* (conference) with him. The Native Commissioner told Mpapa that he was now under the administration of the British and not the Portuguese. He also told him that all disputes were to be referred to the Native Commissioner and that he was to recognize Chief Chitanga as his chief.³ In 1900 the Native Commissioner reported that there was need to teach Paramount Chief Chitanga a lesson for having defied the Native Commissioner's order to allow White people to trade in his country. James a white trader had forwarded a complaint to the Native Commissioner.⁴ The same year Forrestall recognized the independence of Chief Ngwenyenye when he failed to persuade him to become under the control of headman Masivamele.⁵ In a letter dated 25th October, 1902 to the chief Native Commissioner in Salisbury. he reported about headman Mpangalayi under Chief Sengwe who in 1901 paid tax to the British and was now claiming to be in Portuguese territory.⁶ Chief Chitanga and his headman Zinyemba beat and made the Portuguese native Shangaans pay a fine for returning from Matebeleland mines passing through his area without informing him.

1
2
3
4
5
6

In a letter to the acting Native Chief Commissioner in Salisbury on 30th March, 1903 Forrestall recommended that Paramount Chitanga who was on receipt of government allowance of 1 Pound per month must be severely punished as an example to other chiefs for not having referred the case involving Portuguese natives to the Native Commissioners.¹ In 1939 the then Native Commissioner of Nuanetsi District Mr. Ling nicknamed (Zvakare) invited Paramount Chief Hlengani Chitanga to visit Salisbury the capital. The chief refused the invitation.² In 1958 when A. Wright took over as a District Commissioner of Nuanetsi District he discovered that Chief Sengwe, one of the major Hlengwe chiefs exercised jurisdiction powers over his people on closed shop basis. His further investigations revealed that this was the case with most of the Hlengwe chiefs who lived far away from the District Commissioner's office. There were many examples of resistance that were conducted passively or underground because of fear of government reprisals. A. Wright summed it all up when he said that the Hlengwe chiefs were very good at listening and doing nothing in implementing government policy unless under pressure.³

The Hlengwe judicial system was centered on the chief. The removal of the chief's traditional powers and the introduction of a colonial judicial system had a great impact on the Hlengwe people. The Hlengwe's strong sense of justice differed from that of the Europeans on certain major points. Owing to their collectivist notions, the Hlengwe considered relatives as responsible for most crimes committed by their own kin. For proper administration of justice, knowledge of Hlengwe psychology by the colonial officials was essential. New laws could be proclaimed and new bills passed, but if they were contrary to Hlengwe fundamental ideas of justice they would purely and simply create a feeling of injustice especially when these laws enforced a policy of differential treatment as applied by colonial administration. Universal justice must be informative and constructive, must protect society and check evil at its root. The colonial judicial system appeared to have very little related to the Hlengwe needs. For most colonial judicial officials it appeared as if they basically believed that the Hlengwe understood only one sort of justice, rough justice, and this was what they were going to get. As in many colonial policies Native Commissioners were in the front as colonial judicial agents. Differences between the Hlengwe and European conceptions of justice did not always draw the same conclusions from the given premises. Most of the Native Commissioners did not remember to find the differences. This was no minor point and the sense of justice was never the less one of the most striking and promising characteristic of the Hlengwe. They overlooked the fact that the Hlengwe were capable of being very peaceful ad law abiding under normal circumstances.

Colonial interference with Hlengwe judicial system was illustrated by the laws, which were passed, and what practically happened. The British Order –In- Council of 1891, made it clear to the High Commissioner in Southern Rhodesia that he should “confine the exercise of authority and application of law as far as possible to whites leaving native chiefs and those living under their tribal authority almost entirely alone, since the extent of jurisdiction exercisable by Her Majesty over natives has not yet been

1

2

3

accurately defined".¹ This situation was soon to be changed particularly by the men on the spot, the Native Commissioners. In 1894 the Native Department was created after the overthrow of Lobengula, King of the Ndebele, in 1893. The British South Africa Company, which was the instrument of British colonialism now, had the power by way of conquest as guarantee of the British crown. It had now the legal foundation for jurisdiction over the African people of whom the Hlengwe were part and parcel. The Native Commissioners were officially empowered to raise their own police, arm them and pay them a salary and rations. The Native Commissioners depended on the native police for language, guidance, settling disputes and acquainting with native culture, customs and habits. The native police became a mainstay of Native Commissioners in interfering with the political, economic and social order of the native.

In 1902 the Native Affairs Department was formally established and the Native Commissioner's authority extended over the whole spectrum of African life. In 1910 the powers of the Native Commissioners were increased when they received both criminal and civil jurisdiction over Africans through the High Commissioner's Proclamation. The same proclamation defined the powers and duties of chiefs to be the same as those of police constables. As a practical follow up of the proclamation, P. Forestall the first Native Commissioner among the Hlengwe summoned all the chiefs to his office and including Paramount Chief Chitanga who represented the Hlengwe chiefs. He informed the chiefs the necessity of bringing all serious cases to the Native Commissioner for jurisdiction. The Native Commissioner in the course of his office later on claimed that he settled native cases according to custom.²

Chiefs did not take usurpation of their power with wide and open hands. Theirs was generally passive resistance against losing their political and jurisdiction powers, which continued into the era of modern nationalism and armed struggle. In 1958 when A. Wright took over as District Administrator of Nuanetsi District where the majority of the Hlengwe chiefs in Zimbabwe live he discovered that Chief Sengwe, one of the major Hlengwe chiefs exercised jurisdiction powers over his people on closed shop basis. He was further shocked when he discovered that most of the Hlengwe chiefs did the same, taking advantage of their remoteness from the District Commissioner's station.³ As a way of closing the loopholes left by his predecessors in removing all jurisdiction powers from the chiefs Wright decided to take the administration right into the center of each tribal land. The system of carrying out all administrative work at district headquarters with the exception of the annual patrol was inefficient. The distance factor meant that matters, which should be brought to the notice of the District Commissioner or members of his staff, were not brought because Hlengwe chiefs had to travel far and many days to reach the station. Appeals from courts of tribal leaders were not heard in time. Marriages were not solemnized and divorces were not regularized. The solution was to establish a system of sub-offices permanently staffed in the heart of each tribal area. All work such as civil courts, revenue collections and marriages were carried out there. The sub-offices were supplemented by rest houses in some areas where the Native Commissioner resided in order to be very close to the people for some days. The idea behind the decentralization of administration was to make sure that activities of African

1

2

3

chiefs were closely monitored. Sub-offices such as Boli, Malipati, Neshuro, Mpakati and Chibwedziva were set up in the Hlengwe heartland.

The Christian missionaries contributed towards the undermining of the chief's position. The Free Methodist Church was the most active denomination among the Hlengwe complimented by the Roman Catholic, the Reformed Church and the Lutheran churches. Oral and written reports agree that in the early days the attitude of the Christian missionaries towards the position, role and status of chiefs was generally negative. "They regarded chiefs for the most part as a drunken crowd of all sorts, their brains pickled in spirits, brutal and by nature and wholesale debauchers of women. The chiefs were always surrounded by diviners, witch-doctors and herbalists who flourished in every royal capital."¹ The Christian missionaries did not pay too much attention to the chiefs. They regarded the chiefs as dirty, unkempt, drunken individuals and not too loveable. The missionaries unlike the Native Commissioners later realized that one way of promoting the people was to visit the chiefs and convince them about Christianity.² This in a way would facilitate their work among the people because the chiefs had strong influence over their subjects. After some time colonial agents discovered that some of the Hlengwe chiefs were characters full of vision, wisdom, guile and ancient legends of their land.

An overall assessment of the activities of Native Commissioners was that they placed a very effective check upon the powers of the chiefs. Authority of chiefs in the clan was certainly diminished. The tribe was left without a head and was unable to guide itself. In the words of one old Hlengwe man, he nostalgically reflected "Our chief is the forest into which we retreat, without him we are but women".³ The Hlengwe chief as a judge was no longer allowed to inflict capital punishment and his tribunal only judged minor cases. There was further appeal, the court of the White commissioner, which was ready to consider every important case. However, if the chief became unjust or selfish in his decisions his subjects were attracted to the White tribunal. It may be that their claims will not be so well understood as in their own court, but they will perhaps meet with fairer treatment. In fact, some Native Commissioners were shrewd and clever hence they succeeded in attracting more applicants to their offices than the chiefs to their courts. The dual control contributed to a progressive loosening of tribal ties.

White settler rule usurped most of the chief's power and diminished the political activity of their subjects. This has created a new thinking that the system of chieftainship must be absolutely abolished. This would be a mistake as long as tribes and clans exist. If chieftainship is to die, let it be a natural death. Chiefs might not have been republicans, but they were democrats in a large way. Chiefs became government servants yet under their tribal law their power was checked by their councillors and could be deposed by a royal council. Under the White settler rule some chiefs felt supported by the white authorities and some were tempted to take less care of the interests of their people. Some chiefs became corrupt and desperate drunkards. They were one group of Africans who were allowed to buy and drink the white men's beer, which was absolutely refused to their subjects until 1958. There were some chiefs who sunk deeply, morally speaking. This was a lamentable result, which indeed killed the life of the clan or tribe. If the good

1

2

3

aspects of tribal system are to be preserved at all, a strong and careful supervision must be exercised by chiefs with some powers restored. This is the major reason why the ZANU PF government has introduced the Traditional Leader's Bill, an attempt to restore some of the powers removed from the chiefs by the White Settler colonialism.

REFERENCES – HLENGWE POLITICAL SYSTEM

1. H.A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE VOL. 1
2. IBID
3. H. P. – BANTU HERITAGE
4. INTERVIEW MUYESHE MKACHANA MATSILELE 1980 – CHITANGA AREA
5. JOSEPH MBOWENI'S DIARY
6. H. A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A AFRICAN TRIBE VOL. 1
7. AUTHOR'S EXPERIENCE - 1957
8. H. A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE VOL 1
9. INTERVIEW – DAVISON MTAVENI CHITANGA 1995
10. H. A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE – VOL pg 382
11. IBID
12. INTERVIEW WITH CHIEF S. M. CHITANGA 1981
13. INTERVIEW WITH REVEREND. P. MALULEKE 1994
14. INTERVIEW WITH MR MURUMBI CHIRAMI HLUNGWANI – 1974
CHITANGA AREA
15. THE HOLY BIBLE – THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY LONDON
– ST. LUKE 20: 19-26
16. THOMPSON (BLACK MARUMBINI)
17. T. HOUSER – CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
18. T. V. BULPIN – THE IVORY TRAIL pg 122
19. P. FORRESTALL – N. C. REPORTS NCV 1/1/2
20. IBID
21. IBID

22. N. C. REPORTS TO CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT TO CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT OF NATIVES VICTORIA NCV 1/1/2
23. P. FORESTALL TO CNC 10 APRIL 1897 NVC 1/1/1
24. P. FORESTALL N C REPORTS N9/1/4
25. P. FORESTALL TO CNC 11th MAY, 1897 NVC 1/1/1
26. P. FORESTALL TO CNC WEEKLY SUMARRY 29TH JUNE, 1897 NVC 1/1/1
27. P. FORESTALL REPORTS WEEKLY SUMMARY TO CNC 18TH NOVEMBER, 1897 NVC 1/1/1
28. P. FORRESTALL MONTHLY REPORT TO CNC 31ST JANUARY, 1902 1/1/2
29. N.C. LETTER 17TH MAY, 1910 TO SUPERINTENDENT OF NATIVES VICTORIA NVC 1/1/2
30. A. WEINRICH – CHIEFS ABD COUNCILS IN RHODESIA 1890 – 1969 pg 10
31. CHIEF NATIVE COMMISSIONER’S REPORT 1913 NNC pg 10
32. P. FORESTALL – NATIVE COMMISSIONER’S WEEKLY REPORT TO CNC 29TH JUNE, 1897 NVC 1/1/1
33. P. FORESTALL NATIVE COMMISSIONER YEARLY REPORT TO CNC MAY 1898 N9/1/4
34. P. FORESTALL’S LETTER TO MR JAMES 16TH MARCH, 1900 NCV1/1/2
35. IBID
36. P. FORRESTALL NC LETTER TO CNC SALISBURY 25TH OCTOBER, 1902 NCV 1/1/2
37. P. FORESTALL NATIVE COMMISSIONERS’ LETTER TO ACTING CNC SALISBURY 30TH MARCH, 1903 NCV 1/1/2
38. T. HOUSER – JOSEPH MBOWENI DIARY
39. A. WRIGHT – THE VALLEY OF THE IRON WOOD.
40. T. O. RANGER – REVOLT IN SOUTHERN RHODESIA pg
41. P. FORESTALL N.C. REPORTS TO CNC 1/1/1

42. A. WRIGHT – THE VALLEY OF THE IRON WOOD

43. T. V. BULPIN – THE IVORY TRAIL PG 122

44. T. HOUSER – SOCIAL ORGANIZATION – CULTURAL ANTHORPOLOGY

45. M. PINYUKA MATSILELE – INTERVIEW 1989 CHITANGA

THE MYSTERY OF MAKAPAILE POOL

Once upon a time historians, geographers, environmentalists and oral traditionalists referred to a once mighty Makapaile Pool in the Runde River, Masvingo Province in Chief Chitanga's area, which is now a heap of sand with narrow streams flowing through it. In times of flood the water is now flowing very fast. Though yet in the past it would appear it stood still and shimmering, trying to negotiate its way down the river. The disappearance of the pool became pronounced after 1996, and today it is no more. This was a gradual process, which took a nose dive turn in the late 1990's because of various factors. The major cause of the disappearance of the pool is a very simple siltation because of human activities.

Runde River, which flows into the Save, is one of the major rivers, which flows through the Zimbabwean southeastern lowveld. By the time it passes through the area where the Makapaile Pool was located, it is about five kilometers long. Makapaile Pool was located in a place where the river took a bend in a southerly direction. There were three major streams in the river, which were separated by small islands, and all converged in the pool. Then the water ran out of the pool by two streams of the river separated between by rocks, which served as a natural dam wall for the pool. It was only in times of abnormal floods that water went over these massive rocks to fall down on the other side to create what the local people called Mhute's Falls. Before the name Mhute, the falls were simply known as Makapaile Falls.

The origins of the name Makapaile in Shangaani, and Makapaire in Karanga, according to oral tradition, is drawn from a man who lived as a hermit in the vicinity of the pool. He lived largely on fish. His origins and lifestyle, and his death, was passed from one generation to another traced back to time immemorial. The mystery of the man was closely associated with the mysteries of the pool until its siltration.

The Runde River forms a natural boundary between the Shangaans under chief Chitanga, and the Karangas under Chief Shindi. However, since the greater part of the pool was on the Shangaan side, they claimed physically to own the pool. On the other hand Chief Chitanga and his people had only claimed this area after the 1850's when they time and time again raided Shindi and his people. Later on the White Settler Government moved them into that area in 1917. Chief Chitanga and his people were clever enough to accept the legendary and religious powers and claims the Karanga people held over the pool. In particular the Kuriremwe clan of the Shumba Sipambi dynasty who lived under Chief Chitanga claimed to be the custodians of Makapaile Pool with all its mysteries. The Karanga part of the river was made a White commercial farm restricting their access to the pool. This gave the Shangaans more opportunities for the general use of the pool.

In the old days before the early 1960's the pool was hardly accessible. It was only accessible from very few points. The pool was surrounded in the north and east banks by very thick forests. Very tall and large trees of *mimveva*, *mifomwe*, *mishembe*, *mipalavana*, *mitsovhori*, *mikanyi*, *misimbiri mikuwedende* and a variety of creepers surrounded the pool. Inside the river thickets of reeds grew to great heights. It was on the south side where the river flowed out of the pool that is covered with large rocks reaching the height of about 150 metres and the two major streams of the river passed through to continue its journey. The thick forests and massive rocks gave the pool its

majestic appearance and added to its mystery. The only few access points to the pool were made by the large numbers of hippo which inhabited the pool. Even during Winter or dry season accessibility avoided the pool because of its mysteries and religious significance. For a long time this was responsible for the survival of the pool.

As for the size of the pool, a direct line across the pool from one bank to the other was roughly 1000 metres. The circumference was roughly about 1.5 kilometres. The whole shape of the pool was a rough circle with inlets here and there of streams, which emptied their waters into the river. The depth of the pool remained a stretch of imagination for those who came very close to the pool. However, the number of hippos, crocodiles and a variety of fish, which lived in the pool, was evidence of its depth. There was a strong belief that a family of mermaids also lived in the pool particularly the rocky side, which was believed to harbour very big caves under them. There was also a claim that there was a fish as big as a calf. If true this could only have been a whale. However, only a few chosen ones claimed to have seen this kind of fish animal. These are some of the mysteries of the pool. Unfortunately, modern scientists and mathematicians never had a chance to calculate the depth of the pool. Until after 1995 all the memorable droughts in history had failed to make the pool dry up although the amount of water was reduced in severe drought periods.

In this part of the Runde River there were a good number of pools inhabited by hippos. However, Makapaile Pool in an account made by the members of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife in 1966, stated the pool had 120 hippos. They only confirmed an estimation of the local people who compared the number of hippos with numbers that they observed in other pools. In winter, hippos had a culture of basking on the sun, on the sandy banks of the pools. It was then that the local people made their estimations. Why such a large number of hippos inhabited one pool when there were other pools nearby was a mystery to the local people, though the modern learned man has other explanations. For many years the large number of hippos had co-existed with the people. It is true that there was always a conflict between hippos and people as to who was supposed to reap the latter's crops, pumpkins, beans, nuts, and maize. In the 1960's gunmen employed by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife made frequent visits to the pool with the mission of reducing the number of hippos that were a threat to the farmers. The efficient guns and boom sounds began to decline, gun sounds and blood of colleagues threatened their security and survival in Makapaile Pool. The Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 increased land under cultivation, over crowding in the Reserve and an awareness of crop cultivation among the local people at the expense of the security of the hippos. Land clearing and cultivation was brought to the banks of the pool. Soil erosion and deforestation also reached the banks of the pool.

Before the White man and his gun the local people had protected his crops against the hippo by beating drums during the nights, digging trenches and making fences of branches of trees. It was on rare occasions that hunting groups killed a hippo. Hence the hippos and local people co-existed and had their own mutual understanding. In the 1980's the hippos discovered that their sacred pool was being besieged from all angles. They began to abandon the sacred pool and by the time the pool was no more in the 1990's, the hippos were also no more. The abundance of hippos in Makapaile Pool is now only a story for the generations after 1980 and the grunting night noises they made

are only tales. Their sight is now for the privileged that travel outside the locality. The siltration of the pool logically meant the disappearance of the hippos.

There is a popular story told about one particular hippo that lived in Makapaile Pool until her death in 1968. Those who were living were about 70 years of age, who were born and bred in the area explained that they had seen this hippo when they were youngsters. This particular female hippo had one long tooth that projected outside her mouth on the right side. Thus she was easily recognized when the hippos were basking in the sun, or when they raised their heads outside the water. This appearance was a mystery and abnormality that as far as the local people were concerned signified that she held an important position in the pool. The local people called her *Davula* literary meaning “opening by force”. The local people also claimed that every year she gave birth to a baby. Hence they also recognized her as a mother, and by the time she died in 1968, she was the grandmother of the pool. It must be remembered that in a pool the hippos have only one bull until he is dead or driven out by an energetic young one. Other male calves abandon the pool with their mothers, or are chased away from the herd to find their own families, or to live as hermits. Some people claim that *Davula* had a chain of beads around her neck – another mystery. The other popular story was that *Davula* was associated with wizards and witches. There is a strong belief among the Shangaans and other Africans that witches and wizards use hippos, hyenas, owls and jackals as a means of transport. Possibly it was because of their nocturnal activities, since witches and wizards are believed to be active during the night. *Davula* was not only another means of transport for the witches and wizards, but a special one. No wonder she was adorned by beads. In fact her peculiar projected tooth was associated with witchery and wizardry. It was a special mark of recognition. It was a reality that she had a tooth that projected outside, and to those who did not believe in mystery it was simply an abnormality or a result of fighting.

In November, 1968 *Davula* was found dead about two kilometers from Makapaile Pool her life long home. In fact many animals both wild and domesticated perished after a combination of drought and a strong, very cold wind accompanied by drizzle was experienced in the area. For the elders *Davula*'s death was not a natural event, but heralded bad times ahead. In fact for them the death of other animals before and after *Davula* was associated with her death not the bad weather, drought and the fact that, according to their information, she was more than 80 years of age, and old age had to announce her demise. Many people visited her death site to witness the end of the mysterious hippo of Makapaile Pool. Shangaans are known for their love for meat killed or otherwise. They will try to salvage something from a dead animal. Nobody dared to salvage anything from *Davula* because of the mystery that surrounded her, her peculiarities and sudden death. Interestingly enough the beads had disappeared if even she had them. For the elders the explanation was simple, for her riders had taken them away since she had died at night.

A zealous young schoolboy ten years of age after two weeks took *Davula*'s head to his headmaster at Chitanga Primary School to put in the school museum. The headmaster welcomed the gift although many elders raised eyebrows. The young man had an experience, which he will never forget after the night he delivered the head to the headmaster. For the first time after six years he urinated his bed in his sleep. The spirit of *Davula* wanted to revenge by humiliating him because he had taken the head to

unfamiliar surroundings. Davula's head remained in the school museum until the days of the Liberation War when it disappeared like many other things. The elders associate the later siltation and demise of Makapaile Pool with the death of Davula. Another mystery of Makapaile Pool.

Makapaile Pool was famous for its crocodiles. As far as numbers were concerned it can only be said there were very many. It was impossible to visit the pool and not see a number of crocodiles. They were also famous for their desire of human meat. An unaccountable number of cattle, goats, sheep and dogs lost their lives. Many animals sealed their fate by visiting the pool. Many herd boys remember how they were beaten by their parents or elders for letting animals stray near or to Makapaile Pool. The crocodiles were also famous for their big size. The local people described them as "*swikepe swe makapaile*" meaning ships of Makapaile. In 1966 after a spate of cattle, goats, sheep and dogs killed by crocodiles, the local people made a strong appeal to the Department of National Parks and Wildlife. For two nights the hunters had an exciting time and killed seven crocodiles of abnormal size. These were real ships of Makapaile Pool. Local people do not eat crocodiles because they are associated with witches and eat people. The hunters removed the skins and took them away. The flesh became a feast for fish and dogs. The water in the pool turned oily because of the fat from the crocodiles. This was the beginning of the disappearance of crocodiles from the pool. The pool is no more and obviously the crocodiles are no more.

FUMPULE

The pool was a hideout for the crocodiles when going out hunting upstream or downstream. They always dragged their victims to the deep pool from some shallow spots of the river. A very moving story is told of an event that happened in the 1940's of a young teen-age boy called Fumpule. One hot summer afternoon seven teen-age boys decided to cool themselves in a small pool about half a kilometer upstream in Makapaile Pool. The small pool and the big pool were linked by a flowing stream since the early summer rains had fallen. The boys were aware of the risk they were taking concerning Makapaile crocodiles. Boys will always be boys. In the course of swimming and playing games in the pool one of the Makapaile ships grabbed Fumpule in the shallow waters and started to drag him to the deep pool. When the others realized what had happened they panicked and scuttled out of the pool to safety. Fumpule cried out to the top of his voice, yelled and screamed for help. The crocodile started to drag him down to the deep pool. The boys gathered courage and started to hurl stones and whatever they could grab, but one dared to plunge into the water to hold poor Fumpule. The crocodile was so big and determined that whatever the kind of missiles the boys hurled on it were ineffective. All the boys could do was to continue following the crocodile and the victim down the stream. Time and again the crocodile would raise the boy out of the water, and then under. Every time he rose outside the water he would yell for help, and each next cry was in a subdued voice sounding in desperation. Just on the edge of Makapaile Pool, Fumpule called the name of his elder brother three times, and that was his end. He became one of the statistics. When the other boys went home they hesitated to inform their parents because they knew that they had been instructed many times not to go near the pool. However, finally one of the boys broke the sad news of what had befallen Fumpule. The men of the village, as it was a custom under such circumstances, grabbed

spears, axes, knobkerries, bows and arrows and rushed to the famous pool. It was already evening. When they began to scout in the pool they heard a roaring sound under water on the side of the pool with the massive rocks. It is a tradition of crocodiles that after killing a victim they store it to rot so that they can easily eat it. Meanwhile they kept a strict vigil for the victim. The roaring was a sign that the crocodile had Fumpule in one of the under water caves, and there was no way the relatives could retrieve the body except to sadly return home knowing the fate of their son. Three of Fumpule's companions on that particular fateful day are still alive today to vividly tell the story, which happened more than thirty years ago. The spot where Fumpule was grabbed by the crocodile from then on is known as Fumpule's Pool. His was a story which lived to be told because they were witnesses, and the dragging exercise was a nerve wracking sight and hard to imagine. There were so many whose fate was easily sealed because they were closer to the deep pool or no witnesses, but only blood and other remains such as pieces of clothes remained as signs of where they had died. The traditional method of fighting crocodiles was ineffective such as trapping or piling branches of thorny trees such as wait-a-bit. Therefore they had to live with the scourge of the crocodiles of Makapaile Pool.

MERMAIDS (*TINJUZU*)

There was a strong belief that the rocks of Makapaile Pool harboured very large caves under water that were headquarters for the mermaids (*juju*). Their appearance and behaviour is between human beings, fish, reptiles and animals. From the head down to the waist is human, but the last part is a fish. It is also amphibious like a hippo, able to live comfortably on land and in water. Its basic diet is fish. Some people claim that mermaids own property in form of cloth and blankets. They are also shy of human beings, and seen by chance particularly at dawn or sunrise or on misty days. Their language is one of clicking and clattering sound. However, existence of mermaids is an open argument between modern scientists who refute their existence, and traditional Africans who strongly believe in their existence. Makapaile Pool was claimed to be one of the many scattered mermaid dwellings in the major rivers. Inhabitants of the Lowveld both Shona and Shangaans believe that their capital was located on the confluence of the Runde and Save rivers. Their existence has been threatened by modern life. There are many recorded cases when Europeans stormed places believed to be occupied by mermaids using dynamite. There are no known cases of captured mermaids, and traditionalists claim that it only led to their disappearance and are now living in the Indian Ocean.

In the early 1940's a group of five Shangaan teen-age boys witnessed an event which they still live to tell, and it also spread to many parts of Masvingo Province. Three of these teens who are today are mature men are still alive. On this eventful day the herd boys let their cattle cross the Runde River at a spot four kilometers upstream from Makapaile Pool. The herd boys followed the cattle on the Karanga side of the area. On their way back with their charges the herd boys decide to cross one of the major flowing streams of the river using the fallen branch of the *palavula* tree. The branch linked the opposite sides of the stream. Thus the herd boys crawled over the branch in a line. When the other four had safely crossed, suddenly they heard a great splash and saw water rising, with this happening the last herd boy in the line, named Hlazelani, disappeared. They only heard one cry shouting that he had been caught by a crocodile. The group

panicked and dashed over the riverbank to safety. When they gathered courage and returned to the spot there was no sign of Hlazelani, nor the crocodile. The next logical step was to rush to the village and inform the elders. Likewise, the men, who happened to be around, equipped themselves with spears, axes, knobkerries, bows and arrows. They rushed as quickly as they could to the river. They combed the whole area hoping to see blood or pieces of cloth or to hear the groaning of the big reptile guarding its victim. There are obvious signs when a crocodile has killed a person or animal. This was a shock to the old men because there was no sign to confirm that the herd boys had witnessed. The men made a thorough search until late at night, and even fire was used, but all in vain. One elder indicated that the herd boys were misleading them, possibly because they had done to Hlazelani like the story of Cain of Joseph in the Old Testament. When they went home that night all the four herd boys received a hiding that they will never forget. Sometimes at the same time, and sometimes separately, but to the old men's surprise they stuck to their story. Very early the next morning the men were back at the spot, but no sign, and their vigil and surveillance of the whole area from the spot where Hlazelani disappeared to Makapaile continued for a month. There was also hope that his remains might surface so that they could bury him. The local people had witnessed many cases of people, dogs, goats and cattle killed by crocodiles and always there had been evidence then or later. They could find nothing of blood, remains of cloth, limbs, bones, skins to tell about the sad story. Nothing to tell about the aftermath of Hlazelani. The only logical traditional African way was to consult a traditional healer. According to informants who were relatives, five traditional healers or *ng'angas* were consulted. Their information was a consensus that Hlazelani had been taken away by a mermaid; he was alive and they had to wait and see until the mermaid revealed its needs. For how long, and why they had to remain forever, and evermore. The local people were puzzled but there was nothing they could do. The spot where Hlazelani disappeared became sacred. Relatives were ordered not to mourn or speak about it because this could only anger the mermaids and would not reveal him. In the midst of great despondence the relatives had a ray of hope because the *n'angas* had told them that he was alive and would one day come back to them a great *n'anga* as long as they fulfilled the demands of the mermaids when they made their revelations.

Days, weeks, months and about twenty years passed after both Hlazelani's parents had died that stories of his appearance began to circulate. In 1959 stories about Hlazelani's appearance started among his close relatives. They started as whispers, then rumours and finally the truth. Hlazelani's parents were dead, and he was left with his elder blood brother who was a family man. The rumour which became truth according to the local people was that every morning just before dawn the brother had a knock on his bedroom. When he responded to check who was knocking there was always no reply, but a continuous knock. When the brother made an attempt to open the door he would hear the footsteps of a person running towards the river two kilometers from his home. The only other reaction he would always hear was a voice shouting Hlazelani's name, and then the footsteps. The brother was the only one who heard the knock at the door. His wife was disturbed by husband's restlessness at night, and she became curious. When he told her she also began to hear the knocks and the two had sleepless nights. When it became unbearable they informed their relatives. The close relatives began to take turns to check at dawn if they could witness the peculiar event. Hlazelani avoided them, but

whenever they gave up, he came back. Once again they had to consult the traditional healers (*n'angas*). The explanation was simply that Hlazelani was revealing himself after twenty years of his disappearance. Then the story became public. Then many people began to claim that they were seeing Hlazelani at many places and odd times. The most common was at dawn or sunset at the spot he disappeared, or graves of his parents. He was naked, very brown in complexion, and his hair reached his waist. Whenever, he noticed people around him he ran back to the river and down to Makapaile Pool. All conversations among elders and young ones in 1960 were about Hlazelani. It became the talk of the locality. Any peculiar events or sounds were interpreted to explain the presence of Hlazelani. The young ones were advised to keep away from the spot he had disappeared.

The relatives were given instructions by the *n'angas* if they wanted him to return. The procedures they had follow could not be done without the knowledge of Chief Chitanga, but even worse the White District Administrator at Mwenezi Office and the police. They had to conduct some of ceremonies as a group, at the spot where Hlazelani had disappeared and at night. It must be remembered that since the First Chimurenga War in 1897 and nationalist political activities White Settler Government regarded African ceremonies and gatherings with suspicion. The Hlazelani affair became a public affair because it had to be monitored by the White Settler regime. The relatives lead by a woman *n'anga* accompanied by all old relatives men and females-blood relatives had spend the night singing, dancing and beating drums at the spot Hlazelani disappeared. These were songs and dances associated with ancestral worship and ceremonies. They had to perform this ceremony daily at night from about 8 pm to 4 am until there were signs from mermaids that they were prepared to release Hlazelani, then they would embark on the next stage. The exercise was very taxing for the old men and women, also at the expense of their daily chores. When signs of a reaction from the mermaid, or Hlazelani, became remote and hard to come by, relatives began to point fingers at each other. After two weeks of hammering the drums and singing daily one early morning, the *n'anga* and a few chosen elders left the group, and moved closer to the pool. The *n'anga* claimed that she had heard the voice of Hlazelani calling her. After their visit to the pool the *n'anga* and elders claimed that in the middle of the pool they saw a reed held up by a hand which slightly emerged out of the water indicating that the holder of the reed was dancing. At least this was good news for the tired relatives.

After a day, the *n'anga* visited the pool early in the morning alone. Her feedback was that the mermaids had demanded a black cow and black she-goat be tied close to the spot where Hlazelani had disappeared. There was nobody to be in sight for two days. When they returned early in the morning the next day, all the blood male relatives were to form a queue holding each other on the waist. The *n'anga* would lead the way followed by the other brother of Hlazelani and followed by the other brothers according to seniority. The queue would move into the pool at the spot where he disappeared, and here the exchange would take place. His elder brother and wife were to make a commitment of taking this man who had lived a different lifestyle for about twenty years, and who was to become a great *n'anga* until he could stand alone in life. Relatives were prepared to contribute a black cow and black she goat. The idea of queuing to go into the unknown pool was not accepted. The brother and wife could not make their commitment to accept the queer man in their family. The *n'anga* noticed hesitation in the minds of

relatives to fulfill what she claimed to be the demands of the mermaids. Once again she visited the pool alone and her feedback was that the mermaids were taking Hlazelani to Makapaile Pool and when the summer rains fell and floods came, they were taking him for good to the confluence of the Save and Runde rivers. Fear, suspicion and mistrust began to reign among the relatives. They began to point fingers at each other particularly the wife of Hlazelani's elder brother his mother's son. In their inner circles they raised doubts over the authenticity of the *n'anga's* conversations and messages from the mermaids. The summer rains and floods finally came, and Hlazelani's relatives had not made a decision. There were rumours that he was seen on the rocks of Makapaile Pool twice or more in about December, 1960. The rumour died, and Hlazelani was never heard again until today. The *n'anga* demanded her payment which the elder brother, particularly his wife, paid grudgingly.

More than twenty-five years after the relatives of Hlazelani failed to rescue him, the siltation of Makapaile Pool is associated with this event. The elders claim that the siltation is not natural, but related to the fact that the mermaids were angry and abandoned the pool. Hence the pool is no more. In 1974 Hlazelani's brother lost his mind, although physically fit, until his death in 1997. Some relatives stretched their imaginations back to interpret this as a punishment from the spirits of his ancestors because he had failed to ransom his brother from the mermaids. The episode of Hlazelani and other events associated with it remain one of the mysteries of the Makapaile Pool. Wherein lies the truth for the Whites and those Africans who think like them, it was one of those African superstitions? For the Shangaans, the Karangas, and majority of Zimbabwean Africans it was one of the real African mysteries from the world of the spirits and the dead who only die in flesh. Unfortunately for the generations after the 1970's the stories of mermaids are pure folk tales or legends.

FISH

Makapaile Pool was a home of a variety of fish. In simple language it was abundant in fish life. Varieties such as barble, bream, tiger, carpenter, mud slipper, goldfish were common. One old man claimed that there was a fish as big as a calf. This kind of fish could only be likened to a whale. However, it was never confirmed independent observation until the pool was silted. The large number of hippos deposited their dung in water which fertilized the algae and other water plants, which in turn fed large schools of fish. The thick vegetation around and in the pool also provided fish with food. The inaccessibility and sacredness of the pool and fear of crocodiles limited the number of people who caught fish in this particular pool. In most cases it remained more of a breeding place for the neighbouring small pools and streams and a major source of fish during Winter.

ARMY DOCUMENT REFERENCE ONE

The army played a very important role as a component of the political system and as an effective instrument of Government. In former times the Hlengwe military organisation seems to have gradually developed and drastically changed after their contact with the Gaza Nguni. The army used to form in straight line not in a circle, as was with the case with the Gaza Nguni influence. When Manukosi with his Gaza Nguni subjugated the plains of Delagoa all was changed. Another important element which was introduced by the Gaza Nguni and the Mfecane era was the establishment of the standing army. In the past the Hlengwe rulers called all able-bodied men in times of war.

The Gaza Nguni introduced among the Hlengwe a system of war, which was more cruel than the old one. There was mass killing except women and able-bodied men who were taken prisoners. The Hlengwe clans in order to survive accepted this mode of fighting. They adopted the Nguni-Zulu system almost wholesale. The proof was Zulu military terminology and dress later used by the Hlengwe. The Nguni noticed that the Hlengwe had certain aptness for war and incorporated them into their own regiments, sending them forward in the battle. They praised them calling them *Mabuyandlela* meaning those who prepare the way. This is a nickname which the Hlengwe have kept to this day and of which they were generally proud of.

The war costume constituted the head, neck, waist and leg dress. The head was decorated with three plumes of slender feathers taken from the *sakabonyi* (widow bird) or (*magalu* or (*mafukwana*) and one of the plumes was worn on the centre. One on each side and all three fixed on to a conical helmet *shidlodlo* rimmed with ostrich feathers. The helmet was set on a kind of tongue of another skin held in place by a chin-strap. The style of the headgear and colour of feathers distinguished ranks and regiments. It made the head look about twice the natural size giving it a more ferocious appearance. It was adorned here and there with porcupine quills.

On the neck the soldiers wore a necklace of plaited thongs of black calfskin called (*tinkocho*). Armlets of long white on hairs carefully selected from the tail, ornamented the biceps and garlands of a similar make were worn on calves of legs. The belt around the loin was made of a beautiful skin of a civet cat *nsimba* with its fine yellow stripes hanging down in front to the middle of the thighs and small antelope's skin behind (*madzobo ya hlengane*). The calves and ankles were covered with bracelets of large black seeds. The size of legs considerably increased and conveyed the idea of a pachyderm. In most cases they moved bare footed although sometimes wore wood sandals which were made from the (*marula, nkanyisi*) or (*muwuyu-boabab*) trees.

Weapons or arms dated from the very ancient times such as the club or knobkerrie to some old fashioned guns were used. One of the most formidable weapons was the assegai (thlari). There were two kinds of assegais. The larger one was called the *likhaho*. It consisted of a sharp, pointed, double-edged steel blade, fixed on to a stick with the iron and brass wire. It was for hand to hand contact and a warrior never released his hold of it. The smaller assegai was called *tindzombi*, with a blade of the size of an arrowhead, fastened to the handle with strips of bark or palm leaves. Three or more could be held in the hand and when fighting was taking place they could be thrown at the enemy from a distance. The handle of the larger assegai was broken at the warrior's death, but the blade never died to be inherited by the warrior's sons. During the warrior's life the large

assegai was kept in the hut of his first wife, and she was called the owner, (*nwinyi*) of the assegai. It was taboo for other wives to touch it, a fact which showed the special position of the first wife. An axe or hatchet was another common weapon used in war as well as for domestic uses. There were two types of axes. The one with a narrow and elongated blade was called *shingwatane*. The broad and rounded blade was called the *shiyema*. Big knives called *mikwa*, which looked like swords were also used as war weapons. A dagger of rare specimen believed to have originated from the Ndaui people was also used.

The shield (*shithlangu*) was a very vital weapon used by the Hlengwe and its effectiveness was made popular by the Nguni. The Hlengwe shield was made like that of the Nguni. It was made out of an ox-hide, oval shaped, various sizes and colours. The various colours distinguished the regiments. On either side of the central line from top to the bottom two parallel rows of small square incisions called *magabela* were made through which ran strips of hide of a different colour. These formed a series of oblongs. The ends of these strips were tied at the back of the shield to form several sheath-like nooses into which was inserted the stick by which it was held. The space between the two lines of oblongs was called *nhlana* meaning the back of the shield. The nooses or sheaths numbered four or six, two or three at the top and two or three at the bottom. Then space was left in the middle where the warrior grasped the stick. The stick was used to strengthen the shield and acted as a pivot around which it could turn. It was the pivoting action, which gave the shield its chief value as a weapon of protection. An assegai thrown with considerable strength would easily penetrate an ox-hide, but when it struck the shield, the force of impact caused it to pivot and the weapon was deflected to one side. If it struck the middle it would hit the stick, break it and lose the further impact. The Hlengwe shield or *shithlangu* was invented to protect the warrior against the assegai at a time when firearms were not in common use.

Before the Mfecane, mobilization of the army was generally simple. The chief mastered his army by means of a *shipalapala*, a simple rudimentary trumpet. A messenger called *shigijimi* ran from one village to another blowing the trumpet. When he was tired he passed it to the second person and so on. At the sound of the *shipalapala*, warriors or all able-bodied men would respond by shouting (*A hi hlomeni*) meaning "let us arm". They at once put on their war costumes and went to the capital. If the situation was more serious, such as being invaded, everyone was supposed to give alarm *kuthlavela mukhosi* and everyone was supposed to take cover.

The army was divided into battalions called *mabotshu*. The battalion or *botshu* was made up of several companies *mithlawa* or *mabadhla* varying in numbers. When the army first assembled the first formation was called *kubiya mukhumbi* or *kuaka mukhumbi* meaning to build or form a circle of warriors. Every able-bodied man was a soldier and made it a point of honour to join the army when mobilised.

One of the earliest written sources on the use of guns by the Hlengwe referred to the last part of the 17th century. The Ronga, a group of the Hlengwe, are reported to have possessed several hundreds of rifles during their war with the Portuguese in 1894 and were fairly proficient in their use.¹

However, the Hlengwe made their own guns and the gun makers became very important individuals in society. Skills of gun making were normally passed from father

1

to son or within the family. These guns were normally used for hunting and rarely for war.

The administering of war medicine played a very important role in military affairs. The custom probably was of ancient origin and practised without great formality until the advent of the Nguni influence when it was brought into much greater prominence and invested more solemnity. The drinking of war medicine and smearing of bodies was confirmed by oral traditions and written records later to have been a common practice among the Hlengwe. The chief doctor of the army prepared the medicine. The belief was that the warriors became more courageous, protection against evil spirits of those they killed, to give them luck and not to be vulnerable to bullets. However, the invulnerability to bullets appears to have been a superstition although the warriors of the day appeared to have been perfectly convinced. It gave the warriors some confidence and courage.

During the war, the whole tribe was subjected to many taboos. Those who remained at home were expected to live in peace, and make no noise in the villages. Women were not allowed to close the doors of their huts, and fire must be only lit in huts in the evening. Some of these taboos disappeared with the advent of the Mfecane. Likewise, work in the fields was more or less suspended. It was also taboo to mourn for warriors killed in the war before the return of the army. It was also taboo to have sexual relations when the army was on the warpath. These taboos which might be regarded as superstition, if thoroughly analysed it is found that they served a purpose at that time.

Scouts or *tihloli* were an important element in military campaigns before and after the Mfecane. Scouts surveyed the area ahead and each company had its leader to whom they brought reports. Generally, the chief did not go to the battle. He remained at home. The chief must have heard his military experience before he came to power.

In the days before the Mfecane it appears as if the wars were fought on better human principles. However, after the Mfecane it became a general rule to kill everyone, babies, old men and old women and all the disabled. The only lives spared were those of young men and girls of whom they could hope to absorb in their tribe. Young men could become general hands or join the army. Girls were normally taken as wives or sold to others for matrimonial purposes. As a rule such wives were not ill-treated. The war prisoners were called *tihloko* meaning heads and this was the only kind of slavery practised by the Hlengwe.

One important element of military warfare introduced by Mfecane was the method of surprise attack and sudden descent upon a peaceful and unsuspecting folk, avoiding regular battles. During campaigns passwords were also used. Before the Mfecane the African traditional methods of warfare were pitched battles or direct confrontation away from villages, women and children. Those who resorted to guerrilla warfare, surprise attacks or ambush were regarded as cowards. When the Hlengwe moved into Zimbabwe and attacked Karanga groups using methods of surprise attack, the Karanga called them *mambwende*, meaning cowards. This derogatory nickname is still in use particularly when tempers are high between the Hlengwe and Karanga.

When the army was defeated it returned silently and dispersed before reaching the capital. Mourning of the dead took place in the villages, but this was not allowed to take a long time because the dead were not killed, but had died on the battle fields and they were men. When the army was victorious they returned with great ceremony and pomp.

This was marked by important songs called *hubu*. When approaching the capital they formed themselves into *mukhumbi* in order to enter the place. They were applauded as great men of the day *tingwazi* or *tinhenha* heroes who had saved the tribe. Those who killed in the battle covered themselves with the most enviable glory. They had the right to perform the war dance before the chief. However, those who had killed were believed to have exposed themselves to the mysteries and deadly influence of the spirits of the dead, thus they were to undergo medical treatment. *Nuru* was the spirit of the slain which was believed to try and take its revenge on the slayer. It haunted him and might drive him into insanity. After the victory, celebrations were all over the land. Those who had killed remained at the capital for the medicine man to purify them. After the battle, for about a month the heroes wore trophies or medals called *tintebe* made of antelope horns.

The military rites of the Hlengwe, on the eve of colonialism was a mixture of the old Thonga and Nguni customs. War threatened the existence of the tribe and the chief was the central and vital cell of the organism of the clan in times of danger. Thus the readiness of the warriors to answer the *shipalapala*, the *guba* to entoll the chief and *gila*. The *guba* and *gila* were both national rites directed towards the salvation of the clan. These may be elements close to a national idea. It was possible that war taboos owed their origin to the idea of the passage taboos similar to the circumcision school and the period of mourning.

War songs played a very important role during military campaigns. The songs stimulated war like courage and imbued the warrior's minds with certainty of victory. The war songs called *guba*, and the war dances *gila*. The war songs and dance supplemented the medicine administered on the soldiers to render them invulnerable. The war songs were short, usually a declamation of few words by a soloist *musimi* who danced in the middle of the circle. The chorus was sung by the warriors, stamping their feet on the ground and striking their shields with assegais. The true war dance the *gila* or *giya* was a representation of deeds of valour by warriors before and after the battle especially by those who had killed. The war formation or *mukhumbi* was very impressive. "It is a mixture of dramatic, epic and lyric poetry three literary gestures which are still confounded, in the whole being enhanced by a deep, wild music and subject to the laws of a certain artistic style".² The fighting instincts were excited to the highest pitch by patriotic choruses and dramatic representations. The singing and dancing before battle were abandoned together with the line battle formation when Manukosi and his Nguni invaded the Hlengwe areas. However, these only took place after victorious celebrations. Today they have remained to be heard or seen, being sung and danced nostalgically at beer or *vukanyi* drinks by the old folks. In fact, Hlengwe folk tales are rich in military tales and vocabulary rich in military language.

The dawn of Mfecane revolutionised the military organisation of the Hlengwe. In fact, Hlengwe societies particularly groups, which trekked into Zimbabwe became organised on military bases in order to survive. The army played a very important role in the political, economic and social organisation of the tribe until the introduction of European colonialism. During the late 18th Century the whole sub-continent of the Southern Africa entered a period of turmoil as a result of the Mfecane. The Hlengwe began to pay more attention to raiding and warfare as a means of making a living. There was a definite increase in the violence in society. The areas between the Tugwi and

Mwenezi Rivers were subjected to the Gaza-Nguni and Ndebele raids. The Hlengwe groups for example, Sengwe, and Vurumela allied themselves with the Gaza-Nguni, the Paramount Chief Chitanga with the Ndebele. The Hlengwe were more responsible for raiding the Karanga groups who lived in the Southern parts of the areas between the Limpopo, Runde, and Save Rivers. The Ndebele and Gaza raids overlapped in the Runde - Tugwi confluence area and clashed among the Hlengwe in the lowveld area. Most of the Hlengwe aligned with the Gaza. The lowveld area was subjected to raiding for years by the Hlengwe as instruments of the Gaza or Ndebele or at their own initiative. Oral tradition and Portuguese sources confirm that the Ndebele generally respected the Mutirikwi River as their border with the Gaza-Nguni³

The raids were responsible for the population distribution in the Southern and Eastern parts of Zimbabwe before the British South Africa Company occupation. For instance, Matibi was forced to move away from his Northern lands into the remote lowveld in the late 1880's.⁴

It has also been argued that Hlengwe military organisation and campaigns were not started by the Mfecane, but only precipitated and given a wide scope. Before the Mfecane what might be termed the Tsonga explosion, the Hlengwe included, was occurring throughout the interior of Southern Mozambique. Most of the Hlengwe activities were centred on an area near Save River. They were reported to be stealing land, which previously belonged to the Tonga. Their movements carried them to the neighbourhood of Sofala where additional land fell into their grasp. Even parts of Teve were conquered by the expansive Hlengwe although most activities took place in the North, incipient movements towards Inhambane were also noted.⁵ Mfecane renewed Hlengwe expansion. Their thrust towards Inhambane was halted by the Portuguese. It was because of this process that the Hlengwe occupied much territory of southern Mozambique, southeastern Zimbabwe and parts of the Transvaal. The Hlengwe expansion to a large degree was responsible for changes, which occurred in the ethnographic map of these areas.

Oral traditions and written records by White hunters, traders, adventurous and officials of the British South African Company especially in the Native Department have provided information about Hlengwe military activities in Zimbabwe. Hlengwe incursions into Zimbabwe were organised and conducted under military terms. They were basically results of the Mfecane and extensions of Gaza Nguni activities in Mozambique. Inside Zimbabwe some have argued that they were instruments, vassals or tributaries of the Gaza Nguni and the Ndebele. It is true that there were cases when the Hlengwe carried out raids on behalf of the Gaza Nguni or the Ndebele, yet it is also true that the Hlengwe carried out raids on their own initiatives.

According to oral traditions, the first largest Hlengwe group to move into Zimbabwe was led by Chief Ngwena who settled in the now Mwenezi area among the Karanga. Ngwena aware of his little knowledge of the environment and military strength versus the Gaza Nguni in the South and the Ndebele in the northwest decided to make peace with the Karanga. He even paid tribute to Madzivire, a Karanga chief who lived on the Mwenezi River. Murimbi and Mere who were Madzivire's tributary chiefs at one occasion killed Ngwena's people. This incurred Ngwena's wrath who organised a strong

4

5

army, which drove Mere, Mirimi and Madzivire out of their land. It was possible that Ngwena used this as an excuse, but the real fact was that he was now acquainted with the environment and safe from Gaza Nguni and Ndebele. Madzivire and his followers were driven across the Runde River and Ngwena and his people occupied the whole of Mwenezi area until occupation by the British South Africa Company in 1890.⁶

By the time Ngwena died, and his group had become very big, his brothers and sons had started to disperse towards different directions of the southeastern lowveld of Zimbabwe. They took advantage of the large sparsely settled areas and the military weakness of Karanga groups. Once again, raids became the order of the day. The Gaza Nguni under Mzila and the Ndebele under Lobengula were stretching their military activities towards this area. For instance, the Hlengwe Chief Vurumela and his group attacked Chief Matibi who called the Ndebele to help him drive Vurumela out of present day Maranda Communal lands in the Mwenezi District. At one time there was a succession dispute between Mateke and his brother Maime over the Vurumela chieftainships. Maime with the assistance of Mzila, the then Gaza Nguni ruler killed Mateke. Mateke's son won the support of the Ndebele and avenged his father's death. The renewed war forced one of Mateke's group to move to the lower area of Mwenezi and Buby Rivers.⁷ In the late 19th Century a succession dispute developed between Chitanga and Mpapa after the death of their father Balani nicknamed Ndalega. Mpapa called for the assistance of the Gaza Nguni under Mzila or Nyamande who killed several of Chitanga's people. Chitanga retaliated by summoning the Ndebele who in turn killed many of Mpapa's people.⁸ The Hlengwe Chief Sengwe and his group occupied the areas along the modern border of Mozambique and South Africa. He paid tribute regularly to the Gaza Nguni who also used him as their instrument of raiding within Zimbabwe.⁹ Thus the Gaza Nguni and Ndebele participation in Hlengwe military activities were a reality, particularly for Hlengwe groups which were closer to these military states.

After Ngwena's death he was succeeded by his son Balani popularly known as Ndalega in Hlengwe and Ndarega in Karanga. He assumed the title of Paramount Chief of the Hlengwe since many chieftainships were born after the death of Ngwena. The descendants of Ndarega still hold this position among the Hlengwe chieftainship. It was recognised by the White settler government and ZANU PF government after independence. They are currently using the paramount chieftainship name Chitanga.

Ndarega launched several attacks against his Karanga neighbours in alliance with the Gaza Nguni or Ndebele, or as a result of his own personal initiative. He made several attempts to conquer his Karanga neighbour Neshuro who took refuge on his stronghold Zhanje Mountain. Chief Neshuro Majitire managed to drive the Hlengwe off. Cheneka and Shonodo who succeeded Majitire as chiefs Neshuro respectively were also raided by both the Hlengwe and Gaza Nguni under Mzila. When Ndarega failed to conquer Neshuro he established friendship with him and later lived in co-existence until the time of his death.¹⁰

6

7

8

9

10

Ndarega directed his raids against the Karanga who lived across the Runde River. He seized the country belonging to Chief Chigovo who fled to the Rubanga country. Gororo's territory which occupied an area south of the Tugwi River was subjected to several raids by Ndarega and his Hlengwe, the Gaza Nguni and the Ndebele.¹¹

The Karanga chiefs Madzivire and Shindi suffered more from Ndarega's raids because of their proximity to the Hlengwe. In 1904 P. Forrestall, the Native Commissioner of Chibi District, reported that the Nebweni Tribe under Chief Shindi who occupied an area between the Runde and Shindi Rivers were several times raided by the Ndebele and Hlengwe. At the time of the British South Africa Company occupation there was a succession dispute over the Shindi chieftainship between the then Chief Shindi and his uncle. The uncle called in the assistance of the Hlengwe Chief Ndarega who was beaten back although he managed to capture a lot of Shindi's cattle.¹² Shindi and his people took refuge on his stronghold, Manyanga Mountain. Madzivire did likewise on Chirongwe Mountain.

By the time Ndarega died, The British South Africa Company rule was beginning to be effective. It is when the British South Africa Company began to restrain and interfere with his raids on the Karanga that he called himself "*Ndarega vukomba ndichavuda*" literally meaning that he had abandoned military heroism when he still wanted to continue. Hence, from this time onwards and after his death he was popularly known as Ndarega/Ndalega instead of his real name of Balani.¹³ By the time he died he was beginning to conclude that the exercise of raiding the Karanga on their strongholds was a fiasco. He was beginning to opt for peaceful co-existence and payment of tribute.

Hanyani Chitanga succeeded Ndarega as the Hlengwe Paramount Chief. He was caught in a more complex political and military situation. The British South Africa Company was intensifying its control over the area. The Ndebele and Gaza Nguni were not prepared to abandon their influence over the area. The Hlengwe had not yet abandoned their spirit of raiding or imposing tribute. This was the situation in which Hanyani Chitanga and the other Hlengwe leaders found themselves. Chitanga's policy became one of taking advantages when offered. Whenever possible he raided the Karanga or forced tribute from them. He also embarked on a policy of marrying daughters from Karanga chiefs or headmen. He also encouraged his sons, brothers and all male members of the royal family to do so. In fact all the Hlengwe paramount chiefs who succeeded Chitanga including the current one have Karanga women as junior wives. However, it was strictly adhered that the heir's mother must be a Hlengwe until the coronation of the current chief in 1996 whose mother was a Karanga and the only wife of his father. This was accepted considering the impact of modern times.

The other Hlengwe chieftainships were not idle while the paramountcy was conducting military activities against the Karanga. The Hlengwe chiefs Chilonga, Mpapa and Gezani raided and occupied areas which are now parts of Chiredzi South and the Gonakudzingwa National Park.¹⁴ The Hlengwe chiefs Tsovani and Mahenye were responsible for the raids and occupation of areas now under Chiredzi sand Chipinge districts, Hippo Valley and Triangle Sugar Estates. The Hlengwe headman Magudu

11

12

13

14

conducted his military activities as far as Nyajena District. According to the Native Assistant report of 1903, the Hlengwe raiders who raided the Ndanga District, Zaka areas and Duma people took away wives, girls, children, young able bodied men, grain and cattle. Then finally they settled on the land.¹⁵

After the Anglo-Ndebele war of 1893 the Hlengwe paramountcy which used to pay tribute to Lobengula took cognisance of the military power of the British South Africa Company. The information on the defeat of Ngungunyane, the Gaza ruler, by the Portuguese in 1895 did not escape the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe particularly those who paid tribute to the Gaza state.

The Ndebele and Gaza states were more powerful military states compared to the Hlengwe chieftainships. Events in South Africa particularly in the Northern Transvaal where some Hlengwe groups had settled were not encouraging. The Afrikaner commandos and British armies who had come in contact with the Hlengwe kith and kin were irresistible. These events made the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe revise their attitude towards the White settlers. The general Hlengwe stance against the White Settlers was to avoid war.

Hlengwe participation during the First Chimurenga (1895 - 1897) was very minimal. Although the Hlengwe like the Shona and the Ndebele were beginning to lose land, and to suffer from forced labour and taxation, they were a long distance from the centres of Chimurenga organisation. The influence of Mbuya Nehanda, Mkwati and Kaguvi was very remote from the Hlengwe. There was considerable presence of white settlers among the Hlengwe compared to other areas. Their Karanga neighbours did not actively participate in the Chimurenga War. These are some of the explanations as to why the Hlengwe, a group with a military tradition did not play an active role during the Chimurenga War.

After the First Chimurenga in 1897 the British South Africa Company effectively imposed its rule over the Hlengwe as it did over the Shona and Ndebele. However, Hlengwe military organisation which was still in existence was brought to a halt. It was then that the Hlengwe paramount Chief Chitanga gave himself the name '*Hanyani Vanyayi*' literary meaning 'let the Karanga live' because the White Settlers prevented him from raiding them or collecting tribute from them.¹⁶

All the Hlengwe leaders or chieftainships from the time they moved into Zimbabwe until the time of effective British South Africa Company rule in 1897 were more of military leaders rather than political leaders. Theirs were military chieftainship organisations rather than military states. The army or military organisation played a very important role in political, economic and social organisation of the Hlengwe. As of today, the Hlengwe nostalgically remember their military tradition when they sing and dance at social gatherings such as beer or *marula* drinking parties.

The belief held by some people, and perpetrated by colonialists that the Shona were helpless victims of the Hlengwe, Ndebele, and Gaza Nguni, was wide off the mark. The Shona lacked military organisation of the other groups, but they were able to formulate defensive tactics. The availability of guns from the 1860's onwards did counter the Hlengwe, Gaza Nguni and Ndebele military strength. The Venda gun settlers eventually

¹⁵

¹⁶

penetrated as far as Chirumanzu. The defeat of the Ndebele by Chivi in 1879 and of the Gaza Nguni by Gutu in 1880 were indications of Shona military strength.¹⁷

The environment or terrain to which the Shona were familiar helped to protect them against their enemies. The areas inhabited by the Shona were characterised by granite hills, mountain ranges with big caves, which could be used as hideouts or high mountains, which could be climbed at certain given points. Hlengwe oral traditions confirm how the Hlengwe armies failed to dislodge the Karanga from their mountain strongholds such as Neshuro's Zhanje Mountain, Solani Chidyanavawa's Rungare, Shindi's Manyanga, Madzivire's Chirongwe, Chivi's Mushonga Neburi and Matibi's Vuwa.¹⁸ There is no doubt that the Karanga made maximum use of the natural environment in the form of mountains, hill, or kopjes to defend themselves against raids.

Raiding as an on-going policy was self defeating. It worked in the first days of contact as a means of Hlengwe attempting to impose their rule over the Karanga and looting Karanga wealth. However, in the long run there was nothing to loot if the Karanga were not given time to produce wealth, particularly when the economy was based on farming and rearing of animals. The Hlengwe began to realise the policy of tribute was more economic and raids would be done as a punitive measure for stubborn chiefs. After all, the Karanga were acquainted with their environment so they could produce grain, work on iron and rear cattle which they would use to pay tribute to the Hlengwe. The Hlengwe in turn needed the same products to pay as tribute to the Gaza Nguni and Ndebele. Therefore the argument that the Hlengwe's policy was to make the Shona extinct is a non-starter.

Matrimonial relations played a very important role as a means of establishing friendships especially when the Hlengwe attempts to use force failed. The majority of the Hlengwe chiefs including the paramounts after 1890 and leading military *indunas* married Karanga women. Today's offspring's serve as evidence. However, marriages were one-sided in that it was mainly the Hlengwe men marrying Karanga women. These marriages in the long run rendered it impossible for the Hlengwe to raid their matrimonial uncles, aunts and in-laws. There were blood relationships established between the Hlengwe and Karanga royal families. The bottom line is that considering these factors there was no way the Hlengwe could have adopted a policy of exterminating the Karanga people.

There are arguments that the Hlengwe were not a martial group by nature.¹⁹ Their military spirits and ability was not an ancient feature, but was imposed on them by the Gaza Nguni who pushed them in front of battles as *mabuyandhlela* - those who opened the way.²⁰ The Hlengwe military organisations of a standing army and raids were a response to Mfecane Revolution introduced to them by the Gaza Nguni.

It was highly probable that under normal conditions the Hlengwe were a peaceful and mild people. The Mfecane experience instilled the military spirit among the Hlengwe who became renowned fighters against European Colonialism. During the Portuguese - Gungunyane Gaza War of 1895 the Hlengwe who fought for the Gaza State proved their bravery, courage and endurance. The Hlengwe showed a military spirit ten

17

18

19

20

times that of the Pedi in a war against the Afrikaners in South Africa in which the Hlengwe Chief Muhlaba allied with the Pedi Chief Maaghe in Zoutpansberg. Those who served the Portuguese in Angola were praised “as very steady and reliable.”²¹ During the liberation wars against the Portuguese in Mozambique and the British in Zimbabwe the Hlengwe leaders and combatants proved themselves to be some of the most courageous, brave and capable fighters.

Portuguese and British colonialism destroyed the Hlengwe military power only to merge in a different form during the revolutionary wars for national independence. After 1897 the European colonialists convinced themselves that they had broken the Hlengwe fighting spirit forever. The only chance the Hlengwe might have was to be able to kill a few white women, children and few colonialists settled among them far away from urban centres and that they might obtain some occasional victories against a badly conducted reconnoitring party. They could not withstand European army armed with quick firing rifles, maxim machine guns and all implements of modern warfare even if they were ten times superior in numbers. As long as the Hlengwe could not fight against the White men on equal footing as regards to weapons whatever their valour or patriotism they could not hope to regain their military power.

After the First Chimurenga in 1897 the British South Africa Company Administration placed Native Commissioners and their police, the British South Africa Police and White people everywhere to watch over the blacks. The Blacks were disarmed and most of their weapons or tools classified as weapons of offensive nature. The Native Commissioners placed a very effective check upon the military activities and tendencies of the African chiefs and their people. It has been argued that the colonial government brought to an end tribal wars although a trend towards co-existence between the Hlengwe and the Karanga had already started. P. Forrestall, the first Native Commissioner of the then Chibi District in which the majority of the Hlengwe people live for almost 20 years it was his major responsibility that Hlengwe military activities could not be revived. The Colonial government’s contribution in ending tribal wars was favourable because the wars never brought blessings to the tribes. However, White Settler colonialism introduced a new terrible and horrible war of exploitation, suppression and oppression against the Hlengwe and all other blacks in Zimbabwe for the next 90 years.

REFERENCE ARMY DOCUMENT ONE

1. H. JUNOD - LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE Vol. 1 pg 454
2. H. JUNOD - LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE Vol. 1 pg. 463
3. D. BEACH - WAR AND POLITICS
4. D. BEACH - WAR AND POLITICS
5. A.K. SMITH - THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN MOZAMBIQUE

6. PARAMOUNT CHIEF S.M. CHITANGA - INTERVIEW - AUGUST 1980
CHITANGA AREA - MWENEZI
 7. BANNERMAN - TOWARDS A HISTORY OF THE HLENGWE PEOPLE
 8. PARAMOUNT CHIEF S.M. CHITANGA - INTERVIEW - AUGUST 1980
CHITANGA AREA - MWENEZI
 9. IBID
 10. IBID
 11. P. FORESTALL - N.C. REPORTS N3/33/8 1/1/04
 12. IBID
 13. PARAMOUNT CHIEF S.M. CHITANGA - INTERVIEW - AUGUST 1980
CHITANGA AREA - MWENEZI
 14. DANIEL MUZAMANI GWALALE CHAUKE - INTERVIEW -
AUGUST 1980 - CHITANGA AREA- MWENEZI
 15. ASSISTANT NATIVE COMMISSIONER - NDANGA DISTRICT REPORT
1903 1/1/04
 16. PARAMOUNT CHIEF S.M. CHITANGA - INTERVIEW AUGUST 1980
CHITANGA AREA - MWENEZI
 17. D. BEACH - WAR AND POLITICS
 18. D. BEACH - WAR AND POLITICS
 19. BULPIN - THE IVORY TRAIL
 20. H.A. JUNOD - THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE Vol. 1
REFERENCE ARMY DOCUMENT ONE
1. H. JUNOD - LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE Vol. 1 pg 454
 2. H. JUNOD - LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE Vol. 1 pg. 463
 3. D. BEACH -WAR AND POLITICS
 4. D. BEACH - WAR AND POLITICS
 5. A.K. SMITH - THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN MOZAMBIQUE

6. PARAMOUNT CHIEF S.M. CHITANGA - INTERVIEW - AUGUST 1980
CHITANGA AREA - MWENEZI
7. BANNERMAN - TOWARDS A HISTORY OF THE HLENGWE PEOPLE
8. PARAMOUNT CHIEF S.M. CHITANGA - INTERVIEW - AUGUST 1980
CHITANGA AREA - MWENEZI
9. IBID
10. IBID
11. P. FORESTALL - N.C. REPORTS N3/33/8 1/1/04
12. IBID
13. PARAMOUNT CHIEF S.M. CHITANGA - INTERVIEW - AUGUST 1980
CHITANGA AREA - MWENEZI
14. DANIEL MUZAMANI GWALALE CHAUKE - INTERVIEW -
AUGUST 1980 - CHITANGA AREA- MWENEZI
15. ASSISTANT NATIVE COMMISSIONER - NDANGA DISTRICT REPORT
1903 1/1/04
16. PARAMOUNT CHIEF S.M. CHITANGA - INTERVIEW AUGUST 1980
CHITANGA AREA - MWENEZI
17. D. BEACH - WAR AND POLITICS
18. D. BEACH - WAR AND POLITICS
19. BULPIN - THE IVORY TRAIL
20. H.A. JUNOD - THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE Vol. 1

CHISANDAKO INTERVIEW

Happyson Matsilele Chauke

Mr. Joseph Chisandako Chitanga Chauke is my paternal uncle, my father's elder, cousin, brother (*baba mukuru*). I am well acquainted with him.

There was no appointment made to see him. I made sure I arrived at his residence at lunch hour since people in Mwenezi District because of high temperatures during the day tend to do their chores early in the morning until about 12.00 noon. Then they resume at about 4 p.m. until sunset. On Saturday people knock off from heavy work at noon until Monday morning.

On this particular Saturday, we found Mr. Chisandako resting under the shade of his mulberry tree. He was alone because members of his family had gone down to a nearby stream to do their weekly laundry and to water vegetable gardens. This was conducive for an interview using a tape recorder without much disturbance. I was accompanied by my elder brother. When we arrived at the gate of his residence we announced our arrival by shouting aloud the traditional royal family salute of the Chauke's. '*Hlezana! Hlezana! Hlezana!*' The he responded '*Mlilo! Mlilo! Mlilo!*'. Then we also responded '*Mlilo! Mlilo! Mlilo!*'. We clapped our hands twice and moved into the home. We exchanged greetings the traditional way. He was not surprised seeing us because it is normal and expected that when sons return from the city they must visit all families of their elders to pay homage and pay respect to the beloved ones who had since departed during their absence.

We soon entered into general discussions of matters such as the weather, harvests, deaths, land and AIDS. I made my proposal that I wanted to tape record him on the subject of the origins of the Chauke totem and chieftainship. His response was very positive and his immediate comment was that these matters must be told, written and preserved because '*Xilungu*' European way of life, was destroying and burying our culture and history. Yet, the elders, who were custodians of our culture were perishing and becoming extinct. He referred to himself as the oldest member of the Chitanga royal family who has witnessed the building of the first school, church and clinic by missionaries in his area. In the whole Chitanga area he was the tenth oldest surviving male. He told us that he had given interviews before to some white missionaries, Z.B.C., Z.T.V. and other non-governmental organisations, mostly on developmental issues or projects, not a single one on the origins of the Chauke totem and chieftainships. He was familiar with tape recorders and never minded his voice being recorded.

Our interview was generally one of questions and answers. The only slight problem was that the old man sometimes tended to digress from our topic. However, I had to tactfully bring him back to the topic by specific questions. He enjoys talking and this is not surprising because he was once a Free Methodist Church lay preacher. I recall thrice when chickens came around chasing each other. We had to stop and start because their sounds were captured by the recorder. Otherwise the tape-recorded interview went on smoothly in a very relaxed atmosphere.

The tape recorded interview lasted for about 33 minutes. Then we switched off and delved into various topics, which were related to the history of the Hlengwe such as circumcision and installation of chiefs. I made notes on the unrecorded topics. Finally,

we bade him farewell the Hlengwe traditional way. This time we did not salute, but clapped our hands three times. He accompanied us to the gate and we left. His last words by his gate were *'Uthlela kambe hi ta bhula hi mhaka swilo leswi swifanele ku bhuliwa ne ku tsaliwa eku kasi swita hlayiseka'* 'Come again so that we can discuss these things because they must be written and preserved'.

The tape is in the custody of H.W.M. Chauke – 12 Dunstable Circle, Avonlea, Marlborough, HARARE. Zimbabwe.

THE HLENGWE CIRCUMCISION SCHOOL

Happyson Matsilele Chauke

Ngoma or *murundu* are the Hlengwe names meaning a male circumcision school or a male circumcision ceremony. Oral tradition and written records confirm that the Hlengwe have been practising male circumcision as far back as time immemorial. The Hlengwe whose population is about 70 000 settled in the south-eastern areas of Zimbabwe after 1840, mainly in Mwenezi, Chiredzi and Chipinge districts with small pockets in Beitbridge, Zaka, Chivi, Bikita and Nyajena districts. They originated from southern Mozambique and north eastern Transvaal in various groups, but mainly during the Mfecane. One of the major aspects of their culture, which they have retained until now, is male circumcision school or male initiation ceremony. The British South Africa Company Administration and the successive Settler Colonial Governments never interfered with circumcision schools as long as they were not a security threat.

The ZANU PF Government adopted the same policy of non-interference. There is little doubt that circumcision was practised throughout by the Tsonga or Thonga tribes in former times of which the Hlengwe area dialect group. The special words for the physical operation are *yimba* or *soka* in Hlengwe and Ronga, another Tsonga dialect group. Original, *ngoma* or circumcision school appears to have been a truly puberty rite which later on in the course of history had other factors added to it. Circumcision rites certainly have varied because of time and seem to have been simplified in later years, but the core elements have remained. The suspension of conjugal relations and prevalence of licentious language during the ceremonies might have given an idea that *ngoma* has a direct relation with sexual life. *Ngoma* is not a pure act of aggregation to a definite clan although it is a rite of the chief.

Male circumcision among the Hlengwe is a sacred institution and a strict taboo to women and the uncircumcised that are referred to as *mashuvuru* in Hlengwe language.

Men are extremely reticent when asked believing that the one who reveals secrets of the school will be punished supernaturally though it is a reality that the custodians of the school thoroughly punished such culprits. Published material on the subject is very limited and almost nil when it refers to the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe. Informants can be masters of the ceremony who know the details of the school and who have taken part in the initiation of others as instructors or shepherds called *vadzabhi* in Hlengwe.

Various theories have been put forward in trying to explain the origins of initiation ceremonies among human beings. Frobenius (1898) stated that initiation ceremonies originated from primeval ancestor worship, Schurtz (1902) argued that it was a gregarious instinct in man, while Perry (1923) claimed that it was a diffusion of a superior culture. In (1908) Webster noted that it was an evolution of a primitive social system and yet Butt-Thompson (1929) concluded that it started as a mystery which later became a cultural trait.¹ Gennep (1909) showed that a great number of rites including circumcision are inspired by the idea of a passage from one place to another.

1

All rites present common features of separation from the odd stage of things symbolised by the separation rites, a period of margin, where the individual or group concerned is secluded from the society and submitted to a number of taboos or rites. Finally, the tabooed people are received into a community as regular members by aggregation rites.² These features are present in the Hlengwe circumcision ceremonies. However, according to the above account all human beings practised initiation ceremonies that the Hlengwe still do in the form of circumcision schools.

Oral traditions, written records and current events confirm specifically to circumcision rites as having been and are still practised by many groups in Europe, North America, the Islam worlds, East Africa, West Africa and Southern Africa although procedures of conducting the ceremonies vary from one community to another.

One of the oldest records on circumcision is found in the Old Testament. Genesis Chapter 17 is entitled 'The Rite of Circumcision Instituted'. This was the covenant between God and Abram who was to be named Abraham from now onwards. "And God said unto Abraham, thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you and thy seed after thee. Every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt you and me. And he that if eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house and he that is bought with thy money must be circumcised and my covenant shall be in your flesh, for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people, he hath broken my covenant."³ Abraham practically followed the covenant. "And Abraham took Ishmael his son and all that were born in his house and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the self-same day as God had said unto him. And Abraham was ninety years old and nine when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In the self-same day was Abraham circumcised and Ishmael his son. And all the men of his house, born in the house and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him".⁴ This was a religious aspect which later on became both a religious and cultural aspect of Jews. The Old Testament is full of circumcision references. Even when the rite was disturbed by the era of slavery in Egypt and the exodus to Canaan, when Abraham's descendants had the opportunity they revived the covenant. For instance, when Joshua and the children of Israel were about to enter Canaan, "At that time the Lord said unto Joshua, make thee sharp knives and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time. And Joshua made sharp knives and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise all the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt. Now all the people that came out were circumcised, but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, had not been circumcised. For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were

2

3

4

men of war, who came out of Egypt were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord, unto whom the Lord swore that he would not show them the land, which the Lord swore to their fathers that he would give us a land that floweth with milk and honey. And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, Joshua circumcised, for they were uncircumcised because they had not circumcised them on the way. And it came to pass, when they had been circumcised they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole”.⁵ If the time span from the first circumcision covenant and Joshua’s ceremony is taken into consideration it goes without question that circumcision had become a permanent religious and cultural ceremony of the Israelites. For the Hlengwe, male circumcision is “*ngoma yavatatani*” meaning that it was a culture of their forefathers and it has become part of their permanent culture. The greatest revolutionary of the Jewish religion, on which Christianity was born, Jesus did not escape circumcision. “And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcision of the child, his name was called Jesus”.⁶ The greatest challenge and threat to the Israelite circumcision ceremony was Christianity. “And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem they that were of the circumcision contended with him. Saying, thou wentest in to men uncircumcised and didst eat with them”.⁷ Peter replied his critics by explaining to them the vision he saw in Joppa while praying. In the vision he saw a container which descended from heaven full of four-footed beasts of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things and fowls of the air. This was followed by the voice from heaven which instructed him to slay and eat. Peter refused because these beasts were common and unclean. The voice for three times instructed him that nothing that God had cleansed could be called common. Peter went further to relate his experiences of witnessing to Gentiles - the uncircumcised being filled by the Holy Ghost. The interpretation of Peter’s vision and experiences was that circumcision was a Jewish ceremony without any relevance to Christianity although those Christians who wanted it could go ahead with the practice.

However, Peter’s vision and experiences did not bring to an end the argument. For instance in Acts 15 verses 1 - 2 “And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren and said, except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain of them should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. “And when they were come to Jerusalem they were received of the church and of the apostles and elders they declared all things that God had done with them. But there arose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed saying, that it was needful to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses”.⁸ The apostles and elders came together to consider the matter and the discussion developed into much disputing. It was then that Peter once again repeated his vision at Joppa and experiences among the Gentiles.

His final statement was that it was not circumcision, but the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ which saved both Jews and Gentiles. Peter’s sentiments were supported by the experiences of Barnabas, Paul and James. The Conference resolved not to enforce

5

6

7

8

circumcision among the Gentile Christians and letters were written to convey the message to be delivered by Paul, Judas surnamed Barnabas and Silas who would also confirm verbal the resolution of the elders and apostles over the issue of circumcision.

Thus circumcision was a Jewish ceremony which could not be imposed on non-Jewish. However, the Jewish Christians accepted the ceremony. When Paul came to Derbe and Lystra he found a disciple by the name of Timotheus, the son of a Jewish woman who was a Christian and his father was a Greek. Paul took Timotheus for company, but he had to circumcise him because of the Jews who were in those areas who knew that Timotheus' father was a Greek.⁹ Paul was aware that to make his relationship with Timotheus more comfortable he had to be circumcised. Paul as a Jew was upholding the custom of circumcision although this was now overshadowed by his belief in Christianity. Therefore there is no doubt that circumcision became and is still an important aspect of Jewish culture which they guided jealously.

According to J.B. Thompson, circumcision was practised by many groups in Southern and Central Africa from the unknown past, especially those who had puberty rites. From his research he listed the following groups. The Makwengo and Masheke of the Caprivi area, now extinct, the Sheke of Angola, the San, the Sarwa especially the Lisuma dialect group, the Garwe, the Barwa of the East, the Marawu of Chimanimani dominantly Hottentout akin to the Hwai, Kwai Khosa and Moyana. He also listed totem groups in Southern Rhodesia of Bantu origin whom he said also practised circumcision. The Shava, Mhara, Meta, Nzou, Mbizi, Mhari, Mbada, Tsowe, Dziva, Humba, Gona, Shonga, Shumba, Banda and Mbani. This according to Thompson is a short list otherwise all the Bantu people of Southern Africa practised circumcision at one time or another in history.¹⁰ However, Thompson's findings need more research since oral traditions from some of the Bantu groups mentioned particularly the Shona groups in Zimbabwe do not remember anything connected with circumcision in their history. The groups which are still practising circumcision in Zimbabwe are the Hlengwe, VaRemba and Vhenda.

Male Circumcision was and is still practised by various tribes in East Africa, West Africa and Southern Africa. This is supported by oral traditions, written records and current events. One of the earliest written records on Hlengwe circumcision was by Don Goncalo da Silveira during the 16th century. In his letters to his superiors he gave detailed accounts of the life style of the Tsonga or Thonga people of which the Hlengwe are the major dialect group. In particular, he wrote about their custom of circumcision.¹¹ Dutch records of the 18th century give details on Tsonga chiefdoms and their culture of circumcision which they exported to some groups of Southern Africa, for example the Chopi who accepted it during the 16th century.¹² Kriege argued that circumcision was a custom associated with male initiation ceremonies in South Africa and he gave note on the distribution of the custom. "The present distribution of circumcision cannot be fully plotted out owing to complete lack of information on many tribes. We do, however, know from published sources that it is practised by the Xhosa, Thembu, Jingo, Bomvana, some Tswana tribes, southern Sotho, Pedi, Masomela, Lemba, Ndebele, Matlala of

9

10

11

12

NorthWest Transvaal, Mmamabola of Woodbush, the Transvaal Shangaan-Hlengwe-Tonga, Vhenda, Lobedu, Xanamwa, Letswalo, Khaha in Portugese East Africa by the Chopi and some Shangaan-Hlengwe-Tonga”.¹³

There is no doubt that circumcision was an initiation ceremony marking the age of puberty among many Bantu tribes including the Hlengwe who immigrated into the Transvaal and Zimbabwe from Southern Mozambique.

The Hlengwe in the Transvaal did not borrow the custom from the Pedi as claimed by some. Although the Hlengwe can receive initiation in Pedi circumcision schools in Spelonken they possess their own schools for the Nkunas near Leydsdrop. This is confirmed by the fact that the Hlengwe have a special word in their language for the physical operation of the foreskin of the male organ *yimba* or *soka* used together with the word *ngoma*, a generic term for all customs associated with circumcision.

H.A. Junod wrote a comprehensive and detailed account on the circumcision rites of the Tsonga-Thonga-Hlengwe of Southern Mozambique and Transvaal. He sourced information from informants such as Shinangana, a Hlengwe from Spelonken, Vignet and Valdo. He also received information and pictures from the Reverend A Jaques who was once allowed to take pictures of a Pedi *sungi*, or circumcision school in the Masume Valley near Shiluvane.¹⁴

The major weakness of Junod’s research was that although the rites were described to him with such a wealth of details and vivid language that seemed to make him feel as if he had practically lived for three months during the course of the circumcision ceremony he was never fortunate enough to penetrate into a lodge as it is a great taboo for the uncircumcised.

Interpretations have been made to link the Hlengwe circumcision practises with those of the Jews, Islams and VaLemba. Writing during the 16th century, Don Goncalo da Silveira noted that “Circumcision is a feature of Tonga (Hlengwe) life which they say was left with them by a distinguished Moor who came to their country sometime ago”.¹⁵ This convinced some students of Bantu culture to believe that circumcision amongst the Bantu came from their intimate contacts with the Semites. This fact is strongly supported by the presence in Northern Transvaal and South Western Zimbabwe of one Bantu group called the VaLemba whose customs, among them circumcision rites, features and physical type they claim are definitely Semitic like. It has been further claimed that the *ngoma* was brought to the Hlengwe in Northern Transvaal and the VaVhenda by the VaLemba. The VaLemba lived amongst the Hlengwe and Sothos of Zoutpansberg like Jews among the Europeans without chiefs and national unity, but with characteristic customs such as circumcision which they adhere to from generation to generation. They resemble Jews in that they do not eat flesh unless blood has been carefully drained out and shave at each new moon. It is also claimed that they brought metallurgic art and introduced domestic tools. The arguments attempt to prove intimate relationships between the VaLemba and Semitic people and ideas which the VaLemba later passed to the Hlengwe. The VaLemba oral traditions declare that they came from the North by sea and reached the East African coast after a shipwreck. However, the historical current fact is that the VaLemba practise circumcision with great assiduity and hold a special position

13

14

15

in Hlengwe lodges as doctors or overseers. They are referred to as masters of the ngoma by the Hlengwe. Circumcision is wide-spread among Semitic nations and one might infer from these remarks that the custom has been taught to the Bantus, including the Hlengwe by Semitic masters. There is a great probability that the VaLemba played an influential role as they still do today when chance is given on the VaVhenda and Hlengwe circumcision lodges.

Vignet, who was Junod's informant confirmed that ngoma was brought to the Hlengwe and VaVhenda of Spelonken and Northern Transvaal by the VaLemba.¹⁶ An argument which can not be contested is that some Hlengwe groups even in Zimbabwe came in contact with VaLemba because even today VaLemba play an important role in Hlengwe circumcision lodges. On the other hand Hlengwe initiates can attend Lemba lodges. However, among the Hlengwe ngoma is much older than the arrival of the VaLemba sometime in the 18th century in their area. In fact, the question of the origins of circumcision as far as many of the Hlengwe are concerned is a 'tumbuluko wavatatani' literary meaning it was practised since the creation of their forefathers.

There are glaring differences between the conducting of Semitic, VaLemba and Hlengwe circumcision ceremonies. The Semitic influence has been referred to as the Jewish-Christian link. The origins of circumcision among the Jews is traced to the Old Testament, Genesis Chapter 17 particularly verses 10 to 14 as a covenant between God and Abraham. Abraham obeyed, circumcised himself, his son Ishmael and all his slaves. Hence, from this day Jews must circumcise every baby boy when he is eight days old or more. On the other hand they will become God's nation and receive God's blessing.¹⁷ Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity as a Jew was circumcised, but Christianity as a religion challenged circumcision as a way to salvation.

"And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcision of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb".¹⁸ However, circumcision has remained until to this day a Jewish religious and cultural institution. An interesting resemblance with the Hlengwe is that every initiate after circumcision has to acquire a new name or name of the ngoma. Among the Hlengwe one can only be circumcised when he is old enough to understand the practice, roughly from six years of age and any other stage from then onwards.

When Christianity was introduced among the Hlengwe by White missionary's circumcision was denounced as a heathen and pagan practice. Hlengwe converts, who were adherents to the custom of circumcision justified themselves by quoting from the Old and New Testament although they conceded that there was a need to reform the Hlengwe circumcision schools to bring them into line with Christianity.

Some have tried to strike at a resemblance between Jewish circumcision and Christian baptism. In all circumcision circumstances the same physical operation is performed on the foreskin of the male organ, but for the Jews it is strictly on infants. For the Jews it is argued that circumcision has a meaning of purification, a removal of pollution and an introduction into a Holy Nation. In the course of time it was probably spiritualised and circumcision meant the removal of sin, a marginal period of instruction and admission into the Holy Communion. It has been argued that Hlengwe circumcision

16

17

18

has no spiritual and moral idea attached to it, but inspired by some deep and true sense of necessity in evolution of man, of a progress consisting in renunciation of a miserable past and an introduction to new life. A deep analysis of Hlengwe circumcision ceremonies has revealed an attachment to strong moral lessons which are taught to the initiates.

A struggle within the Christian Church among the Hlengwe erupted over the issue of circumcision until the 1950's when a compromise was reached. This phase was similar to the one which occurred to the early Christian Church in the New Testament when the Gentiles who were uncircumcised were converted to Christianity. The dispute in the early church was resolved at the Jerusalem Conference when it was decided not to impose circumcision on the Gentiles. On the other hand, when it became clear that circumcision could not be destroyed as an element of Hlengwe culture Christian circumcision schools were introduced. Therefore, today there are two types of Hlengwe circumcision schools. That is, the traditional and Christian circumcision schools.

The impact of Christianity, European, political, economic and social systems have forced some groups to abandon circumcision ceremonies. However, the Hlengwe are one of the few groups who are still practising circumcision rites though a lot of changes have taken place. It must be noted that even before European influence other factors had caused some groups to quit circumcision ceremonies. The Mfecane or Nguni Revolution of the early 19th century made some groups to abandon circumcision. Even before the Mfecane, the Ronga a dialect group closely related to the Hlengwe and whom the Hlengwe called *vavutoya* meaning cowards because they feared the ordeals of the circumcision schools, had abandoned the practise more than 100 years ago before the arrival of Soshangane Manukosi and his army. Tshaka, the Zulu, who was the spirit behind the Mfecane had abolished circumcision among the Zulu because it did not fit in his new military reforms. This was copied by other groups.

Constant fighting during the Mfecane, troubled times, did not allow men to stay three consecutive months in a circumcision lodge. It was feared that the enemy would easily kill initiates or the circumcised because they were unable to fight or run away. Thus, when Manukosi and his Gaza-Ngoni invaded the areas occupied by the Tsonga-Hlengwe in Mozambique it was not surprising that circumcision disappeared among other clans forever, even when the Mfecane came to an end. Hlengwe oral tradition claim that circumcision though heavily interrupted by the Mfecane was never stopped and resumed seriously when the Mfecane came to an end. This argument is strengthened by the fact that circumcision is still practised by the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe today against the strong forces of European Christianity, political, economic and social systems. The fact that circumcision is still in practice refutes H.A. Junod's statement regarding the Hlengwe people in his book entitled 'The life of a South African tribe' when he wrote that "The Hlengwe people themselves are hardly conscious that they form a definite nation and therefore possess no common name for it".¹⁹

By 1960 large groups of Karanga people from Gutu and Mapanzure areas and Ndebele from Filabusi were settled among the predominantly Hlengwe areas of the south-east of Zimbabwe. Some of them were strongly persuaded to undergo circumcision especially those who got married to Hlengwe women. It has now become a norm that at every circumcision lodge initiates of Karanga origins are found either by

choice or a result of strong persuasion because they are nephews, grandchildren or son-in-laws of the Hlengwe.

In Zimbabwe, apart from the Hlengwe the other groups, which practise circumcision, are the Va-Lemba largely found in Mberengwa and Nyajena districts and Va-Vhenda of Beitbridge. Then Islam converts who are mainly people of foreign extraction particularly Malawians and Mozambicans living in commercial farms, mining and urban centres. For example, Tangai Chipangura gave an account of a circumcision ceremony, which took place in 1991. It was during the school holidays when Islamic boys of the Islamic Chewa sect in Chitungwiza for three weeks went through the circumcision ceremonies.²⁰

Hlengwe circumcision schools have close contact with Vhenda circumcision schools and the two have influenced each other for a long time. This was mainly due to geographical proximity to each other in the Transvaal and in Zimbabwe. They are historical neighbours for a long time. Hlengwe or Vhenda initiates can attend each other's lodge. Vhenda songs and language are commonly used at Hlengwe lodges.

Vhenda circumcision doctors and overseers is a common site at Hlengwe lodges. The first circumcision lodge to be held in paramount Chief Chitanga when he settled in his present area in Zimbabwe was overseered by the Vhenda named Mutaveni in 1929 and this historical event is popularly known as *ngoma yaMutaveni* meaning Mutaveni's circumcision school or lodge.

Matsilele waBoyi one of Chief Chitanga's headman who had lived and worked at Louis Trichardt in the Transvaal among the Vhenda, when he returned home he took the initiative to invite the Vhenda overseers to come and organise the circumcision lodge. Matsilele then invited his relatives Chief Chitanga, headmen Mpapa and Vhulengoma to participate and they positively responded.²¹

A chronology of some of the recorded circumcision schools during the course of history is necessary to prove that the ceremonies have been an on going process from time immemorial until today among the Hlengwe. Sometimes intervals between the circumcision schools have been irregular as a result of wars, droughts and epidemics. Circumcision schools are normally held in times of plenty and abundant harvests. Large quantities of food are consumed at the lodges and sufficient grain is needed to brew beer for the ceremonies when the initiates graduate.

It must be taken note of that Hlengweland is prone to severe droughts generally after every four years of plenty. According to oral traditions circumcision schools have been set up since time immemorial, unaccountable because of being numerous and impossible to remember all of them. However, those, which can be dated before the written word, were those with certain important events attached to them. It was some White adventurous, explorers, hunters, Christian missionaries and later on colonial officers who have written records on some of the Hlengwe circumcision schools. The Hlengwe elders argue that it was unnecessary to keep a record of an aspect of culture since circumcision was their way of life.²²

20

21

22

It has already been stated earlier that the earliest written records on Hlengwe circumcision in Mozambique were by Don Goncalo da Silveira during the 16th century.²³ Dutch records of the 18th century²⁴ and in 1891 by dos Santos.²⁵ In 1905 Shinangana, a Hlengwe of Spelonken gave a chronology of circumcision schools which had taken place in southern Mozambique and Transvaal and these were written down by H.A. Junod. In 1861 a circumcision school at Madjadji, 1872 at Madori in Spelonken, 1880 at Mayingwe, 1886 at Nwamutsunga and in 1892 at Mudjudji.²⁶ In 1888 Henri Berthoud, a Swiss missionary gave an account of the return of certain offensive pagan practices, with circumcision being the major one. It was after nine years during which nothing had been questioned that the Hlengwe chiefs of the areas neighbouring Valdezia, in the Transvaal ordered the youth to surrender themselves to circumcision rites. There was no holding back of young Christians and half of the church rebelled led by an elder, evangelist called Abraham who supported the circumcision school.²⁷ In any particular year when circumcision schools are set up, the lodges cover almost the whole of Hlengweland.

One of the earliest recorded circumcision ceremony among the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe was in 1906 which was set up by the Hlengwe paramount Chief Chitanga. The Reverend Joseph Mboweni of the Dutch Reformed Church who recorded the event in his diary refused to attend because it was conducted by traditional medicine man. Mboweni, though himself a Hlengwe, as a Christian now regarded it as a heathen affair.²⁸ In 1929 another memorable circumcision school was established in Chief Chitanga's area after some prolonged break. This was partly due to the outbreak of the First World War when white settler authorities became wary of any gatherings surrounded by secrecy such as circumcision ceremonies, droughts and preceding influenza of 1918.²⁹ In 1952 and 1953 circumcision schools were established throughout Hlengweland in Zimbabwe. This was after another period of prolonged absence because of the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 - 1945 and the great famine of 1948. It was in 1953 that a historic event in the history of circumcision took place when the first Christian circumcision lodge was set up at Chikombedzi by the evangelist Louis Mudungazi supported by some of the Free Methodist Church white missionaries and elders.³⁰ From this time until today Christian circumcision schools became popular and are held simultaneously with traditional circumcision schools.

J.B. Thompson nicknamed Black Marumbini recorded that 1956 was a year of puberty ceremonies, meaning circumcision ceremonies throughout Hlengweland.³¹ The Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 affected most of Hlengweland bringing in Karanga and Ndebele groups and re-allocating some Hlengwe to other areas. This was accompanied by the rise of African nationalism. These two historical events made the holding of circumcision schools impossible until 1974.

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

In 1974 the Hlengwe Paramount Chief Simati Chimamise Chitanga who was a retired police sergeant in the Rhodesia British South Africa Police and was now chief made a special request to the Rhodesian regime to set up circumcision schools. His record and good relationship with the White authorities enabled him to get permission though guerrilla warfare had started to be effective in the North Eastern borders of Rhodesia. The paramount chief also took an undertaking to closely monitor the lodges against political clandestine activities in the name of traditional ceremonies.³² This was followed by a sprouting of circumcision lodges both traditional and Christian throughout the Hlengweland in May to September 1974. Mr A.L. Sparrow stationed at Chiredzi made notes on the circumcision lodges held by the Hlengwe of the south eastern Lowveld of Zimbabwe. He made detailed notes on the Sangwe Lodge which he visited after it had been abandoned or more appropriately when the circumcision school had been closed.³³ After 1974 there was another long break until after 1980 because of the Liberation War. The independence of Mozambique in 1975 opened the south eastern areas of Zimbabwe to guerrilla incursions. There was no way the Hlengwe could set up circumcision lodges under war conditions and many Hlengwe people were placed in 'protected villages' a misnomer for 'concentrated camps'. The Hlengweland because of its proximity to Mozambique where the Liberation Movement ZANU had its major bases had a dawn to dusk curfew declared over the whole area.

The year 1989 after years of reconstruction when the Liberation War came to an end in 1980 and with the revival of African culture campaigned by the new ZANU PF Government witnessed the emergency of many circumcision schools throughout the Hlengweland. An interesting element, that is, one of exploitation, emerged during the conducting of the ceremonies. A new breed of overseers and supervisors who wanted to take advantage of the rites were exposed.

For instance in Chief Chitanga's area five supervisors were taken to a magistrate's court for charging very high fees and abusing properties of the initiates. They were given a sentence with an option of fine or jail.³⁴ In 1993, a year of plenty and good harvest, after a severe drought was marked by the establishment of many circumcision schools among the Hlengwe.

The creation of the Ministry of Education and Culture after independence encouraged the holding of circumcision schools. Since then circumcision schools have become regular though sometimes disturbed by droughts. However, in some years the circumcision lodges are more spread than in others. This was the case in 1995. The circumcision fees paid by initiates to the chiefs and doctor, that is the surgeon have also increased from \$10 to \$ 25. In the past \$ 7 were given to the doctor - maina in circumcision language and \$ 3 to the chief. The current fee of \$ 25, that is \$ 20 to the doctor and \$ 5 to the chief.³⁵ Increase of fees are a result of popularity and inclination to exploit by some authorities who have become capitalistic minded.

In 1997 the Hlengwe circumcision schools because of their widespread practise attracted the attention of the mass media in the country. "Fear of circumcision sends

32

33

34

35

them fleeing “ read one of the several articles in The Herald.³⁶ This was an article written by Abiot Mahuni in Chiredzi. The Sunday Mail of August 10, 1997 echoed the same topic when its cartoonist, W. Musapenda depicted a circumcision event in the Sangwe communal lands.³⁷ The Sunday Mail of the 24th August 1997 pursued the same theme of circumcision by a photograph and notes inscriptions “Initiation Season- Ethnic Shangaan (Hlengwe) youths sing initiations songs signalling their entry into manhood after being circumcised at Chief Tshovani’s homestead in Chiredzi. As the annual initiation period draw to a climax, militant Shangani (Hlengwe) elders are reportedly on the warpath facing all uncircumcised males to undergo initiation along the Save River”.³⁸ The Zimbabwe Standard Weekly of the 6th to 10th of August, 1997 had an article on Chief Hlayisi Mundau Tshovani who was being investigated by the police for unorthodox methods of conducting circumcision ceremonies.³⁹ The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation could not afford not to highlight Hlengwe circumcision stories in their radio and television bulletins of 8.00 p.m. on the 5th of August, 1997.⁴⁰

The chronological account of some of the specific dates when circumcision schools were held is adequate evidence to prove that circumcision is an important aspect of the Hlengwe culture, which has stood the test of time. The fact that circumcision has been practised by the Hlengwe people from time immemorial and able to resist the onslaught by European political, economic, social systems and Christianity is evidence that it has a role to play in the life style of the Hlengwe people. Therefore a discussion on the objectives, aims, relevance and significance of circumcision among the Hlengwe people is imperative.

The Hlengwe people regard male circumcision as part of their culture. Ralph Linton (in Haralambos and Heald 1985) defined culture as “The culture of society is the way of life of its members, the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation”.⁴¹ Clyde Kluckhohn’s definition is “culture is a design for living held by members of a particular society”.⁴² Without shared culture members of society would be unable to communicate and co-operate. Culture has two essential qualities, that is, it is learned and shared.

Culture determines how members of society, think and feel, directs actions and defines their outlook on life. During circumcision schools and even after the initiated and initiates communicate and co-operate closely. According to anthropologists, culture means a total way of life of a people, the social legacy the individual acquires from his group and part of the environment that is, the creation of man. Thus circumcision is a group exercise and a creation of man. Culture is a way of thinking, feeling and believing. It is the group’s knowledge stored up in memories of men, in books and objects. For the Hlengwe people, one way of storing the culture is through circumcision. Ruth Benedict (in Kallen-back 1963) defined culture as the bond that binds together people, hence the initiates who go through the circumcision practice together have a common bond into the

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

future.⁴³ It must be taken into account that not all elements of culture promotes physical survival. Aspects of culture which once were adaptive may persist long after they have ceased to be useful. Any cultural practice must be functional or it will disappear before, long. It must somehow contribute to the survival of society or to the adjustment of the individual. It is probably one of the major factors why circumcision among the Hlengwe has survived for a very long time until today.

Every culture is a precipitate of history. In more than one sense history is a sieve. Among all other elements of Hlengwe culture sieved by the impact of European civilisation, circumcision is one of those elements that have survived. On the other hand the ceremony of circumcision sieve men from boys, all Hlengwe men are expected to go through circumcision schools as a preparation for their role in society. Jomo Kenyatta wrote that some anthropological studies have tried to show that circumcision like Jewish circumcision is merely a bodily mutilation that was regarded as *conditio sine qua non* of the whole teaching of tribal law, religious and morality. Circumcision is an important custom among other factors in giving a boy the status of manhood.⁴⁴ Nelson Mandela in his autobiography recorded that when he turned 16 years of age his uncle decided it was time that Nelson became a man. "In Xhosa tradition this is achieved through one means only, circumcision".⁴⁵ The Hlengwe strongly subscribe to the notes of Kenyatta and Mandela that an uncircumcised Hlengwe man was a contradiction in terms, for he was not considered a man at all, but a boy. For Hlengwe people circumcision represented formal incorporation of males, into society. Circumcision was not just a surgical procedure, but a lengthy and elaborate ritual in preparation for manhood. In the past Hlengwe men counted their years as men from the date of their circumcision. According to the Hlengwe who uphold the tradition, circumcision rite represents a passage to adulthood. A sample survey carried out in 1990 among 100 elderly Hlengwe males revealed one reason which they gave as to why circumcision was practised, simply that it was a sign of maturity.

Pre-initiation period is normally marked by peer group interaction and adolescents' behaviour as in modern days. Circumcision helped to prevent prolonged alienation by suddenly and dramatically cutting youth off from the transition period and aligning him solidly with the adult world. Circumcision as an initiation with adult norms and adult teachers as referents severed the youth's connections with the non-initiated and provided a mechanism by which adolescents could identify himself or herself with the new adult role.

Circumcision as an initiation prepared the Hlengwe boys for one or many of his adult roles, such as military, political, religious, legal, marital and sexual. Circumcision schools were an essential stage through which boys had to pass before they could attain a higher status particularly before the advent of European civilisation. For the Hlengwe, like other Bantu societies initiation schools are considered of central importance in the life circle of an individual. The specific significance of the circumcision institution might be difficult to determine particularly today. Some ethnographers have carried the interpretation only as far as to say that initiation confers adulthood or manhood on the initiate without defining whether this means sexual, jural, social, religious, political,

43

44

45

economic adulthood or a combination of both these statuses. A detailed analysis of how the circumcision schools are conducted such as the rite, *sungi* and formulae would assist in the understanding of the aims, significance and relevance of this Hlengwe culture.

A questionnaire conducted in 1989 from a sample of 100 male respondents who attended circumcision schools between 1929 and 1989 ranging from the illiterate to academicians and professionals all agreed that circumcision was one major unique aspect of culture which identified the Hlengwe as a distinct group, although it is practised by other groups it has other salient features, which are typical Hlengwe.⁴⁶ One who is culturally deprived has little or no confidence, feels insecure and lacks in authenticity. He lives on second-hand premises. What applies to an individual also applies to a whole society. One of the general definitions of culture is that it is peoples' way of life. As such it includes language, a system of beliefs, food, artefacts, customs, economic systems, political systems, social stratification, kinship systems, land tenure, dress, ornaments, shelter, formal and informal education.⁴⁷

Formal and informal education is one system through which culture perpetuates itself and acquires new dimensions. Hlengwe circumcision schools can be placed under traditional formal education. The above are some of the ways of life through which each human group be it a tribe or nation can its members identify themselves. The group covers the various angles of the totality of its needs and requirements. Its dimensions are physical, social, psychological and spiritual. Circumcision is one of the major cultural elements, which identifies the Hlengwe from other groups.

The importance of culture in the process of national identity cannot be over-emphasised. It promotes self-awareness and authenticity, which are necessary elements for motivation, self-reliance and productivity. When people identify themselves, they also become better equipped to identify others around them. This helps to foster understanding, unity and harmony. It also becomes a source of intellectual and social enrichment. In most cases initiates belong to an age group and here a good deal of practical teaching and learning about important tribal matters take place. Initiation ceremonies are carried out separately in groups and the initiates mostly boys are kept secluded from villages for about three or more months in the past and a month in these days. It is probable this idea which is the basis of the custom which led Van Gennepe to describe it as a 'rite de-passage', a rite inspired by the conception of a passage from one status in life to another.⁴⁸ This probably led to one school of thought to argue that the *ngoma* has no spiritual and moral idea attached to it and that it is inspired by the same depth and true sense of necessity in the evolution of man, of a progress consisting in renunciation of a miserable past and an introduction to new life. This argument is not the whole truth. Boys 7 to 12 years of age and men of 25 years or more, sons and fathers are occasionally admitted at the same *sungi*, lodge together. This has been used to prove the argument that circumcision rites have nothing to do with marriage properly speaking. The initiates can attend the *sungi* of other tribes or clans.

The circumcision lodge can only be built by a recognised traditional chief. Though the initiates are exhorted to become good subjects to their chief, but one of the major intentions of circumcision schools is to introduce the boys into manhood, to cleans

46

47

48

them from *yukuna* or *vukwena* meaning from immaturity and making them into thoughtful adult members of the community. Although after circumcision the initiated are re-incorporated in the community and their new status recognised, they are not necessarily regarded as being completely adults in all spheres of community life. Circumcision is an essential stage through which boys must pass before they can attain higher status. All respondents to the questionnaire agreed that circumcision schools are a dramatic production at helping the community to accept the new status of boys. The drama of the situation affects the way in which initiates perceived the importance of instructions and revelations of the circumcision schools. However, they all agreed that circumcision schools did not equip the boys with all the knowledge and entitle them to accept rules which maturity would bring.

Circumcision conferees upon the initiate's status of a man irrespective of age and all respondents agreed. Every initiated man becomes his comrade-in-arms. One argument is that as far as graduating in circumcision schools is concerned, sociological maturity at some point counts more than philosophical maturity. For instance, a boy of 12 years of age has the liberty to look down upon a man of 48 years of age if the latter is not circumcised. However, this is highly censored and tolerated when circumcision schools are in session. In the past it gave the young boy rights and privileges of citizenry greatly valued in tribal life. As a bona fide citizen he was not entitled to attend tribal meeting or tribal courts, but hunting expeditions and eligible for the army.

Cohen pointed out that in societies where organisation is based on extended kinship relationship as the Hlengwe compared to nuclear families some mechanism must be found to break the nuclear family band and attach the child to the wider group.⁴⁹ Circumcision ceremonies provided such mechanism. Initiates were removed from the protection and authority of the close, familiar family and subjected to the control of relatively unfamiliar groups. Circumcision forges those who go through it together into a group, which have certain rights and obligations to one another. The ceremony, particularly before the impact of European civilisation tended to create a general feeling of solidarity between the initiated. Circumcision schools have elements, which suggest that they aimed at drawing boys to society of men in contrast with women and the uninitiated.

It was a valuable mechanism for adjusting social relations and defining roles and statuses. However, it did not by itself confer instant adulthood in all social roles. It was an essential preliminary qualification of latter acceptance into complete adult status. In the past males who were not initiated were barred from effective political and jural positions and it was hard for them to find brides among the Hlengwe. Marriage and parenthood confer privileges of full adult status attained at middle age. Advanced age brings increased power and authority. Circumcision schools do not mark the final stage of development of an individual, but it does not equip and entitle him to accept roles which authority will bring. For instance, a mature man could not marry before circumcision, but after circumcision he could now marry, plough his own field, be admitted to the councils of the community and his words taken seriously.

Circumcision is a tradition, which started and continued as long as anyone could remember. It was a ritual that promised boys manhood, but the impact of European political, economic and social systems accompanied by Christianity generally meant an

49

empty and illusionary promise, a promise that can never be fulfilled. The Hlengwe became a conquered people by European colonialism, slaves in their own country, no land, no economic and political power and no control over their destiny in the land of their birth. Formal education and employment under the European capitalist economic system replaced circumcision as factors, which introduce boys into manhood. Even with the regaining of political power these factors are here to stay. However, circumcision still remains because of other various roles, which it plays.

Circumcision as a process of introducing boys into manhood made boys more mature in their handling of social relationships especially those involving conflict of interest. When Hlengwe elders talked about maturing of boys one of the major themes they harped upon more often was that boys settle conflicts by the stick, but men should settle disputes by law or words, implying judicial or quasi-judicial disputing. This is one area in which modern society and formal education has a long way to achieve.

Circumcision schools were bound up with the widening of social horizons of adolescent groups. Like modern formal school, though for a short period, boys were closely brought together at the lodges and previously not known to one another or knew each other at a distant. Initiates formed new associations, which cut across not only the nuclear or extended families, but lineage, rank ties and ethnic boundaries. For instance, Hlengwe initiates can attend same lodges with the Mfengu, Xhosa, Bhaka, Hlubi, Pedi, Sotho, Vhenda and Va-Lemba, forming bonds of interest and friendship. Once initiated it was a passport for wide visiting circuit where they could expect hospitality as groups or individuals. The initiates can identify each other by passwords common to all the tribes which practise circumcision and only in extreme cases when physical observation of the male organ is carried out. This is done by the experts of the *ngoma*.

The behaviour and values circumcision schools have tried to inculcate in the initiates have varied with time in human development. According to oral tradition before the Mfecane and before European colonialism circumcision schools focused on the establishment of a new regiment, military functions stressing on loyalty to the chief and tribe rather than on kins and kith. The ordeals which the initiates experienced at the lodges were adequate evidence of military training. Colonialism which brought to an end tribal wars also brought to an end the military function of circumcision schools since it was a security threat to its own existence. It must be noted that even though circumcision ceremonies were conducted under mysterious circumstances the colonial authorities always had their spies or the chief made a strong undertaking not to be a threat to state security.

The military function of the circumcision school was definitely brought to an end by European colonialism through its own political, military and security systems. Circumcision was seen as a device, which incorporated an individual into a new status in a group. The lodges are calculated to give the initiates the impression that they are new men and that they must prove it by submitting manfully to all the trials or ordeals of this hard and sometimes cruel initiation. It is the intention of the circumcision rites to introduce the boys into manhood, to cleanse them from *yukuna* (raw personality) and to make them thoughtful adult members of the community. The six major ordeals or trials, which the initiates have to pass, are the raw physical operation without any anaesthetic, heavy blows, severe colds, thirst, unsavoury food and sometimes death. On slightest mistakes initiates are severely beaten up by the shepherds at the order of the senior men

or overseers. Everyday in the morning at about 5 a.m. to 6 a.m. and in the evening from 7 p.m. to midnight they sit around a huge fire called the elephant holding a stick in hand, singing and lunging at the elephant fire as if piercing a real elephant. If they do not sing or lunge at the fire properly they are beaten up or made to carry on the exercise for a longer time. This exercise is very strenuous on the shoulders and vocal cords. They eat their food in semi nudity, crouching and at a pace of a very hungry dog while the shepherds are standing behind them holding whips which they apply to the backs of the initiates who are slow grubbers.

The winter months of June to August are the coldest in the Hlengweland. During the night temperatures fall to 41⁰F. This is the time when circumcision lodges are set up. The initiates sleep naked in the open on their backs, with heads turned to the fire and warm, while feet are cold. Blankets are prohibited, the floors are simply unsmearred soils and only light grass covers are allowed when it rains. Very early in the morning at about 4.30 a.m. when water is still very cold the initiates are led to the pool where they remain inside the water for about two hours. The cold water is believed to help heal the wounds after the operation of the foreskin.

Before the advent of European formal education this was a six months exercise and these days it is for a month. According to oral tradition in the early days drinking of water was forbidden during the course of the initiation and this was one of the most painful ordeals. However, the initiates took advantage during washing at the pool, early in the morning and evening and during hunting trips, but if discovered they were thoroughly flogged. Probably the unsavoury food helped to counter the scientific argument that a person cannot survive for a fortnight without water let alone a month or more. However, respondents stated that initiates are now allowed to drink water three times a day, that is morning, noon and evening. They all drink at the same time. However, considering that day temperatures in the Hlengweland are very high, an average of 45⁰C and the fact that meat is the major diet of the initiates, thirst is also a major ordeal for the initiates.

Punishments involve heavy blows for minor offences. The standard of punishment for serious offences is called "drink the goat's milk," and this is supervised by the father of the lodge - the overseer. Four sticks from a shrub called *mbuti* meaning goat are placed between the offender's fingers and squeezed by the two shepherds on opposite sides. According to oral traditions' initiates who attempted to escape from the lodges or revealed secrets of the *sungi* to women or the uninitiated were hanged on the last day of the initiation and burnt together with all the sacred contents of the lodge. Colonial system of justice has prevented the death sentence being passed by the lodge elders. This has been substituted by heavy flogging or a fine of a heifer. In fact, these day's cases of escapees from the lodges are common and fugitives ending up in modern hospitals or clinics also protected by the modern judiciary system.

According to oral tradition one of the ordeals that was abandoned was that before the circumcision ceremony one must have performed a daring exploit which could be proved such as a successful encounter with a lion, leopard, buffalo, crocodile, rhino or cattle raids from other tribes. It was supposed to be a successful, risky adventure.

The physical operation of the foreskin without anaesthetic using an assegai, a home made knife, then modern knives or razor was the first major ordeal introducing the initiate to the series of other ordeals. Flinching or crying out during the operation was regarded as a sign of weakness and it stigmatised one's manhood. It has also been argued that for the potential initiates it is a time of sleepless nights, nightmares and mental torture when preparation for the setting up of lodges started. Although preparations are carried out secretly by the elders, it is always possible to guess from the goings and comings and their discussions that something amiss is going to take place. In fact all the initiates who are seven years and above always wait for this day of reckoning covered with mystery.

The initiates must be prepared to die as a result of unhealing wounds, epidemics in the lodges and from various ordeals. It is forbidden to mourn for a dead initiate. In some cases the relatives who were not in the lodge knew about the fate of their beloved son when the initiates returned from the lodge. Sometimes the mother or spouse of the deceased was informed by a notch cut on the edge of the wooden or clay plate in which she brought food to the lodge. She was not allowed to cry until when it was officially announced when the lodge was closed. The corpse was secretly buried by the elders in a wet place and in a grave dug by sticks left without any mark. The very sick were isolated from the other flock of initiates and they reported back if one of the initiates was dead or had fled. However, the initiates knew the hidden truth that tormented their minds throughout the course. The circumcision ordeals were a trial of bravery and stoicism, a man must suffer in silence. Graduating from the circumcision lodges after experiencing the ordeals made one to feel a great achiever and a new man.

It also gave pride and honour to the parents and relatives. Graduation was and is still accompanied by singing, dancing, ululating, feasting and gifts such as is witnessed at modern academic or professional graduation ceremonies. The current argument is that the various ordeals are now irrelevant as a result of formal education and the capitalist economic system. Death if it happens which is very rare has to be reported immediately according to the requirements of today's judiciary system. In fact, elders have allowed very serious cases to be referred to modern hospitals or clinics rather than face the modern judiciary system. However, it must be made clear that they do this as a last resort.

The various ordeals taught the boys endurance and discipline for the hardships of manhood. In a society like the Hlengwe where males dominated it was also naturally believed and accepted that men performed the hardest jobs. For instance, the risky tasks such as hunting and defending one's family, clan or tribe were done by men. It was a norm for a man to have a polygamous marriage which among other advantages and brought forth tribulations of quarrels among the wives and mischief of children which the father had to solve. One aspect of a good leader is the ability to endure hence it is believed that the ordeals of circumcision would prepare the man for this eventuality.

There are those who argue that in a way these ordeals limited cases of suicide which are now common as a result of economic and social impact. However, the initiates believe that these ordeals are no longer necessary because to successfully complete any stage of formal education and attaining any professional qualification one has got to pass through many ordeals.

Rumours of various ordeals made many young men run away from home to avoid circumcision with or without approval of parents. However, the majority of parents are for circumcision. The majority of peers get circumcised so even those who are against circumcision get circumcised because they fear to be a laughing stock. The fact of being laughed at if one is not circumcised when he is eligible is a reality and officially licensed by the elders, particularly when the circumcision schools are in session.⁵⁰ It is often in a family where one of them is non Hlengwe married to a Hlengwe and some of the modern parents or uncircumcised fathers who collaborate with their sons to avoid circumcision. However, the fear of being secluded, jeered and laughed at by other peers have made some boys ignore the advice of their parents and succumb to go through the ordeals.

Young men are by nature adventurous and curious hence some of them have gone to the lodges in order to discover the mystery and reality of circumcision without any other reasons behind their minds. However, this is a very small proportion compared to those who enter because they have no choice and are forced by parents because of expected benefits.

Life in the circumcision lodge taught initiates great discipline and demanded a higher degree of keeping secrets. The life in the lodges is surrounded and covered by a dark, heavy cloud of mystery. Many would rather suffer or die than reveal the secrets of the circumcision rites. This lesson has remained indelibly in the minds of initiates. Police and security reports and records especially during the Liberation War generally agree on the fact that it was hard to extract secret or confidential information from the Hlengwe people. A. Wright who worked among the Hlengwe as District Administrator for 10 years in the early 1960's summarised Hlengwe refusal to reveal a secret in a simple answer (*aniswaṭivi*). 'I do not know.'⁵¹ Crude as the circumcision methods and organisation may be there was no doubt that the whole process was designed as to impress upon the rising generation the importance of right conduct. Circumcision contributed to act as a mechanism of nipping delinquency in the bud.

During the period of seclusion in the lodges, teaching bore on such topics as truth, honour, purity, abstinence from alcohol, shunning adultery, humility, love of one's neighbour and responsibilities towards one's community or society. It was a way of impressing maturity and responsibilities bearing in mind the anti-social behaviour common among herd boys and peer groups. There was a consensus as to the importance of circumcision schools teaching them discipline and good morals.⁵²

There is an argument as to whether or not circumcision schools contribute to the development of intellectual learning. All respondents with formal educational background - 'O' Level and above argued that circumcision schools scantily or insignificantly developed intellectual learning. Every morning, noon and evening in the lodge the initiates are brought together to the place of formulae under the pole, set up on the centre of the lodge to be instructed in the tribal law. They are also made to shout aloud the circumcision slogan for 15 minutes. Tribal laws and the slogan are to be memorised and recited sentence by sentence. Respondents argued that this is rote learning similar to modern formal schools especially when pupils are preparing for

50

51

52

examinations.⁵³ However, life in the lodge has been compared to a formal school programme. There is a daily timetable, lessons or subjects to be taught teachers and supervisors. Sargant has gone as far as comparing circumcision schools with modern techniques of brain-washing in which isolation and hardships disorientate a subject, destroy and weaken his old personality and make him amenable to the learning of new beliefs and behaviour patterns. The technique is particularly effective during puberty when an individual is already experiencing a certain degree of physical and possibly emotional upheaval.⁵⁴

The formula is regarded as the slogan or motto of the circumcision school an embodiment of summary of the aims of the circumcision rites and tribal law. It also provides the principal passwords by which the circumcised can recognise each other. Others have argued that the formula is a collection of esoteric words rather than a true intellectual learning. The truth is that this is an argument provided by outsiders or those who have attended mismanaged circumcision lodges.

Moralists and Christians have pointed out that obscene language used during the circumcision sessions tends to pervert the minds of the boys and constituted an immoral preparation for sexual life. It is true that vulgar or obscene language is used by overseers, supervisors and shepherds, but not by the initiates during the course of giving orders, instructions or lessons but not by the initiates. However, respondents argued that this particular language is used only at specific contexts in the absence of children, women and uninitiated. It is strictly used within the lodges. The only time when it is used outside the lodge is when the shepherds welcome women who bring the food for the initiates, but this is done through shouting from a distance. It is through this exposure that the initiates learn more about vulgar language, when and where to use it and even more, its implication.⁵⁵ The use of vulgar language (*tsuko*) among the Hlengwe at any other place by anybody deserves severe punishment for children and a strong verbal reprimand or even a fine for elders.

One interesting argument is that sex instruction not education as such is one of the major subjects taught in the circumcision lodges. However, all respondents denied sex instruction, but accepted that normal sex education is imparted. They argued that the former argument is presented and over emphasised by the uninitiated, Christians, teachers, medical officials, other Government officials and all those who want to see circumcision rites abolished. They have associated circumcision schools with sex instruction and frequent obscene allusions to sexual functions. There are even exaggerations that what happens in these secluded lodges has to be seen to be believed and that it is this reason why secrecy and mystery are sacred. It is reported that initiates are given oral and practical sex lessons and fed on various concoctions and to be able to handle women sexually as an old man of 80 years of age would boast to be. Respondents have dismissed these arguments of practical lessons and concoctions as a figment of some people's imaginations.⁵⁶ Circumcision schools promote accepted sexual education such as sexual rules and behaviour within marriage and absolutely no practical lessons nor concoctions are involved. There is emphasis on sex education that discourages

53

54

55

56

immorality. Threats of sanctions such as ridicule, isolation or heavy fines were clearly enunciated to the initiates in the case of those who violate the Hlengwe code of sexual conduct. It is one of the major factors that has kept circumcision rites alive amidst the impact of European political, economical and social systems accompanied by Christianity. Hlengwe elders are adamant that European formal education has dismally failed as far as sex education is concerned to produce positive results. They are very apprehensive to leave sex education wholly in the hands of strangers and would rather do so to people whom they know and trust. In fact, Hlengwe elders do not hesitate to blame prostitution, promiscuity and illegitimate children to the exposure of sex education from books, radios, television sets, newspapers, magazines, films and too many strangers, people outside the tribe.

There is a debatable claim that women enjoy making love with circumcised males. The old men dismissed this as nonsense and a boyish whim. However, they confirmed that in the past it was very hard for an uncircumcised man to marry Hlengwe women. Possibly, women were made to believe this point as a result of tribal or cultural socialisation of women. Linked to this argument is the belief that circumcision plays a role in fertility which the elders also rejected.⁵⁷ The no foreskin no fun idea, according to opponents of circumcision, the removal of the sensitive foreskin dulls a man's sexual enjoyment later and robs his partner of enjoyment too. A massive 1992 study centred at the University of Chicago found very little difference in sexual satisfaction as reported by circumcised and uncircumcised men. Thirty years ago a classic sexual research was carried out by Masters and Johnson who found out "no clinical significant difference" in penile sensitivity between the two groups.⁵⁸ However, the argument remains unresolved since women who are the other partners would also need to be consulted. The belief that circumcision was hygienic was strongly supported by all respondents to the questionnaire. A professional medical doctor among the respondents confirmed that surgeons sometimes deemed it necessary to prevent complications and dirt that accumulated under the foreskin.⁵⁹

Therefore it is possible that before the introduction of modern washing detergent's circumcision was one way of keeping the male organ clean. Other critics argue that if this was a major reason then it's now more natural to leave circumcision to the province of medicine particularly the physical operation aspect rather than imposing it as a collective educational rite. In fact, more medical research is needed in this area.

Singing plays a very important role in the daily timetable of the circumcision school. Every morning and evening there are long sessions of singing. This also takes place when initiates are returning from hunting or fetching firewood. The songs have been criticised for lacking deeper meaning and the melody as rude and wild although very impressive. However, all the respondents argued that the songs carried cultural messages and that they were full of meaning apart from providing entertainment. They felt that singing was a necessary a method of teaching and a break from the ordeals. Most of the songs conveyed historical, political, military, economic and social messages related to the Hlengwe people. The young generation among the respondents complained that songs in the Vhenda and Sotho language were unnecessary. The elders argued that it

⁵⁷

⁵⁸

⁵⁹

was necessary because it widened their horizons and brought them into contact with these tribes who are their geographical neighbours for a long time.⁶⁰ National, government schools socialise pupils into loyal and active citizens through singing of national anthems, saluting, greeting and bidding farewell to national leaders or very important persons. In the absence of formal schools it was during circumcision that the young were socialised to be loyal and active members of the tribe.

Oral traditions and respondents who attended circumcision schools before 1945 emphasised that hunting was an important occupation of the initiates. The White settler colonial government declared hunting illegal and can only be carried out under licence. Thus hunting ceased to be an important aspect of circumcision schools. Before colonialism the Hlengwe lived in an environment which made hunting an important economic aspect. Therefore boys were to be prepared and encouraged for this type of livelihood. Some critics have gone to an extent of arguing that hunting was the only useful thing taught by the *ngoma*. The initiates went out hunting using simple sticks, bare hands, traps and nets to catch animals, spears, bows, arrows, home made guns and dogs which they had to use in real life were prohibited. The vital knowledge which they learnt about hunting during the circumcision sessions were to identify the various footprints of different animals, how to track the animals hiding or resting places, sounds of animals, how to ambush, kill and skin the animals. Professional hunters among the supervisors of the lodge imparted to the initiates their experiences and skills.

They were also taught the various uses of certain parts of animals and parts eaten by the elders, women or children. It must be noted that hunting was not a new skill or a special preserve for the initiates. During circumcision knowledge on hunting was deepened and skills refined. After 1955 government introduced stringent laws against hunting and since then practical hunting has ceased and only theory has remained to be imparted to the initiates. Although hunting was very valuable the new capitalist economic order has made it redundant.

Circumcision has been dismissed as of no relevance to modern capitalist economy particularly as a means of getting employment. Advocates of circumcision have argued that the ordeals taught workers values such as respect, patience and endurance. This helped the workers to survive in the rough working conditions, in the mines and commercial farms. It is on record that Hlengwe labourers had a record of being hard workers in the Transvaal mines and received the first preference on recruitment. In fact many workers in the early days passed as 'Hlengwes' in order to be employed. Respondents who worked in the South African mines before the late 1950's adamantly argued that the circumcision ordeals prepared them for slave labour in the mines and forced labour.⁶¹ However, this is no longer the case because the criteria for employment is based on academic and technical qualifications.

One of the greatest challenges of circumcision rites is European formal education. The Hlengwe in their terminology refer to the circumcision ceremony as a school. In fact, general similarities can be drawn between the two although there are many glaring and great differences. European formal education was introduced among the Hlengwe in Mozambique and Transvaal in the late 19th century and in Zimbabwe seriously in 1939. The functionalist perspective of modern formal education in an industrial society is to

60

61

transmit the norms and values of society, preparing the young people for adult roles. Hence the same role circumcision schools played in the Hlengwe society before European formal education. Modern formal schools, training and technical institutions select young people in terms of talents and abilities necessary for effective participation in the capitalist economy. On the other hand circumcision schools generally catered for everybody. However, the fact that circumcision schools still flourish parallel to modern formal schools then it means that modern formal schools have failed to adequately address all issues accounted for by circumcision schools. The Marxian perspective asserts that modern formal education transmits values and norms of the ruling class and that in a capitalistic society its major role is reproduction of labour power. The Hlengwe circumcision school although it was set up by the chief transmitted the values and norms of the whole tribe. European colonialism has incorporated the Hlengwe into a large national capitalist society, but this did not bring to an end circumcision schools. Hence circumcision schools represent more that what is advocated by the Marxian perspective.

The Hlengwe are now living in an educational environment, which is a compromise of both the functionalist and Marxian perspectives. A combination of these perspectives has failed to get rid of the Hlengwe circumcision schools. Modern formal schools have been established among the Hlengwe with many specialised professionals who process students and certify that they have enough education to perform necessary economic, political and social tasks. Vast sums of money are devoted to educational activities, affecting life chances and influencing the direction of social change. Many years are spent in formal schools compared to not more than six months in the past and now not more than five weeks in a circumcision lodge. European formal education acts as a giant filtering system where at each level some drop out and others are encouraged to go on. The problem with the screening system is that some are unfairly judged within a very short time or some of their talents and abilities are not considered. Modern formal education is responsible for social stratification. Children are introduced to bureaucratic organisations where achievement and promotion matters more.

Examination formalises completion to succeed. Circumcision schools took notice of individuals, but promoted co-operation and communalism. Initiates who are talented and brave are noticed, but failures or average achievers are not heavily labelled like those who pass and fail in modern education examinations. Although initiates who flinch or cry out during the removal of the foreskin or succumb to some of the ordeals are ridiculed, regarded as cowards and have their manhood stigmatised, this is only a consumption of the community in the lodge.

It is necessary to discuss how circumcision ceremonies are generally organised and conducted in order to understand their relevance, advantages and disadvantages. An analysis of how the ceremonies are organised will help to reveal and explain why they have stood the test of time. The Hlengwe circumcision rites are organised by traditional recognised chiefs and their council of elders, mainly headmen (*tinduna*) who have the final decision over all matters pertaining to the ceremonies. The fees paid by the initiates are received by the chief before the ceremonies begin, but if one is desperately willing and can not pay there and then it can be settled later. In the past fees used to be in the form of chicken, but when money became a common currency, then it is now in the form of hard cash. The fees have increased with the passing of time. In 1974 it was a dollar, in 1989 it was two dollars, in 1993 it was three dollars and in 1997 it was ten dollars per

initiate.⁶² It is the duty of the chief and his council to appoint the ‘doctor’ who carries out the physical operation and protects the lodge with his medicine. The ‘doctor’ is paid a fee. In the past it was a heifer and now it is over five hundred dollars. The chief and council appoint the father of each circumcision lodge, who is the overall overseer of the lodge, the final decision-maker on the spot and answerable to the chief and the council. The overseer of the lodge has about five subordinates who form a mini council, which takes care of the daily affairs of the lodge.

The father of the lodge who is a highly respected man in the community appoints his subordinates with the approval of the chief and his council. All the circumcised in the last session and four years back act as guardians, attendants or shepherds in the lodge. In Hlengwe language they are called varies, *switsiva* or *vadzabhi* meaning servants of men and their duty is to constantly watch over the conditions of the initiates. An attendant is in charge of an average group of not more than ten initiates. They take care of all the needs of the initiates and act as nurses and personal tutors of their groups.

The Hlengwe circumcision lodges (*ngoma*) are set up generally after every four or five years, particularly in a year of good harvests, for all boys from the age of seven years and above. It is common for mature men of any age to be initiated at the same time. They might have missed the right time due to some reasons such as illness or managed to hide successfully because of fear. The Hlengwe do not circumcise infants, however, there are cases of children or mature men circumcised at hospitals for medical reasons. These special cases when they want to enter the traditional lodges they pay a higher fee, but there is no physical re-operation.

The spacing of setting up lodges has been irregular at times because of a number of factors particularly after the introduction of European colonial rule. The lodges are set up in a year of plenty, heavy rains and abundant harvests because plenty of food is required for the initiates and brewing of beer for the celebration ceremonies when the initiates graduate. Hlengweland is under a region of five, characterised by droughts and good rains after every four or five years. The setting up of lodges also depends with the number of potential initiates available. For instance, when the ideal time for initiation is at hand some of the adolescents will be attending formal schools, young men work in the cities, towns, mines or commercial farms. In times of war such as the Zimbabwe Liberation War 1965 to 1980 circumcision lodges could not be established regularly because they interfered with mobilisation and fear that initiates would be unable to escape in an event of an attack. However, the point to note is that amidst all odds whenever the conditions are conducive the circumcision ceremonies have always resurged with vigour.

Before European colonialism the initiates were kept secluded from the villages, women, children and the uncircumcised for about six months. Demands by formal schools and the capitalist economy have reduced the period to not more than a month. The majority of the initiates are sent without choice by their parents since they are minors. Those who escape if they happen to be at hand on the next occasion are included by consent or force. Mature men are compelled to go through initiation by verbal persuasion, ridicule or exclusion from important social and political functions. In fact, force has been known to be in use although underplayed and very much discouraged unless on special cases such as those who ridicule the *ngoma* publicly or married to

Hlengwe women. In recent times, there has been an increase in cases of using force by greedy organisers who want to make profit. For instance, initiates pay fees, so the more initiates enter the lodge the more fees are paid. However, this has landed some organisers in court such as the 1989 incident at Chitanga circumcision lodge.

The Hlengwe circumcision ceremonies are held during the Winter season between May and September. It is also the favoured months for all groups which practise circumcision in Southern Africa. Oral traditions refer to the time of the year for the setting up of the lodges as the month during which the Morning Star, Venus or *Ngongomela* in Hlengwe language appears in winter. Venus precedes the sun, heralding daylight so symbolically she must lead the initiates to new life, from darkness representing immaturity to light standing for maturity. Winter is believed to be an ideal period since infection chances are believed to be low and less work for the communities in the fields after harvest. The time span in the lodges help to give time for the healing of the wounds.

The site of the lodge is chosen by the chief and his council or elders. The site of the lodge itself introduces the mystery, which shrouds the whole of the circumcision ceremonies from women, children and uncircumcised men. The initiates are bound by frightening codes of secrecy throughout the initiation period and after. The initiates are definitely threatened by death, or death of a close relative or suffer some great misfortune such as infertility if they divulge secrets of the ceremony particularly what happens in the lodge. The site of the lodge physically separates the initiates' from the community. The lodge is built in a secluded and remote place from the village or residential areas, but far enough for women to bring food cooked at a central point, three times a day. The lodge is built on the bank of a river. Fortunately, such big and perennial rivers like the Save, Runde, Mutirikwe, Mwenezi and Limpopo drain Hlengweland. There is a need for adequate quantities of water, preferably flowing water to daily wash the wounds of the initiates after the operation. The environment along the rivers is also ideal for privacy and seclusion since it is covered by thick and heavy forests. However, current environmental deforestation is taking its toll along the rivers and some traditional sports are designated to commercial White farmers who are not friendly. Some sympathetic black farmers in the Gonakudzingwa Purchase Area such as the late Thomas Zanamwe Sibanda has offered their land to be used for circumcision lodges. The hideout, physical location of circumcision lodges is also regarded as an act signifying the separation of the initiates from their former state.

The physical lodge or yard of mysteries called the *sungi* in Hlengwe is built under the supervision of the chief and his council of elders. The 'surgeon' must also have a look at it. The donkeywork of building the lodge is done by the attendants supervised by the father of the lodge and his subordinates. The whole lodge is surrounded by a high fence of thorny branches to reinforce the isolation and seclusion of new initiates. It is also a symbol that all that goes on inside must be kept a secret. The lodge is of a rectangular or round shape. Women, children and uncircumcised men are not allowed to see it. Inside the lodges are simple shelters made of tree branches, which serve as, houses for each group and their attendant. These are built by the initiates supervised by their respective attendance on the second day after their physical operation. As part of their trials the first day, initiates sleep under an open sky. A pole is dug on the centre of the lodge or a tree is left uncut on which the chief instructor climbs up daily in the morning, noon, and sunset to impart the teachings of circumcision until the last day of the lodge.

The position of chief instructor is hereditary, passed from father to son. It must be pointed out that all officials in the conducting and organisation of the circumcision ceremony are paid a thank you fee. What is most important is the respect they receive from the community because these positions become public when the initiates graduate and public celebrations take place. However, recently cases of corruption and exploitation have crept in with some officials demanding more than what is legally required.

The physical operation, that is the removal of the foreskin of the male organ heralds the first major step of the circumcision ceremony and leaves an indelible mark of the whole process of the circumcision initiation. The night before circumcision all the initiates gather at the chief's kraal, also present are the elders of the chiefs council, the father of the lodge, his subordinates, the attendants and the would be initiates. It is also a night of singing and dancing by women and circumcised men trying to cheer up the initiates. The initiates are naturally gathered like sheep being led to a slaughter place, full of apprehension and covered by the fear of the unknown. The same night they are shaved bald, another symbol of abandoning the old life and moving into a new world of maturity. The atmosphere surrounding the initiates is characterised by melancholy although the attendants try to cheer them up. When Venus or Ngongomela rises early in the morning from the East, the band of initiates with their attendance leave the chief's kraal for the lodge.

There are many fairy tales as to how the operation takes place and the truth is revealed to the initiates after the incident. The famous one is that the initiates jump over a huge flame of fire naked and thus losing their foreskins. This cannot happen in the world of the living unless by magic. However, this tallies well with the mysteries of the lodge to the uncircumcised. The story of fire according to oral tradition arose from the incident of the big fire that was lit on the way to the lodge. The fire was made of strongly scented wood and when the initiates smelt the smoke they will at least become numb to reduce the pain before the operation. The smoke is also believed to chase away evil spirits that may temper with the conducting of the ceremony. This rite is called kuthlula ritsva literary meaning to jump over the firebrand. It is one of the aspects of circumcision rites abandoned by Christian circumcision ceremonies.

While the initiates are still a distance from the lodge they are subjected to a great noise, singing accompanied by the beating of drums and blowing of antelope horns. They do not understand the meaning of words sung by the host of shepherds and other circumcised men. About five or more are grabbed from the group, pushed forward and once they are out of sight they are immediately snatched by very strong men who make them sit on stones. This place is not very far from the entrance of the lodge and the spot is called "the place of the crocodile." The spot where the physical operation takes place. The initiates are faced by men in masks and dressed in a fearful manner called nyahombe in Hlengwe, meaning the Lion men.

In the midst of the confusion caused by the singing, drums, snatching, sitting on rocks and facing the fearsome men, the initiates are bound, gagged and blinded. The operator snatches his opportunity seizing the foreskin and with a single motion cuts it off. The initiates are thrown in the lodge without catching sight of the operator. They also do not see what happens to their colleagues until they are inside the lodge. The exercise is repeated until all the initiates are completed.

The hands of the *mayina* or operator move so fast as if they are controlled by another worldly force, without a word, pulling the foreskin and cutting it off without any anaesthetic applied or any other medication applied. "I felt as if fire was shooting through veins, the pain was so intense."⁶³ All initiates have nodded their heads in total agreement. The initiates are instructed to shout words to the effect that they are now men "*ni wanuna*," immediately when the operator let go their organ and in the course of intense pain. This is the greatest of all ordeals of the circumcision ceremony. All those who cry are regarded as boys and all those who conceal their pain are regarded as men. Hence the Hlengwe saying to daily confrontation with problems of life -- A boy may cry, a man conceals his pain.

According to oral tradition, in time immemorial, the operator used any sharp instrument, ranging from sharp stones and then iron instruments and in modern times, knife blades. The unsterilised blade is used to operate all the initiates. No doubt, the loud cry today against circumcision because of AIDS. J.B. Thompson claims to have seen ivory bone and shells used as instruments of operation which are greatly valued and passed on to the trusted sons.⁶⁴

However, today metal knives are in common use. It has also been claimed that copper, bronze instruments, hot knives or assegais were used. The profession of a circumcision surgeon was passed from father to son or grandfather to grand son on the paternal side. The operator is believed to be a medicine man because of the nature of his profession. In fact he holds high respect in society apart from the circumcision ceremonies. The initiates are introduced to the 'surgeon' on the day of their graduation and celebrations at the chief's kraal. At this point a lot of water would have passed under the bridge and the pain he inflicted on them a fact of history.

The singing and drums are to drown the possible noise made by the initiates during the process of the operation. The binding of both hands and legs, blindfolding and gagging is to stop the initiates from wriggling and screaming. They are blindfolded so that they do not see what is being done to them and by whom. The initiates can not explain comprehensively what happens from the time they are separated from the main group until the time they are in the lodge for the first time. Everything happens at a speed of lightning. They are only able to understand and explain well after taking part as shepherds in the future.

After the operation the initiates are literally thrown in the lodge. The first thing which they notice when they begin to regain their senses is a perfect cut, clean and round like a ring minus the foreskin on their male organ. In the lodge they are made to sit on the stones. From this point onwards the life of the initiates is surrounded and confined to the yard of mysteries, called the *sungi* in Hlengwe, except when going hunting, to the pool or gathering firewood. After the operation the initiate has now crossed (*wela*) a technical expression meaning that the initiate has been introduced into the lodge and new life. The removal of the foreskin though it cannot have the high spiritual meaning of the Jewish circumcision seems to others to be also a distinctly separation rite. The foreskin representing the ancient contemptible childish life from which the initiated has emerged.

An interesting discussion among the circumcised and outsiders is an attempt to find out an explanation as to what happens to the foreskins. This is one of the greatest

63

64

mysteries of the rites, which remains the preserve of the mayina or ‘surgeon’ and the veterans of the ceremony called switsviva in the Hlengwe language. Those who claim to know the truth say that the ‘surgeons’ assistant ties the foreskins on the corner of a piece of cloth to hide them from wizards who could use them for evil purposes and then bury them which symbolically is also burying the youth of the initiates. Others claim that the ‘surgeon’ burns them when he cleanses himself at the end of the operation. Another claim is that they are preserved to be buried together with other contents on the last day when the lodge is closed and burnt. The wildest claim which is strongly rejected by the circumcised is that the foreskins are mixed with concoctions, medicine or food given to the initiates.

In the lodge the initiates are seated on the stones until the whole process of circumcision is completed. Some initiates faint or become unconscious as a result of intense pain and oozing out of blood. When one faints it is technically called that the initiate has been gored by a ram. Those who faint are treated by simple pouring them cold water. The attendants begin the long process of dressing the wounds of the initiates and teaching them how to dress themselves. The materials used to dress the wounds depend with the material available around the lodge. Leaves from healing plants, which are thorny on the outside, but smooth inside which absorbs blood and other secretions, dress some wounds. Others use rings of woven very soft grass, which they put on their wounds with string. Sometimes initiates drank a decoction to stop the haemorrhage. However, these days serious septic cases can be treated by antibiotic creams, paraffin, brandy, salt, dettol, methylated spirits and gentian violet. These medications are only used in very exceptional incidents. Before the advent of European colonialism the long time in the lodge was a healing factor.

The first night in the lodge is a memorable one for the initiates. They sleep round the big fire burning with wet wood that cast off clouds of smoke intended to promote healing. They are instructed to lie on their backs with one leg flat and the other one bent also to facilitate the healing of the wound. The attendants painted the naked and shaved bodies of the initiates from head to foot in white ochre turning them into some form of ghosts. The white chalk symbolised purity and the new appearance their maturity. The ochre also helped to protect their bare bodies since they are not allowed to wear clothes. Oral tradition claims that in the past they remained in this form until the day the lodge was closed. These days they spent only a week in this form an ordeal for those used to washing daily.

Inmates of the lodge are divided into three categories. The first category who make up the majority of the total lodge population is the yukwera, a troop of candidates recently initiated and going through the practical and theoretical lessons of the circumcision school. The second category is made up of the shepherds or attendants, varisi or vadzabi who take care of the welfare and teach the initiates. Some of their major duties are to supervise the initiates to clean their wounds, look after them at night, supervise their feeding, teach them the laws of the ngoma, awaken the initiates every morning, accompany them on hunting or firewood collection trips. The highest body in the lodge is the lodge council presided by the father of the lodge and his deputy who is referred to as the mother of the council. They are sometimes joined by a group of circumcised mature men who volunteer to come and spend varied times at the lodge imparting their own wisdom, skills and experience to the initiates and attendants.

Sometimes they while their time carving or weaving. When hunting used to be a very important aspect of the circumcision school they ate the animals killed by the initiates. There is some grain of truth that these mature men frequent the lodges because there is plenty of food particularly meat to eat and spare. An open system of imparting knowledge exists under the system, which allows anybody circumcised to come in the lodge.

A strict code exists for all the officials of the circumcision ceremony and even more for those who conduct the lodge. During the whole duration of the ceremony they are not allowed sexual relationship and must abstain from alcohol. Sexual relationship is traditionally associated with uncleanness and keeping away from alcohol to avoid ill treatment of the initiates. The major duties of the father of the lodge are to keep discipline and administer punishment. The *manyabe* or the Lion man is the great doctor of the lodge. He does not permanently stay at the lodge, but occasionally comes in or he can be summoned in case of an emergency. The Lion man's duty is to protect the lodge by his medicine and charms against evil spirits, misfortunes or disease. Sometimes he attends to sceptic wounds, which are taking time to heal.

On the central court of the lodge a fireplace called the Elephant is lit every night until the last night of the school. The initiates provide the wood and the attendants light it and keep it burning. The initiates sit parallel on both sides of the Elephant changing direction each night. It is during this time that they sing and recite the traditional laws. During these sessions any circumcised person can come and impart his knowledge to the initiates. This session lasts an average of five hours every evening. It is part of the endurance ordeals particularly if the initiates happen to be unfortunate to have the wind blowing smoke towards their direction. The Elephant provides the central venue for all the initiates and instructors. The fire is for light and warmth for the almost naked initiates.

The round or square shaped lodge has one main entrance. Inside there is a division with two gates one used by the officials of the lodge and the other one used by the initiates leading to their yard. The father of the lodge and his council has a hut and the attendants for their meetings or consultations use another hut. The movements of initiates inside the lodge are strictly controlled like a military camp to instil discipline in the initiates. A modern innovation, which Sparrow also observed, is the building of huts for initiates inside the lodge who used to sleep on the open ground.⁶⁹

The cooking is done by women, preferably mothers of the initiates who must abstain from sexual relationship during this time. After cooking they take the food to a spot where they shout slogans for the attendants to come and collect. The initiates take the food, which is always *sadza* and meat to the initiates inside the lodge. The initiates eat the food in a crouched position in a great hurry as part of discipline.

A special language, vocabulary and terminology is used inside the lodge by the circumcised and taught to the initiates. The special language is mainly for common objectives, actions, and objects. The language is a mixture of Nguni languages such as Sotho, Pedi, Tswana, Vhenda, Tsonga, Bomvana and Hlengwe. Orders and instructions are given in this language which others have described in archaic and foreign language. Actions are not often designated by ordinary words, but by unusual terms. For example, the daily smearing of bodies with ochre is called 'to eat the sheep's fat.' If one faints,

69

screams or becomes unconscious it is called “he has been gored by a ram”. The special language is used as passwords to increase the impression of mystery, which the rites must convey to the uninitiated and the initiates.

A day’s programme or timetable in the lodge starts at about 4.00 a.m. when the attendants awaken the initiates to go down to the river to wash in very cold water. After washing the bodies are smeared to shine with white clay or ochre. At about 6.00 a.m. they assembly under the pole on the centre of the lodge for the formulae and instructions from the chief instructor. Then *vuswa* and meat for breakfast. The initiates break up into groups with their attendants for lessons. For lunch they have *vuswa* and meat. Once again they assembly under the pole for another lecture from the chief instructor and formulae.

After an hour they go out hunting or collecting firewood accompanied by their attendants. They return for supper with the usual menu of *vuswa* and meat. They assembly under the pole for the last session of the day with the chief instructor. When the sun sets they gather around the Elephant fire for singing and recitations of the formulae, laws and lectures until midnight when they go to sleep. During the course of the day they drink water at given times. This is the general programme in the lodge marked by ordeals for the initiates. Every time after eating they remain with some crumbs which they throw on the fence shouting insults to a name of a well-known elder who is known to be uncircumcised a *shuvuru*, a term of contempt applied to all uncircumcised men. This is intended to encourage the uncircumcised to be circumcised and to make the initiated to realise their new positions. Nowadays other foodstuffs find their way into the lodges, but this is for the elders.

The teaching of the formulae is the core of all the lessons and the initiates must know it by heart. It is imparted three times a day by the chief instructor under the pole that is dug in the centre of the lodge. The formulae, called *nawu* in Hlengwe means the law or prescription. In a normal situation the chief instructor inherits this position from his father. Every time he teaches the formulae he climbs on the top of the pole so that all the initiates can see and clearly hear him. He introduces himself by asking the initiates if they know him. The obvious reply is negative for the first lesson. For the following lessons the answer is positive. After introducing himself he calls aloud all the names of well known elders who are not circumcised inviting them to under go the initiation. This is to impress upon the initiates that as long as one is not circumcised his position in society will always be looked at in contempt. The chief instructor pronounces the words of the secret formulae with the initiates echoing.

After a few lessons the initiates must know the words by heart and these words are a great taboo to be heard by women and the uncircumcised. The formulae extol the initiates about the circumcision school and the lodge. It underscores the Hlengwe history, laws, culture, endurance, obedience, and manliness. The Hlengwe formulae are taught in special language using proverbs, riddles, similes and metaphors. The formulae uses obscene language when referring to sexual or marital matter. This has made some to argue that the formulae is a collection of esoteric words without intellectual training. However, the formulae provide the principal passwords by which the circumcised recognise each other in real life without removing one’s pants.

The six main ordeals of blows, cold, thirst, unsavoury food, punishment and sometimes death were part and parcel of the daily programme of the initiates in the lodge.

The ordeals are intended to discipline and prepare the initiates for the hardships of manhood. The unsavoury and monotonous diet of *vuswa* and meat generally made the initiates fat by the time they graduated. The food is devoured at an astonishing speed termed *katlha katlha* in Hlengwe, dished on tables of reeds or grass. Plates or bowls are now used in some lodges. The initiates eat their food in a crouching or kneeling position dipping their fingers from a common bowl. This is intended to promote communalism, though others have described it as unhygienic.

Serious offences inside the lodge are punishable by what is termed “drinking the goat’s milk”. This is supervised by the father of the lodge. Sticks are placed between the fingers of the offender and then squeezed by two attendants holding the sticks from the opposite sides of the two hands. The most serious offences such as attempting to escape from the lodge or revealing the secrets of the circumcision rites and lodge to women and the uncircumcised in the past were punishable by death on the last day of the lodge. The offender was burnt to ashes together with all the other contents of the lodge. These days a fine in the form of a heifer is imposed on the offender. He also becomes an outcast among his circumcised colleagues. The grave importance of the ordeals and secrets of the circumcision rites are summarised in the opening words of the formulae. Translated into English “The circumcision school is the shield of a buffalo’s hide. It is the crocodile that bites”.

When the circumcision rites are in session all circumcised men carry a whip called *tuba* in Hlengwe, which they buy for a fee, a hen in the past or \$2 in today’s currency. The *tuba* is prepared and anointed with medicine against evil spirits by the doctor who carries out the operations. The *tuba* is made from the same type of tree called *sihani* and is shaped into a long and narrow stick which the bearer carries with pride as it shows him to be a fully fledged member of the tribe. However, the main purpose is to identify all those who had been circumcised prior to the on going sessions. Sometimes they are used to mete out instant justice on initiates who misbehave. All the *matuba* are handed to the surgeon through the chief for burning when the circumcision session is officially closed. Loosing a *tuba* is a punishable offence and is replaced by a fee. All women prostrate themselves at the approach of a male carrying a *tuba* who is entitled to a fine of a hen if they do not.

When the days to close the lodge are drawing near, one morning the initiates are awakened up to see a very big pole in the yard of the formulae with a half hidden man in white hair called *kokwana Masinde* meaning the grandfather of the lodge. The pole is fixed by the elders and shepherds without the knowledge of the initiates. The initiates are told to greet the grandfather lying on their backs with heads turned to the pole which is called *mulaguru*. A voice comes from the masked figure. This is followed by a very long session of conversation between the initiates and grandfather. The conversation covers a wide range of topics particularly the ordeals and the desire by the initiates to go home. This session, which is very didactic, is repeated every morning until the last day before the closure of the lodge. The *mulaguru* rite is interpreted as an aggregation rite in that the initiates are put into a position to communicate with a figure, which represents the living adults’ ancestors. The initiates are admitted to the adult life of the tribe. A few days before the lodge closes the great doctor of the lodge administers to the initiates a purifying medicine that they drink in a mouthful. The doctor’s medicine is believed to

help the initiates conceal the secrets of the lodge and facilitate the curing of the scars left behind by the operation.

The preceding night before the closing date is a very memorable one for the initiates. They are not allowed to sleep. They sing and stab the elephant fire until the morning. The *Manyabe*, that is the Lion man, the lodge doctor, the elders of the lodge and attendants gather everything associated with the lodge to burn on the fire after it had been sprinkled with medicine. Before the fire is lit the initiates are instructed to run to the river without looking back like the Biblical story of Lot and his wife at Sodom.⁶⁸

All the establishment is burnt in the great conflagration symbolising the end of the filth and ignorance of childhood. This marks the end of seclusion and destruction of the last links with childhood. Pyramids and heaps of ashes remain after the fire symbolising a lost and delightful world of childhood. The remnants of the lodge are now mature and responsible men.

At the pool the initiates wash away the last of the white clay on their bodies shouting that they are now men. They are shaven bold, anointed with ochre and put on new loincloth around their waists down their ankles. The father of the lodge makes his final address to the initiates. He underscores the facts that they are now new men, must behave like mature men, observe, uphold the culture of tribe and that it is taboo to reveal information about the lodge. It is taboo to pronounce the formulae and to sing the songs of the *sungi* in the presence of the uncircumcised and women. He emphasises the punishment to be meted out on those who dare violate the laws of the circumcision ceremony. The *mayingwayingwane* takes place after the washing and the address by the father of the lodge on the day the lodge is closed. The initiates wear masks made from palm leaves that cover the whole upper parts of their bodies. The initiates make the masks with the help of their attendants. The initiates disguised in their masks are trained how to dance to the songs of *ngoma* and the chameleon march entering the chief's court. For a month after the initiates have graduated singing and dancing to the tunes of circumcision songs mark ceremonies. The *mayingwayingwa* ceremony helps to train initiates how to dance those who are shy or lack the gift of dancing without much embarrassment in front of their colleagues. The attendants and elders take advantage of the fact that the initiates cannot clearly identify them and use whips here and there on the slow learners in the art of dancing.

The next major event before the initiates are welcomed back to the chief's homestead is the chameleon procession, *kunenga* in Hlengwe. It is called the chameleon because of its slow pace. From the pool the initiates having been shaved and covered with ochre, march slowly on mats bowing their heads to enter the chief's capital. After entering the initiates sit in queues with heads bowed down. Relatives come to identify them handing them gifts such as bracelets and these days it is money. Each initiate has two sticks, one for holding gifts such as bracelets and one for tapping and uttering their new circumcision names when accepting gifts. All the initiates give themselves circumcision names choosing from a list submitted by their attendants who must also approve the new names. These are the official names they must use throughout their lifetime. However, nowadays some names stick and others do not. The gifts are handed over to the attendants, who hand them to the father of the lodge, then to the chief. The

chief returns the gifts to the father of the lodge, who in turn hands them to the attendants for distribution to their initiates.

The lions share of the gifts is given to the initiates through the attendants and the father of the lodge receives a portion. The circumcision names must have a Hlengwe meaning or explanation. The new name symbolises a breakaway from the past to the present, from childhood to manhood. The chief makes his public speech to the gathering welcoming back the initiates who are now regarded as mature men and dully opens a period of celebrations that lasts for approximately a month. The great ceremony is at the chief's capital, to be followed by those at the headmen's villages.

The initiates demonstrate their skills of dancing and singing. The celebrations are characterised by singing, dancing, eating and drinking to the tune of circumcision songs. No other songs are allowed during this time for it is a time of pomp and ceremony, a time of heavy feasting. This is one major reason why circumcision ceremonies are held during years of plenty harvests. The uninitiated men though allowed to eat and drink are not allowed to sing and dance. Only the circumcised men, women and children join the initiates in the dancing and singing. It is a rough time for the uninitiated who are publicly ridiculed or mocked in words and songs. This is deliberately so as a way of encouraging them to join in the future. When the circumcision ceremonies are in session all other celebrations, ceremonies or group functions and beating of drums are suspended except government functions. The period of celebrations is like the formal university graduation ceremonies, accompanied by feasting and gifts for the graduates. The chief publicly closes the circumcision celebrations. Songs cannot be sung and all talk about circumcision except by the initiated in privacy is prohibited until the next ceremonies. Breaking these rules invites heavy fines.

The manner in which the circumcision ceremonies are conducted reveals some of the lessons, objectives and aims of the ceremonies. Initiation is an aspect of culture. One process by which an individual learns a culture of his or her society is known as socialisation.⁶⁹ Primary socialisation takes place during infancy within the family. By responding to approval and disapproval of parents and copying their example, the child learns the language and basic behaviour patterns of its society. Socialisation is a life long process. Circumcision schools like occupational and peer groups, for the Hlengwe are agents of secondary socialisation. Popenoe defines socialisation as a learning process by which an individual develops into a social being and is able to function in society.⁷⁰ Circumcision schools are a socialising process that helps to mould a Hlengwe individual in the ways of his society and culture.

In the lodges interaction between the initiated and the initiates brings some of the reality of the social world to the initiates. Through this socialisation the initiates are helped to develop a variety of skills, knowledge, values and behaviour patterns. However, socialising agents may support each other or they may be in conflict. Hlengwe circumcision schools as agents of socialisation are sometimes in conflict with modern formal schools, Christianity or modern medical practice.

Education formal or informal is one of the major agencies of socialisation. Circumcision ceremonies have been referred to as forms of traditional formal education. The Hlengwe sometimes use the same word for school when referring to a circumcision

69

70

school or a formal modern school. The function of education is broadly similar in all societies. That is to transmit from one generation to the next accumulated wisdom and knowledge of society and to prepare young people for their active participation in its maintenance of development, to liberate both mind and body. Although circumcision ceremonies have the interest of the youth's welfare through intimate interweaving of the ceremonies and the local society, the promotion of a communal tribal culture is paramount. Circumcision ceremonies therefore, serve needs of a tribe, but they do not discriminate against non-Hlengwe because they are free to be initiated.

Christianity and Western education have reduced the didactic functions of circumcision, but have failed to make them redundant. The interesting fact is that participation and membership is currently keenly sought, particularly in the rural areas. One of the saddest mistakes made by early Christian missionaries and colonial education was their assumption that they were bringing education entirely to uneducated people. If literacy constituted the whole of education, then they are right. If education is an agent of socialisation preparing children to live in a society into which they are born and circumcision schools are a form of formal education then they were and are profoundly wrong.

Circumcision ceremonies in their own right are true institutions of education, because one of their cardinal aims is to conserve the cultural heritage of their society such as laws, language and values. Castle's claim is representing the attitude of those who support circumcision, that circumcision played an educative role effectively before Europeans brought to Africa their view that education necessarily involved skills of writing and reading books.⁷¹ The fact that circumcision ceremonies are still being held confirms Castle's argument that they have their own peculiar role which they play in education. It can be argued that circumcision ceremonies as an instrument of education is steadily losing its relevance to the new educational system that emphasises literacy and technical instruction sometimes at the expense of education for life. The content of circumcision ceremonies was born and linked to the physical and social situation. For instance, the child was educated to adapt to the environment. The Hlengwe inhabit the south eastern Lowveld of Zimbabwe, which they shared with numerous numbers of wild game and characterised by droughts. Circumcision ordeals helped to acclimatise children to the life style they were going to live.

The Hlengwe culture like all other cultures has a large number of guidelines, which direct conduct in particular situations. These guidelines are sociologically referred to as norms. Educational systems transmit and promote values defined as beliefs that something is good and desirable, important, worthwhile and worth striving for. Thus, circumcision ceremonies are there to transmit and protect Hlengwe values and norms. No doubt that circumcision ceremonies continue because formal modern education cannot effectively replace all the functions of circumcision. In society members occupy social positions known as statuses. The various types of statuses are occupational, gender and family. They are culturally defined apart from biological ones such as sex and race. Each status in society is accompanied by a number of norms, which define how an individual occupying a particular status is expected to act. This group of norms is known as a role. Performing roles involves social relationships in the sense that an individual

71

plays a role in relation to other roles. Circumcision ceremonies make the initiates to be aware of their status and roles in the Hlengwe society.

Contact between Hlengwe communities in Mozambique, Transvaal and Zimbabwe with European Christian missionaries had a great impact on circumcision ceremonies. The major Christian Mission denominations which worked among the Hlengwe communities in Mozambique, Transvaal, and Zimbabwe were the Free Methodist Church and Swiss Mission. The general attitude of the Christian Missions when they first came into contact with circumcision ceremonies was to describe them as pagan and heathen ceremonies. They denounced traditional circumcision as barbaric institutions and rites of the devil. Interesting is the fact that these Christian Missionaries accepted Jewish circumcision and some of them with Jewish or American backgrounds were circumcised. Hence they were accused of hypocrisy when they denounced and criticised Hlengwe circumcision ceremonies before gathering detailed information. It is true to an extent that Christian missionaries like their White colonial counterparts dismissed many aspects of indigenous culture as uncivilised and based on suspicion without investigations. From the start there was conflict between the Christian missionaries and Hlengwe traditionalists who believed in circumcision ceremonies. The conflict was not only based on religious differences, but also on educational and medical services. It must be taken note that the Christian missionaries represented and pioneered Western systems of education and medical services. It must be taken note that the Christian missionaries represented and pioneered Western systems of education and health services. The situation became more complicated for the Hlengwe who were converted to Christianity. They found themselves torn between the new religion and their culture. However, in the early days Christian missionaries were not prepared to compromise with traditional circumcision ceremonies.

The first Christian mission to work among the Hlengwe in Mozambique and Transvaal was the Swiss Missionaries. From their mission station at Valdezia in Transvaal they sent missionaries across the Limpopo River into Zimbabwe to set up a mission station at Dzombo among the Hlengwe. The pioneer Swiss missionary was Henri Berthoud who in 1885, 1889 and 1891 travelled and worked among the Hlengwe. In 1891 Henri Berthoud visited the Hlengwe area ruled by the great Chief Ngungunyane at his capital which he had recently established on the sandy hills between the lower Limpopo River and the Indian Ocean. Berthoud's main objective of his mission was to obtain from the chief an eventual authorisation for the settlement of Christian Hlengwe people in their original homeland who were being evicted in areas declared by White farmers in the Transvaal. In 1895 the Swiss missionary Roset went to establish a station at Dzombo across the Limpopo among the Hlengwe in the English territory. This was the area that was then under the British South Africa Company now Zimbabwe. Both Berthoud and Roset commented that one factor that characterised this period among the Hlengwe in Mozambique, Transvaal and Zimbabwe was the offensive return of what they called "certain pagan practices with circumcision being the major one".⁷²

The two pioneer Swiss missionaries among the Hlengwe also recorded that 1888 was a popular year of circumcision ceremonies after a long lull of nine years. The Hlengwe chiefs of the areas ordered youth to surrender themselves to the circumcision rites and that there was no holding back of the young Christians. Half of the Christian

72

converts among the Hlengwe rebelled and joined the circumcision schools. The Hlengwe converts returned and started to participate actively in church matters after the lodges were closed.⁷³ The Swiss missionaries confessed that traditional circumcision rites were going to be a very hard nut to crack although at this time they were not prepared to change their attitude of no compromise.

Christian missions who established themselves among the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe and are still operating are the Free Methodist Church, the Roman Catholic and the Brethren In Christ Churches. The most active was the Free Methodist Church from the United States of America. The pioneer missionary in Zimbabwe, Ralph Jacobs' declaration was to spread the Christian gospel among the Hlengwe whom he felt had been neglected and by passed by other Christian churches although the Dutch Reformed Church had a brief introduction in the early 1890's. Ralph Jacobs explained that he had seen God's vision which commanded him to work among the Hlengwe. Jacobs opened his first mission station, at Lundi in 1939 in the area under the Hlengwe, Paramount Chief Chitanga, where he built a church, school and clinic.

The Free Methodist Church spread its activities among the Hlengweland by opening other mission stations at Chikombedzi and Dumisa. Then mission posts at Chilonga, Chompani, Gezani, Sengwe and Muhlanguleni. It was in 1942 that the Free Methodist Church was confronted by circumcision ceremonies for the first time in Zimbabwe and some of its converts had gone through the initiation before they were converted.

The Free Methodist Church's policy towards traditional circumcision ceremonies was simple and straightforward. Traditional circumcision ceremonies were heathen institutions which could not be accepted by Christians. However, for the Hlengwe converts who had been circumcised it was a dilemma. Jacobs held a meeting with some of the Hlengwe elders who were now converts such as Zacharia Chilumane, Daniel Muzamani Chauke and Meki Hlungwani. He was taken back when he discovered that these elders were not prepared to immediately and publicly condemn traditional circumcision.⁷⁴ The attitude of the elders was a clear sign to Jacobs that he was dealing with a strong force of darkness. The elders decided not to openly support traditional circumcision, but to do so secretly. For instance they sent their own sons to the ceremonies. However, the following years witnessed direct confrontation between the Free Methodist Church and the traditional elders over circumcision ceremonies. Fortunately, Jacobs and other missionaries such as Tillman Houser began to revise their attitude towards traditional circumcision and they seriously took a positive stance. They discovered that in Mozambique, Reverend A. Jacques of the Swiss Mission was allowed to visit a Hlengwe circumcision lodge at Shiluvane in Mozambique and was even allowed to take pictures. Then Reverend Tillman Houser of the Free Methodist Church was allowed to visit a Hlengwe circumcision lodge in Zimbabwe. It was a circumcision lodge at Masivamele in June 1953 when the father of the lodge Tshavani invited him into the lodge and he took pictures. These gestures by traditional leaders made the missionary leaders to realise that their head on collision policy with traditional circumcision was ineffective. The Christian formal schools, clinics and hospitals which were used as

73

74

instruments apart from religion to siege and pound the traditional circumcision ceremonies were failing to annihilate traditional circumcision rites. The Christian missionaries discovered that converts and boys attending their schools were wonderfully attracted by circumcision ceremonies. During circumcision ceremonies boys left their books for the circumcision formulae and attendance at church services was reduced. The missionaries found it strange that converted girls refused to marry men who were not circumcised.⁷⁵

On the other hand cowards of circumcision found refuge in the mission stations and the Christian religion. When this was accompanied by public speeches of condemning traditional circumcision, the traditional leaders who had willingly accepted Christian missionaries to operate in their areas were not pleased. Some of the White missionaries and Hlengwe converts suggested a compromise rather than a conflict. They advocated for a policy that would give Christianity an African character. Hence, they began to campaign for the establishment of Christian circumcision ceremonies. The majority of Christian missionaries raised their eyebrows with unbelief when this suggestion was made.⁷⁶ The advocates of Christian circumcision ceremonies had to research and study of any reference from the past on this issue before they embarked on the scheme with vigour. One of their major references was The All Christian Conference of Le Zoute in September 1926. At this special meeting Canon Lucas, a Hlengwe, who was a Christian member of the Universities Mission informed his colleagues results of an experiment of a Christian circumcision school at his station of Masasi. Lucas took control of the initiates. The initiates began entering the church and the church elders represented the elders of the tribe. The initiates were blessed in church before a qualified native trained by modern medical men performed the operation. Parents waited outside the camp dancing to church music. When all the boys had been circumcised they were told by the manager of the camp, who was an elder in the church that circumcision was done to incorporate them into the tribe. The initiates remained in the camp for three weeks and were carefully treated until all were healed. During the period of seclusion the initiates received instead of what the Christians called obscene formulae, teaching bearing on seven subjects of truth, honour, purity, abstinence from drink, humility, love of one's neighbour and duties towards God. The initiates also passed through the physical trials and at the end they were renamed as a symbol of abandoning their old sinful life. Their new names came from the Bible not the Hlengwe circumcision names. They were shaven, hair burnt together with their old clothing and all camp buildings. This was another symbol of abandoning the past. On the graduating day, the initiates were provided with new clothes and they went to church for a special blessing. Parents and relatives sang songs and danced to Christian music. The interesting fact, according to Canon Lucas was that heathen parents approved the Christian circumcision and accepted it as an equivalent to the traditional schools. Non-Christian parents sent their sons to this school and Canon Lucas gained enormous influence over them. However, the hardcore Hlengwe traditionalists condemned the dilution of their culture. After Canon Lucas had delivered his speech there was a mixed reaction among the missionaries at the conference. There were some who regarded Canon Lucas' experiment as a dangerous mixture of Christian ideas and heathen rite. They strongly believed that the real genuine

75

76

Christian rite of passage was baptism and that the African church might be satisfied with it. Those who doubted Canon Lucas' experiment at that time were on the majority including representatives of the Free Methodist Church.⁷⁷ When the hawks in the Christian church discovered that they could not win after two decades they started to adopt Canon Lucas' compromising policy towards circumcision schools. Canon Lucas' experiment was an attempt to blend together a Christian and traditional rite.

In the early 1950's the Free Methodist Church realised that since its inception in Zimbabwe in 1939 there were no signs that traditional circumcision would come to an end. Some white and African Christian members of the church, notably Reverend T. Houser and the evangelist Louis Mudungazi decided that a very good example of working closely with people and providing a Christian service at the same time was in circumcision rites. They studied Canon Lucas' experiment and finally decided to introduce it among the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe. In 1952 - 1953 the Hlengwe evangelist, Louis Mudungazi from Chilonga visited Reverend T. Houser of the Free Methodist Church who was stationed at Dumisa Mission. He offered to set up a Christian circumcision school in the name of the Free Methodist Church. Reverend T. Houser and the Free Methodist Church superintendent Reverend Ralph Jacobs agreed and offered their support. Mudungazi faced strong opposition from the Hlengwe traditional leaders who only gave their consent after he had paid a heifer. Mudungazi and other circumcised pastors were to act as advisors. Louis Mudungazi became a pioneer of the Christian circumcision school among the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe. He later on moved to Gezani where he died in 1961.⁷⁸

In 1953 following Mudungazi and Reverend T. Houser's groundwork Doctor Naomi Pettengil, an American woman medical doctor working for the Free Methodist Church at Chikombedzi Hospital carried out the physical operation. It was an important landmark in the history of the circumcision school, in that a white person, a foreigner, a woman and using modern medical instruments and anaesthetic, did the physical operation. Then all traditional circumcision procedures and ordeals were followed. The introduction of prayer, Bible reading and services to accompany the formulae in the morning, noon and evening was another major reform. Christian songs and dances were also introduced to be sung together with traditional songs. They had to take new Hlengwe circumcision names since they took Christian names at baptism. Reverend T. Houser confessed that the success of the first Hlengwe Christian circumcision in Zimbabwe was very limited from the spiritual point of view because little preparation had gone into it.⁷⁹ The 1953 Christian circumcision ceremony introduced a new dimension to the Hlengwe culture and has now become a permanent cultural institution. The Christian circumcision ceremonies are held simultaneously with the traditional ceremonies. One memorable Christian ceremony was when a woman from Transvaal assisted in the operations. Dr Thuma of the Brethren In Christ Church from the United States of America helped during the second Christian circumcision school.

Dr Paul Embree a Free Methodist Church resident medical doctor at Chikombedzi from the mid 1950's until 1974 carried out several physical operations for the Christian circumcision schools. After 1964 the political atmosphere made it impossible for the

77

78

79

holding of both types of circumcision schools. In 1974 there was a resurgence of circumcision schools and the largest Christian ceremony was held at Chikombedzi in Mr T. Zanamwe's farm. Dr. L. Hurd a medical doctor at Chikombedzi Hospital carried out physical operations. The following Hlengwe pastors have played active roles at successive Christian circumcision ceremonies; S. Maluleke, Jackson Chauke, Simon Chauke and Phineas Majoko.

In 1960 the All Evangelical Fellowship of the South Africa General Mission attended by many denominations officially accepted Canon Lucas' experiment.⁸⁰ If attendance numbers are anything to go by the Christian circumcision schools have become very popular. In each successive session numbers of both Christian converts and non-converts have swollen. However, the spiritual success is hard to measure. The obvious attraction to Christian circumcision is the use of modern medical instruments such as injections and anaesthetics reducing the ordeal of suffering during the removal of the foreskin. After the operation natural healing of wounds was encouraged, medicine could only be applied on very septic wounds. The popularity of Christian circumcision schools incurred the wrath of hard core traditionalists. There were those who genuinely believed that Christian circumcision schools were diluting and eroding their culture. Then there were those who were concerned with the loss of revenue because potential initiates no longer paid their fees directly to them although they still paid their fee to the chief.

Since 1974 no Christian circumcision school has been held, because of the Liberation War. After independence there was a resurgence of traditional circumcision schools, but not Christian ones because there has never been a sympathetic and resident professional medical doctor working among the Hlengwe until 1999. A Swiss doctor stationed at Chikombedzi Hospital carried out operations at some of the lodges though not Christian ones. The traditional circumcision schools have been held without competition which partly explains large attendance.

It is necessary to explain some of the major similarities and differences between the traditional and Christian circumcision schools. This would enable a clear evaluation as to the advantages and disadvantages of the systems. This is largely revealed by the way the ceremonies are conducted, reforms introduced or aspects left out. For the Christian circumcision school the physical operation that is the removal of the foreskin is carried out by a medical doctor using syringes, injections and anaesthetics instead of a traditional expert, using one raw knife on all initiates without any anaesthetics applied. The doctors who have since carried out operations at Christian circumcision ceremonies were Whites, foreigners and sometimes foreign women. This is a dramatic change from tradition which regards uncircumcised and women participation as a taboo.

The use of vulgar language at Christian ceremonies is discouraged although in the first days the initiates are made familiar with the language used by the traditionalists. The vulgar words in the formulae are replaced by simple words without changing the meaning of the formulae. The formulae are the summary of all the cultural teachings of the circumcision ceremony. Of the six main traditional ordeals, unsavoury food, nakedness, exposure to cold weather, death from untreated wounds and thirst and the breakneck speed pace when eating are maintained. The traditional songs are sung around the great Elephant fire, but decent ones replace vulgar words in the songs. However, one

major reform in the daily timetable of the lodge is the introduction of prayers, religious songs and Bible reading in the morning and midnight when they break up for sleep. There is an emphasis on Christian morals and virtues which in a way are similar to customary morals though examples are drawn from the Bible. The graduation ceremonies for traditional and Christian ceremonies are similar except the glaring absence of alcohol in the later ceremonies.

Everything having been said concerning traditional and Christian circumcision ceremonies the bottom line is that the two ceremonies have accepted and recognised the existence of each other. Christians have taken note that they cannot absolutely get rid of traditional circumcision by adopting a negative attitude. On the other hand traditionalists have realised that they cannot absolutely avoid the impact of Christianity and modern formal education. However, this does not mean that the conflict has been resolved. The struggle between the two still continues - *aluta continua*.

Although the Free Methodist Church has adopted a policy of a compromise with traditional circumcision ceremonies by introducing Christian circumcision most of the major Christian Churches who are in contact with the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe such as the Roman Catholics, Dutch Reformed Church, Brethren In Christ and the Lutheran Church are generally opposed to traditional circumcision. The Pentecostal Churches are even more opposed to traditional circumcision. The Free Methodist Church is accommodating because it has been closer to the Hlengwe in Mozambique, Transvaal and Zimbabwe than the other churches. However, traditional circumcision is currently pounded by the troika institutions of Christianity, Western formal education and Western medical services. The interesting point is that traditional circumcision is still standing its ground and every year as recent as 1998 the numbers of new initiates are very large. A pointer to the fact that to some extent it is still serving a purpose and relevant. There is a loud and vocal voice among some Zimbabweans championed by Christians, educationists and health officials that traditional circumcision must be abolished. Yet on the other hand those who are more informed and knowledgeable about traditional circumcision are advocating for reforms within the traditional institution let alone Christian circumcision.

The defenders of traditional circumcision base their argument on the premises that it is one of the major elements of Hlengwe culture. The National cultural policy of Zimbabwe in its preamble defines culture as “the sum total of a way of life a society can offer in terms of material implements and possessions, in terms of intellectual and educational level of development, in terms of standards of living and ways of life, in terms of values and value systems and in terms of social relations between members of that society, in terms of arts and crafts and in terms of religion”.⁸¹ The policy document further points out that “A people without culture is a people without identity, A people’s culture gives them the reason to live as it guides them to make correct and beneficial choices in life.”⁸² Advocates of traditional circumcision fortify their argument by quoting the first objective from the broad objectives of the national cultural policy of Zimbabwe “to promote Zimbabwean culture in a multi-cultural society and take into account the different ethnic, linguistic and religious groups.”⁸⁴ The policy must also ensure that all political, social and economic development programmes take into account the culture of

81

82

84

the people. The cultural expression of different ethnic, linguistic and religious groups in Zimbabwe must be promoted. Thus supporters of traditional circumcision claim that they have a right to continue with their practice as long as they do it within the legal framework. According to the Hlengwe who uphold the tradition, circumcision rites represent a passage to adulthood, enhancing tribal and social cohesion. Circumcised males still receive important recognition among peers and within their community. Banning traditional circumcision has been and is unpromising in the light of socio-cultural attachment of the practice. Though circumcision is part and parcel of Hlengwe culture which has developed in the distant past, has stood the test of time, has helped society to function in an orderly manner the advocates of traditional circumcision must not accept these views without careful thought. The advocates must not lose sight that it is not a guarantee that what worked well in the past will always work well in the future. Culture is dynamic and must be in line with new contexts and situations. The Hlengwe society has received great impact from Western education, medical services and Christianity. Therefore culture must be carefully applied in new political, economic and social environment. It is true that when culture is enforced in contexts very different from the ones in which they developed injustice is sometimes the result.⁸⁵ An examination of Hlengwe circumcision ceremonies as of recent have revealed cases of maladministration and exploitation which were reported to the Zimbabwe Republic Police. Investigations were instituted some members were fined or imprisoned.⁸⁶

Traditions, especially those shrouded in mystery, magic and fear die hard. Circumcision rites are carried out under mysterious conditions and remain so for the uninitiated and women. It has been practised for centuries and the Hlengwe society is conditioned to accept it. However, according to a survey made by Sara Mansavage, the most common reason for continuation of traditional circumcision is that young men fear to be socially criticised and parents' fear that their uncircumcised sons will be regarded as social outcasts.⁸⁷

The current staunch advocates of traditional circumcision also base their arguments on international organisations. Zimbabwe is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 of the United Nations and to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights of the Organisation of African Unity of 1963. Under the Universal Declaration of Human Right 1948, people "shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want".⁸⁸ It further emphasises that these shall be the highest aspirations of the common people. On the same Article 8 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights categorically enshrines that there shall be "freedom of conscience, profession and free practice of religion" and that "no one may, subject to law and order, be subjected to measures restricting the exercise of these freedoms."⁸⁹ The argument is that in these circumstances therefore the Hlengwe have got absolute and unconditional rights towards a culture of their choice, a culture of their forefathers who lived and practised circumcision since time immemorial. Traditional customs and rituals are an integral part of any society. It is from circumcision that some of the Hlengwe

85

86

87

88

89

norms and values are derived. Thereafter belief and value systems became established. It is from these norms and values, beliefs and value systems that social meanings are deducted. Circumcision helps the Hlengwe society to identify itself as a community and learn about its history.

The issue of traditional circumcision has recently provoked an on going heated debate. There is a big group lead by Christians, Western educated and Western medical officials who maintain that circumcision as practised by the Hlengwe and other tribes is not only an unnecessary mutilation of the body, but a reversion to the type of old society that the Government is trying to overthrow.

The opponents of traditional circumcision has The World Health Organisation as the flag bearer on the crusade against what it calls the unsafe and unjustifiable traditional practice based on misconceptions and myths. The United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Population Fund are some of the international organisations spearheading the opposition against traditional circumcision.⁹⁰ The international organisations are mobilising governments, political and religious institutions, international organisations, non-government organisations and fund agencies in their efforts to eliminate both male and female traditional initiation rites.

The arguments against traditional circumcision are based on what they regard as universally recognised human rights, including the right to the highest attainable level of physical and mental health. Accordingly, opponents of traditional circumcision argue that it is an infringement upon the physical and psychosexual integrity of young men and a form of violence against them. Therefore circumcision is unacceptable from point of view and in any form.

One major issue that has been on the centre of argument for and against traditional circumcision is the issue of relevance today. However, discussion of objectives, aims, purposes or functions of traditional circumcision has partly answered the relevance to the rites today. The fact that the ceremonies are still practised today reinforces the argument that the ceremonies to some degree are still relevant. All respondents to the questionnaire of 1989 on the current relevance of circumcision schools agreed that it was relevant as a cultural heritage and as an aspect of group identity. It is one of the major social institutions that make the Hlengwe people identify themselves as a particular social or tribal group.⁹¹ The Hlengwe are one of the officially recognised minority groups in Zimbabwe where a multi cultural society exists. Popenoe defines a minority group as any group in a society that, because it consists of persons having particular biological or social characteristics, is an object of prejudice and discrimination.⁹² The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 1980 Chapter III (19) (1) reads "Except with his or her consent or by way of parental discipline, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his or her freedom of conscience that is to say, freedom to change his or her religion or belief and freedom whether in public or in private to manifest and propagate his or her religion or belief through worship, teaching, practise and otherwise."⁹³ As a follow up to the statute of the laws of the country the Zimbabwean

90

91

92

93

Government has practically recognised minority cultures by introducing the learning of minority languages in primary schools and allocating them time in radio programmes.

In view of the tug of war between the advocates for and opponents of traditional circumcision progressive elements have argued that the way forward is to introduce reforms in the conducting and organisation of the rites. Christian circumcision schools appear to be in the right direction, but they are queried on their inclination more towards Christianity at the expense of culture. All respondents to the 1989 questionnaire agreed that physical operation, that is the removal of the foreskin is necessary because it is the only indelible physical sign to prove that somebody has passed through the first major stage of the circumcision rites. However, eighty percent of the respondents who were under the age of 50 years, argued that the operation must be done by a well-trained surgeon, using modern anaesthetic and scientific instruments such as syringes to avoid severe pain and diseases such as AIDS. Respondents who were circumcised before 1929 maintained that the operation must be carried out in its raw form because it was also the first ordeal of manhood.⁹⁴

The physical operation is a subject of much controversy. Opponents of the operation condemn it as unnecessary, unjustified and brutal. The operation generates considerable disagreement within the medical community as Dr. John Duckett of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, a respected paediatric urologist refuses to perform the procedure except for medical reasons. 'There are no medical indications for routinely circumcising every infant.'⁹⁵ He declared, on the other hand Dr Edgar Schoen who chaired a circumcision task force for the American Academy of Paediatrics says 'Circumcision has benefits and risks. But to me the benefits outweigh the risks and every additional bit of research conforms that.'⁹⁶ In the 1960's public opinion turned against many common medical procedures such as tonsillectomy or the removal of the foreskin. In this climate the American Academy of Paediatrics Committee on the Foetus and newborn declared 'no valid medical indications for circumcision in the neonatal period.'⁹⁷ Today the A.A.P. Task Force on circumcision reiterated the statement in 1975, but added 'no absolute medical indication.....'⁹⁸ Today the A.A. P.'s position is that the operation of the foreskin has both "potential medical benefits and advantages as well as disadvantages and risks."⁹⁹ In Zimbabwe some anti-circumcision groups mainly from the Christian formal education and health fraternity, but not from the Hlengwe people have picketed the ministries of Education and Culture, Health and Child Care and Home Affairs. It is unquestionable that unanaesthetised operation brings severe pain, heavy bleeding and unconsciousness. The ability not to scream during the course of the operation, to endure the pain and survive after is what is regarded by the traditionalists as an entrance into manhood. Traditional practitioners are accused of using instruments such as knives, razor blades or broken glass. However, they argue that although they do not use anaesthetics their instruments are specially designed for the job. The bottom line is there is now a great need for the Hlengwe to use the available modern medical surgical

94

95

96

97

98

99

instruments and anaesthetics. This would reduce the pain and make surgical operations non-lethal. One major factor that has attracted initiates to Christian circumcision schools is the use of anaesthetics and modern instruments.

The side effects which follow up immediately after raw physical operation include psychological trauma, bleeding, haemorrhage, severe persistent pain, stress, shock and infections that can be fatal. The effects can also last a lifetime. The traditional ritual of male circumcision among the Xhosa people of South Africa revealed serious problems of wounds getting septic. Medical doctors say the problem is caused by unsterilised and blunt instruments used by traditional surgeons who are sensitive to interference from Western doctors and they reject modern methods.¹⁰⁰ There have been several cases of septic wounds taking a long time to heal at many Hlengwe lodges in Zimbabwe, but no recorded or reported cases of fatality as a result of wounds.¹⁰¹ No antibiotics are used after the operation and the wounds may fail to heal quickly because of infection, irritation from urine or an underlying condition such as anaemia. However, there is a pool of traditional information on the treatment of wounds, the surgical use of instruments and the use of medicinal herbs to prevent deaths. Dr Cynthia Howard of the University of Rochester reported that unanaesthetized initiates may suffer from abnormal heartbeat, high blood pressure, severe and persistent pain for at least two weeks.¹⁰² This can be avoided by medical doctors performing circumcision using anaesthesia with two tiny injections at the base of the male organ called dorsal penile nerve block. This is what the Free Methodist Church doctors used for the Christian circumcisions.¹⁰³ An anaesthetic cream can also be used. Traditionalists use very strong men to hold the blindfolded initiate, distracted by very loud singing, stampeding of feet and beating of drums. This does not take away the excruciating pain that leads to many fainting immediately after the operation and only to be treated by being poured cold water.

Many groups have practised circumcision for thousands of years. One theory is that it originated as a health measure in arid regions to protect against infection caused by sand under the foreskin. This would make sense for the Hlengwe because they inhabit some of the hottest areas in Mozambique, Transvaal and Zimbabwe. It has today religious significance and as a rite of passage. In the hygienic jungles and deserts of World War Two where a shower was a luxury, uncircumcised males appeared to incur more infections of the male organ than the circumcised. Consequently although it was not a policy, some commanders mandated circumcision or it was ordered on medical officers' whim.¹⁰⁴

The Hlengwe traditionalists strongly subscribe to this argument. However, the arguments raised are that it is no longer necessary with modern detergents and medicine in abundance. It is accepted that the warm moist ordour underneath the foreskin can provide an ideal breeding ground for bacteria leading to infections known as balanoposthitis. These infections can cause pain, inflammation and ulcerated tissue. Therefore opponents of circumcision argue that clean water, soap or antibiotics can

100

101

102

103

104

prevent this. Those who support circumcision argue that although this can be treated by antibiotics there are more chances of recurrence hence the best method is circumcision. A circumcised male organ is easier to keep clean and is a less hospitable environment for bacteria. The foreskin may be simple to care for by cleansing using soap and water in a rich society not a poor society like the Hlengwe where soap and water are a luxury.

According to Professor Ngwabi Bhebe of the University of Zimbabwe's Department of History, male circumcision is healthy. 'The removal of the foreskin is good news since its presence harbours venereal diseases. The emphasis should not be on what health officials are saying but on integrating the practice with modern medicine like anaesthetics and the use of hot water to sterilise the equipment, antibiotics and to operate under a good hygienic environment'.¹⁰⁵ His ideas represent a progressive attitude that Western medicine can be assimilated into the practice of the Africans without interfering with the local people's religious and cultural teachings. Circumcision had indigenous knowledge whose wisdom should be tapped and improved on instead of totally condemning it. One argument presented by opponents of traditional circumcision is that the use of unsterilised and blunt instruments leads to sterility. Among the Hlengwe people circumcision is an important ritual that separates men from boys. Then if it causes sterility it is robbing some boys of the manhood it is supposed to deliver. Eric Naki in his article 'Fight to Save Boys from perils of circumcision' says this is now a problem among the Xhosa people of South Africa.¹⁰⁶ As of now no evidence has yet surfaced in Zimbabwe among the Hlengwe. The solution according to the advocates of circumcision would be to encourage medical doctors and traditional operators to get together and fight the problem instead of abolition.

Circumcision is a surgical procedure and with high chances of complications occurring. Those who are for circumcision argue that most studies have found that complications develop in only a small percentage of cases and that most are minor such as bleeding or infections treatable with antibiotics. In 50 million circumcision cases over 25 years, only 3 deaths were reported, according to a review of medical literature. Others dispute the figure. "There are more complications than are reported", says Duckett.¹⁰⁷ Opponents contend that botched operations are common, deaths and complications are often attributed to other causes. Although no research has been done among the Hlengwe, but their records of deaths and disfigured organs as a result of operations is very low and do not warrant abolition.

In 1986 Dr Thomas Wiswell studied the records of more than 200 000 male infants born in the United States army hospitals world-wide. He found that uncircumcised boys were ten times more likely to be hospitalised for urinary tract infections than their circumcised contemporaries. He later found that 1.4 percent of uncircumcised male infants suffered urinary tract infections in the first year of life. One in a hundred of those will have kidney damages. A dozen other studies have reported the same pattern. Apart from the high fever, in a small percentage of patients the infection will enter the blood stream and lead to meningitis - inflammation of membranes surrounding the brain.¹⁰⁸ There are flaws that were cited in Wiswell's studies and a belief

105

106

107

108

that the urinary tract infections connections has been exaggerated. Opponents of urinary tract infections point out that it is not a very large issue, they are not life threatening and are easy to treat. They argue that it does not make sense to circumcise 100 boys to prevent a readily treatable infection in one or two boys. Unfortunately, these researches did not cover Zimbabwe. However, for the supporters of traditional circumcision, prevention of urinary tract infection is not a major issue for circumcision, the major issue is that it is a cultural rite. Although percentages are small if Wiswell's figures are translated into 5 000 to 10 000 urinary tract infections a year, perhaps more than 100 cases of life threatening meningitis and 50 to 100 potential kidney transplants or dialysis cases annually. To the parents of those boys, the rarity of their illnesses would be little consolation. It is possible that unknowingly, traditional circumcision is preventing these cases. After all urinary tract infections for the Hlengwe would be like any other major diseases costly to treat because of their financial and material means which are very low.

Cancer is one of the 20th century menace diseases which the scientists are still struggling to find a cure. The United States National Cancer Institute statistics has discovered about 800 cases of penile cancer a year and about 200 of them are fatal. While penile cancer is rare when it occurs it is a savage illness with amputation of the organ being a common treatment. Studies have found much lower rates of cancer of the male organ in circumcised men. Opponents dispute that the studies prove a connection between the disease and lack of circumcision, noting that cancer often occurs in men already at greater risk. Some research has also suggested a link between circumcision status and cancer of the cervix, which is more common in sexual partners of uncircumcised men. Doctor Sydney Gellis of Tufts University in Massachusetts argues that the surgical risks of circumcising a million boys a year are greater than the risks that their partners will develop genital cancer.¹⁰⁹ Dr Wissell who opposed circumcision before he conducted his urinary tract infection research says, "It is the accumulation of benefits. If circumcision only protected against urinary tract infections I might hesitate. But there is evidence that it may also protect against cancer of the penis, foreskin infections and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. You get multiple benefits from one simple procedure".¹¹⁰ Therefore, unintentionally the Hlengwe may have prevented some diseases such as cancer through circumcision. Circumcision in a way might have been a blessing in disguise.

It is on record that circumcision forms part of an important ritual that marks the passage to manhood for millions of young black males in Southern Africa. During June to December, the favoured months for initiation schools, the young men undergoing circumcision are isolated from their communities, while they are instilled with age-old social values. The Hlengwe is one of the ethnic groups that still respects the circumcision rite as a great tradition and it is usually carried out by experienced tribal specialists. In recent years there have been mounting concern over the health crisis, which has escalated with the surge of AIDS and the increase in opportunists cashing in on what can be a lucrative business. The result has been an appalling rate of infection. In a research in the Eastern Cape alone in the nine-month period until March 1995, 34 initiates died while 743 others were hospitalised with specific wounds.¹¹¹ Unfortunately, no research has

109

110

111

been attempted among the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe though cases of infections have been reported at Chikombedzi, Chiredzi, Neshuro and Lundi hospitals.¹¹² This may not be a case of escalation, but due to the fact that the old stringent laws prohibiting initiates treatment at modern health institutions have been relaxed. The availability of these institutions and their exposure to the initiates after the circumcision lodges had closed make it possible to record these cases. Although no research has been done on relation between AIDS infection and circumcision in Zimbabwe the possibility cannot be ruled out. The risk of contracting AIDS when one unsterilised instrument is used to circumcise all the initiates is very high.

In 1997 those close to the Hlengwe circumcision practice said about 400 teenage Hlengwe boys were initiated in Zimbabwe. This resulted in numerous letters of protest being sent to Chiredzi District Administrator, Mr Michael Tavaruva appealing to Government intervention to stop the unhygienic practice. Mr Tavaruva said there was need to change the method used for circumcision. "There is need to influence change given the threat of AIDS. The disease did not exist 10 years ago but AIDS is now a reality," he said.¹¹³ If a single knife is used to circumcise up to 200 or more boys and men as it was in the past then fears of contracting HIV are real. Chiredzi Hospital medical superintendent Dr Paul Ngere confirmed about initiates who sought medical attention when their wounds became gangreous. His words were, "Elders must allow these youngsters to come to the hospital to be circumcised to avert the danger of contracting diseases,"¹¹⁴ These are words of good advice.

However, his advice would go down very well with progressive elements if it had gone further to say that the operation is to be done by modern doctors at the lodges and care of the initiates to become a co-operative affair of modern trained circumcised health officials and traditional attendants. The Hlengwe traditionalists argue that besides the associated health effects the fatality rate has been surprisingly low, suggesting a highly developed traditional, scientific knowledge. This is not a guarantee for the future group circumcision in which cutting instruments are used on each boy may give rise to a risk of transmission of blood borne diseases like HIV and Hepatitis B. The claim that the practice prevented a person from easily contracting sexually transmitted diseases as the removal of the foreskin does not allow fast breeding of germs may no longer hold water. The Hlengwe need to be educated that AIDS is not an ordinary sexually transmitted disease. The most unfortunate fact is that there are traditional leaders who reject the existence of the AIDS virus as a ploy aimed at hijacking the ritual into hospitals. Some dispute the fact that unsterile instruments cause injuries. They argue that they clean their instruments everytime. They accuse the initiates of loosening wounds dressing and not washing properly.

Those who support circumcision have presented arguments claiming that circumcision prevents or protects against AIDS. A study conducted by the University of Nairobi in 1992 claims that circumcision may help to protect against HIV transmission. The study that was carried out among 1 000 truck drivers showed that 37 percent of those who were HIV positive were not circumcised as compared to 12 percent of these who were HIV negative who were circumcised. The drivers were interviewed on the main

112

113

114

highway from the Port of Mombasa to Nairobi between June 1989 to February 1992, according to the World AIDS publication. The drivers came from Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and other East African countries.¹¹⁵ However, this must not be taken at face value because the research is inconclusive with other factors not taken into considerations.

Studies done in some developing countries suggest that men who have been circumcised are at lower risk of HIV infection than men who have not. However, data from United States couples suggest no correlation between male circumcision and risk of infection. A study conducted in Kigali, Rwanda of 837 married men who volunteered for HIV testing showed that uncircumcised men had a statistically significant higher prevalence of HIV infection than circumcised men. This was despite the fact that they had a relatively low risk profile that is, they reported fewer lifetime sexual partners and prostitutes contacts than circumcised men. They were more likely to live in rural areas with low HIV prevalence rates and were less likely to report a history of sexually transmitted diseases, according to *Network*, a magazine for the Family Health International.¹¹⁶

In the United States on the other hand, data from the 1992 National Health and Social Life Survey, a national representative sample of 1511 men and 1921 women between the ages of 18 and 59. showed that there was no evidence of a prophylactic role for circumcision in regard to sexually transmitted diseases. In fact circumcised men were slightly more likely to have had both a bacterial and viral STD in their lifetime.¹¹⁷

Likewise, it had been observed that circumcision of men had no significant effect on the incidence of common STD's such as genital herpes, genital warts and non-gonococcal urethritis in Australia. However, men with HIV infection were excluded from the 300 subject analysis and the study findings may extend to other settings where hygiene was poorer.¹¹⁸

A study conducted by American researchers in 1993 has concluded that male circumcision has the potential to reduce the risk of HIV infection by half. According to the latest 'World AIDS Bulletin' the study conducted among 502 gay men in the United States revealed that the foreskin which is cut during circumcision had the main reception molecule for HIV which causes the incurable AIDS disease.¹¹⁹ The bulletin said that the foreskin contained cells of the immune system on their surface hence increasing the risk of contracting or transmitting the AIDS carrying virus. It was also discovered that uncircumcised men were also vulnerable to other sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis. "Even after allowing for these potentially confounding factors the researches found that the uncircumcised men were twice as likely to be infected as the circumcised men," the bulletin said.¹²⁰

Quoting from a French Health Organisation, a Zimbabwe Television news bulletin of 6 p.m. on Wednesday, 23rd August, 1995 said that circumcision, that is the

115

116

117

118

120

removal of the male organ foreskin prevented AIDS.¹²¹ Unfortunately, there were no detailed explanations as to how the organisation reached its conclusion.

AIDS studies comparing disease rates among circumcised and uncircumcised men in the mid 1990's in AIDS ravaged Africa show on average three times more HIV infection among the uncircumcised. One study of a group of HIV infected gay men in the United States also found a correlation.

Dr William Cameron an associate professor at the University of Ottawa in Canada who co-authored several African studies, theorises that the uncircumcised foreskins sustain tiny abrasions during intercourse, allowing the AIDS virus to enter the bloodstream. Several studies have found that sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis and chanroid also occur more frequently among the uncircumcised.¹²² However, experts caution that the studies might not have been adequately controlled for other factors that could account for higher rates of infection in uncircumcised men such as socio-economic background.

There are those who argue that the prime risk for AIDS is exposure to the virus not lack of circumcision. Dr Stephen Moses who reviewed 30 studies primarily from Africa says, "consideration should be given to male circumcision as an intervention to reduce HIV transmission".¹²³

A United States paediatrician has called for all boy babies to be circumcised at birth, saying it will help to prevent disease. Writing in the British medical publication Archives of Disease in Childhood in 1997, Dr Edgar Schoen of the Kaiser Foundations Research Institute on Oakland, California, said 70 percent of men in the United States were circumcised. In Britain the proportion was only 21 percent, he noted, adding that European states could benefit from the practise in preventing urinary tract infections, sexually transmitted diseases including AIDS and penile cancers. Schoen said that out of 50 000 cases of this type of cancer, 10 000 of them fatal which had been recorded in the United States over some 60 years all, but 10 were in uncircumcised men. He attributed the great risk of infection to warm and humid conditions beneath the foreskin and its susceptibility to abrasions, claiming that uncircumcised heterosexual men were four times more likely to catch AIDS than the circumcised.¹²⁴ These researchers reveal positive results of male circumcision although no researches or studies were done among the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe. The positive results are possible when the use of one unsterilised knife to operate more than one initiate is avoided. Physical operation of the foreskin by a medical doctor using modern instruments, anaesthetics and antibiotics would be conducive to producing positive results. Otherwise good results after circumcision under traditional methods have more negative results than good in this age of the AIDS epidemic.

Circumcision rites begin with the operation of the foreskin, but do not end there. In all types of circumcisions great care of the wound is demanded after the operation because it is then that the wound can become septic or other negative after effects may intervene. The Herald of January 11, 1995 reported a case of a Zimbabwean anaesthetic Richard Gladwell McGowan who was convicted of gross negligence in the case of

121

122

123

124

Kalpesh Nagindas who died after circumcision since no proper post-operative care was given.¹²⁵ No wonder why the traditional Hlengwe apart from other reasons closely monitored the initiates in the isolated institutions until they were healed. Negligence by the operator or shepherds was a serious crime that begged for a severe punishment.

Circumcision lodges are set up close to major sources of water such as rivers or dams, ideally the water must be flowing to avoid concentration of dirt at one spot. Large quantities of water are used during the ceremonies. The wounds are cleansed twice a day, in the morning and evening before they are treated with juice from the leaves, roots or sap of certain trees or herbs. Although the Hlengweland in Zimbabwe is fortunate to have perennial rivers such as the Runde, Mutirikwe, Save, Mwenezi and Limpopo flowing to the sea current severe droughts have made these rivers dry in winter. Then isolated pools with stagnant water are used. There is a great concern over an outbreak of water borne diseases such as diarrhoea, dysentery and the deadly cholera. Modern health officials spearhead this outcry. Progressive supporters of traditional circumcision have taken note of this danger. They have suggested that permanent campsites must be set up with Blair toilets or pit latrines and bathing shelters. When circumcision schools are in session members of the group who are professionals in modern health services must supervise the hygienic aspects of the lodge and are answerable to the Ministry of Health for any mishap. If members are concerned to maintain their culture they must be prepared to finance some of the necessities. After all they pay fees these days - up to \$200,00 for the whole initiation course.

This is only possible when the government is interested in what is happening. The sad story is that the Zimbabwean Government is not officially interested in circumcision rites except individual officials who condemn it without any full knowledge. However, staunch traditionalists are opposed to the idea of setting up permanent lodging sites because in a way this will violate the elements of secrecy, myth and fear. The ceremony of burning everything in the lodge when it closes as a symbol of abandoning the past would also become impossible with some permanent structures set up at a particular site. After all, the concern is not only stagnant water, but flowing water is always used untreated down stream by many other people. The Ministry of Health must play an active role in this issue and the Hlengwe must take note that there is a need to reform their culture if the culture is to continue serving a noble purpose.

Apart from the contaminated water and water borne diseases modern health officials have other fears. Circumcision is usually done in winter because the chilly weather numbs the skin and the wounds heal faster. When circumcised the initiates are immersed in water. However, health officials argue that tropical water has dangerous diseases that might infect the initiates through the wounds and some of the rivers by the time they flow through Hlengweland the water would be full of industrial waste which is dangerous. Initiates can also succumb to pneumonia. Traditionalists argue that they have been doing this for centuries without any serious consequences. They must be reminded that this is not a guarantee for the future since many new waste products are dumped into rivers from industrial sites.

A recent disturbing factor is the increase in inexperienced traditional doctors carrying out operations and attendants. This is also a concern for the elders. The explanation is that the old generation is dying and the long break because of the

Liberation War broke the process of continuity. There were many stages which the initiated passed through before they were given positions of responsibility in the ceremonies. It is now very common for those who were circumcised the previous session to become attendants in the following year which was not the case in the past. It was a hard and long road which involved traditional religious rites for somebody to become a traditional circumcision doctor. Apprenticeship training was involved for an individual to become an expert circumcision operator. European influence has provided opportunities which are exploited by some people. There are reported cases of inexperienced traditional doctors and attendants conducting rituals drunk. They have sometimes failed to follow correct procedures. However, some of these bad incidents have invited severe punishments from the traditional leaders.¹²⁶

There is a growing concern that organisers of circumcision ceremonies do so with an intention of making fast money while inflicting death and injuries on the initiates. It is possible that some defenders of traditional methods refuse to accept modern methods because they are afraid of losing profits. They argue that they have been involved in their profession for ages which the medical doctors now tell them about. A study by Eric Naki among Xhosa people of South Africa revealed this attitude.¹²⁷ The increase of opportunists cashing in on what can be a lucrative business was reported in the Eastern Cape in 1995.¹²⁸

Cases of this nature have recently happened among the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe. A good example is what happened at the Chitanga lodge in 1989. Some initiators charged exorbitant fees, illegal collected fees and other properties from the initiated more than what was allowed by the chief and his council. However, the chief and his council allowed the law of the land to take its course. Ten culprits were dragged into the modern court where they answered criminal charges and all were fined. Then they appeared before the traditional circumcision council and each was made to pay a she-goat.¹²⁹ There is no doubt that incidents of this nature are taking place under the cover of darkness. The fees which the Hlengwe initiates paid in 1997 in general terms were high compared to the rate of increase five years ago. They were required to pay the circumciser \$50 each while the traditional chief was paid \$100 by every male circumcised. Then about 300 initiates under one chief were circumcised. By communal standards this was a fortune for the circumciser and the chief. Sometimes payment is in the form of goats or sheep. There is a need to control profiteering.

The setting up of circumcision lodges disrupts formal schools. The worst affected are secondary school students sitting their examinations towards the end of the year who have to forgo classes and spend almost three months in the initiation camp. Chiredzi District has the largest Hlengwe population in Zimbabwe. Mr Michael Tavaruva who has been District Administrator for Chiredzi district for more than seven years reported that every year he receives numerous letters sent to him by education officers and teachers appealing for Government intervention to stop the disruptive practice. One of the worst incidence reported to him was in 1997 when more that 40 Form 1V students preparing to

126

127

128

129

sit for their O - Level examinations in November at Dumisa (Malipati) Secondary School in Matibi 11 were forced to abandon classes and force-marched to the initiation camp.¹³¹

The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation Television News Bulletin at 8 p.m. on Tuesday 5th August 1997 quoted the Zimbabwe Information Service report, that Shangaan traditionalists had forced Mupinda Secondary School in Sangwe communal lands to close after teachers fled for fear of being forcibly circumcised.¹³² The Herald of Thursday, 7th August, 1997 had an article entitled 'Fear of Circumcision sends them fleeing'.¹³³ The article alleged that ethnic Shangani traditionalists had forced Mupinga Secondary school in Sangwe communal lands to close after teachers fled for fear of being forcibly circumcised. The District Education Officer, Mrs Matilda Chinamatira confirmed the premature closure of the school.

The Sunday Mail of 10th August, 1997 had a cartoon by W. Musapenda depicting a huge Shangani-Hlengwe ruler threatening a trembling pathetic school teacher with a crude weapon of offensive nature.¹³⁴ The cartoon represented Hlengwe negative attitude towards schools during their circumcision sessions.

There is a growing shift towards holding circumcision ceremonies during school vacations to cater for the school going boys. Traditionalists argue that a school vacation of a month or less does not give enough time for the ceremonies. Opponents of ceremonies on the other hand claim that even when the ceremonies are carried out during the school vacation they are still damaging to the school going boys. For instance, the prospect of undergoing the rituals daily haunts some of the youths before the day of reckoning. The fact that they are going to be circumcised and experience a lot of pain during the holidays deprives them from concentration on their schoolwork.

All respondents in the 1989 survey agreed that circumcision schools interrupted modern formal schools which are now a prerequisite for individual and general development. They agreed that modern formal schools must take precedence over circumcision schools. Circumcision schools should be held during school vacations and that three weeks was an adequate period particularly when modern medicine was applied on the wounds.¹³⁵ Although respondents accepted the role of formal schools they still felt strongly that modern formal schools were not well equipped to transmit adequately all the aspects of Hlengwe cultural values, citing the case of language. The Hlengwe language is only taught up to Grade 4 in schools where the Hlengwe pupils are in the majority and when teachers are available. The Hlengwe are one of the minority groups in Zimbabwe hence the feeling that their culture is inadequately represented so circumcision schools must be continued, but in a reformed way. The modern formal, school curriculum, syllabi, timetable and teachers are unable to cater adequately for each cultural group and let alone minority groups. Given also the fact that modern formal schools concentrate on public examinations, they are left with very little time if any and considering the multi-cultural nature of pupils in each class or school it is necessary for the Hlengwe to carry on with their circumcision schools.

131

132

133

134

135

The document on the 'National Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe' stipulates the promotion and integration of culture with education through its curricula and extra curricula programmes.¹³⁶ Some of the arguments between supporters and opponents of circumcision could have been settled if the Government had implemented its cultural policy. The government has done almost nothing concerning research on traditional circumcision. However, the best solution would be to hold circumcision schools during school holidays since the significance of both modern formal schools and circumcision schools cannot be simply ignored.

An analysis of arguments for and against circumcision has been made advantages and disadvantages were discussed, but still no concrete conclusions have been made concerning the future of Hlengwe circumcision schools. The Free Methodist Church have introduced the Canon Lucas experiment as an attempt to find a compromise between traditional and Christian circumcision rites, but have failed to absolutely make opposition silent. Traditional circumcision schools are on the increase every year according to existing records. The reformats approach appears to be the way forward and an everlasting compromise for both the opponents and advocates of circumcision.

Reformats have suggested a formation of an association of circumcision surgeons made up of traditional surgeons similar to ZINATHA. Its major aim would be to educate the families and initiators of the current problems involved in circumcision and how to avoid them. The members who must hold regular meetings with medical doctors especially those circumcised when the circumcision schools are in session. The attendance must also involve circumcised-trained nurses who should be always sober and clean. They must teach the initiates to dress their wounds using basic medicine or detergents such as dettol and spirits. Parents must ensure that their sons are properly circumcised, those who are allowed must always visit the initiates and not to leave everything to the attendants. There is a need to create a comprehensive awareness to all community leaders, health workers, women and youth organisations. The words of wisdom from Dr Menzeleli Msauli, head of Family Practice and Public Health at Cecelia Makiwane Hospital at Mdantsane near East London, "But the answer is not to clamp down on initiation schools," must be taken heed.¹³⁷ His experiment at this hospital was based on medical doctors working with traditional leaders on matters of circumcision. Traditionally, circumcision operation is done with an assegai and the wound dressed in leaves. A special unit was set up at the hospital where Dr Msauli and his colleagues trained tribal surgeons, providing them with sterilising fluids and steadily convinced many to use disposable blades and antiseptic dressings. In addition, prospective initiates were encouraged to undergo medical check ups before entering schools to ensure that they were fit enough to withstand the rigours of initiation. Dr Msauli proclaimed in 1996 "We are winning. Last year was the first in several years that we did not have a single death in the East London area".¹³⁸ William Barker's research confirmed Dr Msauli's claim.¹³⁹ This experiment is worth attempting among the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe. A blending of the Christian Canon Lucas experiment and Dr Msauli's medical experiment may produce circumcision ceremonies appropriate to modern times. The fact that

136

137

138

139

circumcision schools are still held both traditional and Christian reinforces the argument that they are still responsible in transmitting Hlengwe culture, norms and mores. Western formal schools, health services, political, economic, social systems and the Christian religion do not adequately cater these for. However, one obvious fact is that for the circumcision schools to give adequate services they need to be reformed to fit the modern times.

The major intention of the Free Methodist Church when they introduced Christian circumcision schools was to stamp out traditional circumcision schools, which they regarded as heathen rites. However, this did not happen. Though Christian circumcision schools provided an alternative so attempts to explain Christian failure have been made. The traditional circumcision rites related themselves to the totality of the Hlengwe social institutions and activities. This claim stands firm whatever theoretical arrangement is used. It also follows that any functional substitute must integrate with the configuration of each theme and the total configuration of the whole social life and structure. The Free Methodist Church's aim was to change the circumcision rites into Western pattern. In the early days the Free Methodist Church was facing an integrated Hlengwe society which had a working solution to what were unsolved problems in the West. Apparently at that point the Hlengwe elders argued that their young people knew their role of life, their sex, their adulthood, their legal status and their relationship to the spirit world. The psychological problems to mystery and uncertainty so common in European society did not impinge upon the Hlengwe. Any Western advocate of the Christian Gospel in the early days was therefore at a disadvantage. Therefore, there was no obvious reason why initiation rites could be discarded though certainly now they need modifications. Christian missionaries must have understood that not only did the effect of the rites ramify through the whole pattern of society, but also when Christ enters he must do the same. Initiation rites with symbolism and accompanying teaching of higher life and responsibility would need to be Christocentric instead of phallic, Christian life centred and world life centred. However, the educative role of initiation can not be escaped. The major problem for Christian missionaries who wanted to incorporate the rites was one of application. The first problem was the capacity the Western missionaries had to prepare such a rite which would interlock with all aspects of society. Another difficulty was that sometimes when indigenous leaders suggested functional substitutes for one thing or another missionaries have been obstructive because of what they considered unorthodox suggestions. The Christian missionaries among the Hlengwe society should have given itself more scope to explore the social and religious potential of its own patterns.

Westerners often fail to see what a void they leave in the lives of people who are deprived of a rite because they see no particular value in it. The rejection of initiation rites is one of those void creators though the danger of the void may not work itself out for a generation or more. This is usually followed by what can be referred to as "delayed reactions of the void". The recent resurgence of Hlengwe circumcision rites is an attempt to bring back a mythical golden age and to reject the pressure of the Western life and Christianity has failed to supply a functional substitute and left a void. Voids create longings.

When the Christian church, European political, economic and social systems adopted a negative attitude toward initiation rites and failed to provide a substitute, many of the psychological uncertainties and dark mysteries of the West have appeared.

Circumcision rites provided devices for sex education, meaningful orientation to the role of sex life, status and social relations in terms of tribal morality. Nowadays, with the influence of the electronic media, mass media and the film industry being felt in the four corners of the earth the void left by traditional rites can be easily felt and noticed. The Biblical expression of the house swept and left empty to be visited by seven spirits is now fulfilled.

It is clear that European style of life and Christianity have failed to sanctify the circumcision rites or eliminate them hence they must find a functional substitute to avoid a void. A void today certainly will produce a delayed reaction tomorrow. Therefore, the way forward is to introduce reforms within the traditional rites. The Free Methodist Church leaders who pioneered Hlengwe Christian circumcision rites were progressive though much has still to be done to make them totally replace traditional rites. The issue of Hlengwe male circumcision has every year drawn the attention of many people particularly the health and education fraternity, social workers, Christians, human rights groups, parents and the potential initiates. It has become a sensitive issue as of recent because of the outbreak of the HIV - AIDS epidemic. The definite fact is that circumcision schools are an annual event among the Hlengwe (Shangaans) of Zimbabwe since time immemorial and there has been a great resurgence after independence in 1980. There is a record of many attempts official and non-official to ban the rites, but all have failed. History has shown that draconian methods to destroy aspects of any culture have never succeeded, but drove them into secret societies or underground activities which became even more dangerous. Education has always been the best method to change people's traditions or culture when it makes them see and understand the advantages and disadvantages. Those culprits who want to use tradition for their selfish interest can be easily identified and flushed out by the people whom they try to mislead. The Zimbabwean Government through the Ministries of Education, Culture, Health and Social Welfare, supplemented by Christian and Human Rights groups must take the lead to understand the rites so as to gain confidence of the Hlengwe people particularly those who are involved in the circumcision ceremonies. Then the way forward would be to introduce reforms within the traditional rites. The Free Methodist Church leaders who pioneered Hlengwe Christian circumcision rites were progressive though much has still to be done to make them totally replace traditional rites. The issue of Hlengwe male circumcision has every year drawn the attention of many people particularly the health and education fraternity, social workers, Christians, human right groups, parents and the potential initiates. It has become a sensitive issue as of recent because of the outbreak of HIV – AIDS epidemic. The definite fact is that circumcision schools are an annual event among the Hlengwe (Shangaans) of Zimbabwe since time immemorial and there has been a great resurgence after independence in 1890. There is a record of many attempts official and un-official to ban the rites, but all have failed. On the other hand the Hlengwe must accept reform of this cultural aspect if it has to continue serving a noble purpose.

REFERENCE CIRCUMCISION HLENGWE SCHOOL

1. HARALAMBOS, M. & HEALY, R.M. 1985 SOCIOLOGY THEMES AND PERSPECTIVES
2. GENNEP VAN, A 1960 THE RITES OF PASSAGE LONDON
3. KING JAMES VERSION – OLD TESTAMENT – GENESIS CHAPTER 17: 9 – 14 p19
4. KING JAMES VERSION –OLD TESTAMENT GENESIS 17: 23-27 p20
5. KING JAMES VERSION OLD TESTAMENT JOSHUA CHAPTER 5:1 -8. . p249
6. KING JAMES VERSION – NEW TESTAMENT – ACTS CHAPTER 2: 21. . p68
7. KING JAMES VERSION – NEW TESTAMENT – ACTS CHAPTER 2:1-3. . p149
8. KING JAMES VERSION –NEW TESTAMENT – ACTS CHAPTER 15: 1-5. p155
9. KING JAMES VERSION – NEW TESTAMENT – ACTS CHAPTER 16:1-3
10. J.B. THOMPSON – NUANETSI C/o KANDODO VILLAGE OFFICE. . SHABANI ...DEC 20, 1958 TO J. H. CHAPLIN COMMISSIONER. . PRESERVATION
11. H. P. JUNOD – BANTU HERITAGE
12. A. K. SMITH – THE PEOPLES OF SOUTHERN MOZAMBIQUE
13. KRIEGE 1937b:100 IN HAMMOND TOOKE – THE BANTU SPEAKING PEOPLES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA p 228-229
14. H. A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE Vol. 1
15. H. P. JUNOD – BANTU HERITAGE (DON GONCALO DA SILVEIRA p44
16. H. P. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE – VOLUME 1

17. KING JAMES VERSION – OLD TESTAMENT –
GENESIS CHAPTER 17:vs9-14
18. KING JAMES VERSION – NEW TESTAMENT – LUKE CHAPTER 2: 21. .
. p68
19. J. A. JUNOD IN A. L. SPARROW – A LOWVELD RITE p 395
20. TANGAI CHIPANGURA – PARADE OCTOBER 1991
21. MUKACHANA MUESHE MATSILELE – INTERVIEW 27/01/90
22. MASUNGWINI MATUWA MATSILELE – INTERVIEW 11/01/92
23. H. P. JUNOD – BANTU HERITAGE (DON GONCALO DA SILVEIRA)
24. A. K. SMITH – THE PEOPLES OF SOUTHERN MOZAMBIQUE
25. H. P. JUNOD – BANTU HERITAGE
26. H. A. JUNOD – THE LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE VOLUME
27. HENRI BERTHOUD –DIARY 1888
28. T. HOUSER – THE MBOWENI DIARY
29. MEKI HLUNGWANI – INTERVIEW 15/07/1990
30. T. HOUSER – INTERVIEW 26/03/90 – CHURCHILL
31. J. B. THOMPSON – LETTER TO MR R. SMITHERS – DIRECTOR
NATIONAL MUSEUMS 24/10/1957
32. PARAMOUNT S. C. CHITANGA – INTERVIEW 03/02/81 – CHITANGA
. AREA
33. A. L. SPARROW – A LOWVELD RITE
34. PARAMOUNT CHIEF FELENI CHITAGA – INTERVIEW 06/10/89 -
. CHITANGA AREA
35. CHIEF GEZANI – INTERVIEW 08/09/95 - GEZANI AREA

36. THE HERALD "FEAR OF CIRCUMCISION SEND THEM FLEEING".
7/08/97
37. THE SUNDAY MAIL 10/08/97 "ETHNIC (SHANGAAN (HLENGWE)
TRADITIONALISTS CIRCUMCISION IN SENNGWE CHIREDDZI".
38. THE SUNDAY MAIL 24/08/97 "INITIATION SEASON – ETHNIC
SHANGAAN YOUTH SING INITIATION SONGS"
39. THE ZIMBABWE STANDARD WEEKLY 6 –10/08/97 "CHIEF
HLAYISI MANDAU TSOVHANI ARRESTED"
40. THE ZIMBABWE BROADCASTING CORPORATION – RADIO AND
TELEVISION BULLETIN 05/08/97
41. M. HARALAMBOS AND HEALD – SOCIOLOGY THEMES AND
PESPECTIVES p 3
42. IBID p 3
43. W. M. KALLENBACK AND HODGES, H. M. ED – EDUCATION AND
SOCIETY
44. J. KENYATTA – FACING MOUNT KENYA
45. N. MANDELA – LONG WALK TO FREEDOM p 30
46. AUTHORS QUESTIONNAIRE 1989
47. L. GWAPEDZA – MOTO MAGAZINE – AUGUST 1981
48. VAN A GENNEP - THE RITES OF PASSAGE
49. COLLEN IN HAMMOND – TOOKE – THE BANTU SPEAKING.
PEOPLES OF SOUTH AFRICA
50. THE WEEKLY MAILY AND GUARDIAN VOL. 111 No. 5 FEBRUARY
3-9, 1995
51. A. WRIGHT – THE VALLEY OF IRONWOOD
52. AUTHOR'S QUESTIONNAIRE – 1989
53. IBID

54. SARGANT IN HAMMOND TOOKE – THE BANTU SPEAKING.
PEOPLE’S OF SOUTHERN AFRICA
55. AUTHOR’S QUESTIONNAIRE - 1989
56. IBID
57. IBID
58. KIESTER E. AND KIESTER S. A. “THE CIRCUMCISION DECISION”.
THE READER’S DIGEST – MARCH 1996 p 68
59. AUTHOR’S QUESTIONNAIRE - 1989
60. IBID
61. IBID
62. CHIEF M. SENGWE – INTERVIEW – HARARE 10/07/1997
63. N. MANDELA – LONG WALK TO FREEDOM p 32
64. J. B. THOMPSON – NUANETSI C/o KANDODO LETTER TO J. H.
CHAPLIN COMMISSIONER PRESERVATION
65. H. A. JUNOD – LIFE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TROVE VOL 1
66. A. L. SPARROW – A LOWVELD RITE
67. IBID
68. KING JAMES VERSION – OLD TESTAMENT – GENESIS CHAPTER 19
69. A. L. SPARROW – A LOWVELD RITE
70. M. HARRALAMBOS & R. M. HEALD – SOCIOLOGY AND
PERSPECTIVES
71. D. POPENOE – SOCIOLOGY
72. E. B. CASTLE – GROWING UP IN EAST AFRICA
73. H. BERTHOUD DIARY 1895
74. P. ROSET SWISS MISSIONARIES DIARY 1895

75. D. MUZAMANI CHAUKE – INTERVIEW 11/07/1990
76. T. HOUSER – INTERVIEW 18/10/1999 HARARE
77. R. JACOBS – JACOBS MISSION MINUTES 1939-55
78. T. HOUSER – INTERVIEW 26/03/90 HARARE
79. CANON LUCAS – NOTES ON ALL CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE OF LE ZONTE – SEPTEMBER 1926
80. REV T. HOUSER – INTERVIEW 26/03/90 CHURCHILL
81. T. HOUSER THE WORLD HAS TOO MUCH
82. T. HOUSER – INTERVIEW 26/03/90 CHURCHILL
83. THE NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY OF ZIMBABWE. 1 P2
84. IBID 1.2 p2
85. IBID 2.1 p2
86. M. F. C. BOURDILLON, MOTO MAGAZINE APRIL, 1983
87. CHIEF F. CHITANGA – INTERVIEW 22/12/90
88. S. MANSAVAGE – THE HERALD WEDNESDAY 24/08/94 “LYING QUIETLY, BRAVE AND CONFUSED”.
89. J. A. S. GRENVILLE – THE MAJOR INTERNATIONAL TREATIES. .
. 1914- 1973 p247-248 PUB – METHUEN & CO LTD LONDON 1973
90. IBID p 484 – 485
91. THE HERALD – ‘U. N. CALLS FOR END TO CIRCUMCISION’. . . .
01/05/97
92. AUTHORS QUESTIONNAIRE – 1989
93. D. POPENOE – SOCIOLOGY
94. STATUTE LAW FOR ZIMBABWE 1981
95. AUTHOR’S QUESTIONNAIRE 1989

96. THE READER'S DIGEST MARCH 1996 'IS THE MOST COMMON OPERATION PERFORMED ON MALES REALLY NECESSARY? THE CIRCUMCISION DECISION – E. KIESLER & S. V. KIESLER. . p66
97. IBID - p66
98. IBID p66
99. IBID P66
100. IBID P66
101. THE HERALD 13/05/93 THURSDAY 'FIGHT TO SAVE BOYS FROM PERIL OF CIRCUMCISION' – ERIC NAKI'
102. DANIEL MUZAMANI CHAUKE – INTERVIEW 11/07/90
103. THE READERS DIGEST MARCH 1996
104. T. HOUSER – INTERVIEW 26/03/90
105. THE READER'S DIGEST MARCH 1996
106. THE HERALD 30/07/1998 'TRADITIONAL RITES IN CONFLICT. WITH MODERN DAY HYGIENE' JOHNSON SAMACHIRA .
107. THE HERALD THURSDAY,13/05/93
108. THE READER'S DIGEST MAY 1996 p 68
109. IBID
110. IBID
111. IBID p66
112. IBID
113. INTERVIEW – SARAH MUZAMANI 27/06/98 – HARARE
114. THE HERALD THURSDAY, 07/08/97 'FEAR OF CIRCUMCISION SENDS THEM FLEEING' BY ABIOT MAHUNI
115. IBID

116. THE SUNDAY MAIL OCTOBER 1992 'CIRCUMCISION COULD . . .
. "HELP RESIST AIDS – TRANSMISSION RESEARCH' S. TIKIWA
117. THE SUNDAY MAIL 15/06/98 'STUDENTS LOOK AT
. CORRELATION BETWEEN CIRCUMCISION AND RISK. . . .
. INFECTION' – S TIKIWA
118. IBID
119. IBID
120. THE HERALD FRIDAY, 06/05/94 p 7 'CRICUMCISION REDUCES
RISKS OF H.I.V.'
121. IBID p 7
122. Z.B.C. NEWS BULLETIN 6 p.m. 23/08/95 'QUOTING FROM A
FRENCH HEALTH ORGANISATION'
123. THE READER'S DIGEST MAY 1996
124. IBID p 68
125. THE HERALD THURSDAY, 25/09/97 p2 'CALL TO CIRCUMCISE
MALES BABIES AT BIRTH'
126. THE HERALD WEDNESDAY 11/01/95 'MC GOWAN FOUND
GUILTY OF CULPABLE HOMICIDE' – COURT REPORTER
127. CHIEF F. CHITANGA – INTERVIEW 22/12/90
128. THE HERALD – THURSDAY 13/05/93 'FIGHT TO SAVE BOYS.
. FROM PERILS OF PUNISHMENT' – ERIC NAIK
129. THE READER'S DIGEST – MAY 1996
130. CHIEF F. CHITANGA – INTERVIEW 22/12/90
131. THE HERALD – THURSDAY 07/08/97 'FEAR OF CIRCUMCISION
SENDS THEM FLEEING' – ABIOT MAHUNI
132. IBID

133. ZIMBABWE BROADCASTING CORPORATION TELEVISION. . . .
NEWS BULLETIN 8 p.m. TUESDAY 05/08/97
134. THE HERALD THURSDAY 07/08/97 'FEAR OF CIRCUMCISION
SENDS THEM FLEEING' – ABIOT MAHUNI
135. THE SUNDAY MAIL 10/08/97 – W. MUSAPENDA
136. AUTHOR'S QUESTIONNAIRE 1989
137. THE NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY OF ZIMBABWE 3.7 p5
138. THE READER'S DIGEST – MARCH 1996 p67
139. IBID p67
140. IBID

AN OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH ROLE IN DEVELOPING THE LITERAL OF THE HLENGWE LANGAUGE 1939 TO 1980

The argument is that Christian missions pioneered the literal development of indigenous languages since 1890 in the communities they established churches. It was through church educational and medical activities that literal development of indigenous languages became a pre-requisite.

The Free Methodist Church was expected to do the same with the Xihlengwe language in Zimbabwe. The church adopted Xitswa as the official church language to use among the Hlengwe Xitswa though a dialect related to Hlengwe language was not good enough for the development of the Xihlengwe language since the Xihlengwe language as spoken in Zimbabwe is a distinct language by itself. The Xihlengwe language deserved recognition. The official policy to use Xitswa in church activities was publicly challenged by Reverend T A Houser after 1948. It was only after 1956 with the arrival of missionaries who came directly to work in Zimbabwe rather than transiting from Mozambique or South Africa where Xitswa and Xitsonga were widely spoken. However, damage has already been made as far as promoting Xihlengwe language as spoken in Zimbabwe was concerned.

Indigenous literature used among the Hlengwe in church, educational and medical activities were Xitswa and Xitsonga. It is true that there are similar dialects to the Xihlengwe, but Xihlengwe is an independent language spoken by a considerable population in Zimbabwe. Indigenous languages in Zimbabwe were put on the literal map by Christian churches. The Free Methodist Church did almost nothing in this sphere. The church argued that they were limited in financial and manpower capacity to embark on publication or production of Xihlengwe literature. The point taken, this had a great impact on the literal development of the Xihlengwe language in Zimbabwe. Few translations from English language unto Xihlengwe were made, but insignificant to make an impact on the language.

The church made attempts between 1956 and 1963 to promote the Xihlengwe language in conducting activities of Women's Organization – Vahlanganyeti, children's organisation, Sunday School- Tinyeleti, Men's organisation – Vakukuti and Youth Movement – Vahlawuriwa Vatswa in the Xihlengwe language. However, this was soon overshadowed by other intervening negative factors as far as promoting the Xihlengwe language was concerned.

The greatest negative impact on the development of the Xihlengwe language was government policy which stopped the teaching of Xitswa, Xitsonga and Xihlengwe (Xichangana) language in schools after 1963. Karanga (Shona) was to be the official indigenous language to be taught at all schools were Xihlengwe (Xichangana) or similar dialects used to be taught. Karanga all along has been challenging Xihlengwe domination in the area and government policy won the battle on behalf of Karanga language. This policy produced until 1980 a generation of Hlengwe who could not read

or write their mother tongue. However, the Xihlengwe language has shown its resilience by still being spoken by the majority of the ethnic group though not being read or written by many. It has become a 'spoken language' not a written language.

The term Xichangana (Shangana) is in a way has also confused the identity of the Xihlengwe language. (Xichangana) is an invention of linguists bringing various dialects such as Xitswa, Xitsonga, Xironga, Xidzonga, Xihlengwe and Ndau into one language. However, Xihlengwe is the largest of dialects of Xichangana (Shangana) as spoken in Zimbabwe. The argument is that, what is termed Xichangana (Shangana) language in Zimbabwe today is mainly or largely the Xihlengwe language which has now also absorbed some Shona and Ndebele words and to a lesser extent English and Afrikaner words.

The bottom line is that by 1980 the Xihlengwe (Xichangana) language has been degraded to a simple spoken language and zero literal development. The ZANU government adopted a policy of resuscitating all minority languages in all aspects. Thus, the Xihlengwe (Xichangana) language included.

Therefore, it is this scenario which calls for the compilation of some kind of a dictionary and standardised orthography to assist in the literal and learning development of the Hlengwe language. It is at this juncture that the Shangaans in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa must come together and adopt a unified orthography. It is at this point that CASAS has become a necessity and of great assistance.

Makiwane Hospital at Mdantsane near East London, "But the answer is not to clamp down on initiation schools," must be taken heed.¹³⁷ His experiment at this hospital was based on medical doctors working with traditional leaders on matters of circumcision. Traditionally, circumcision operation is done with an assegai and the wound dressed in leaves. A special unit was set up at the hospital where Dr Msauli and his colleagues trained tribal surgeons, providing them with sterilising fluids and steadily convinced many to use disposable blades and antiseptic dressings. In addition, prospective initiates were encouraged to undergo medical check ups before entering schools to ensure that they were fit enough to withstand the rigours of initiation. Dr Msauli proclaimed in 1996 "We are winning. Last year was the first in several years that we did not have a single death in the East London area".¹³⁸ William Barker's research confirmed Dr Msauli's claim.¹³⁹ This experiment is worth attempting among the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe. A blending of the Christian Canon Lucas experiment and Dr Msauli's medical experiment may produce circumcision ceremonies appropriate to modern times. The fact that circumcision schools are still held both traditional and Christian reinforces the argument that they are still responsible in transmitting Hlengwe culture, norms and mores. Western formal schools, health services, political, economic, social systems and the Christian religion do not adequately cater these for. However, one obvious fact is that for the circumcision schools to give adequate services they need to be reformed to fit the modern times.

137

138

139

The major intention of the Free Methodist Church when they introduced Christian circumcision schools was to stamp out traditional circumcision schools, which they regarded as heathen rites. However, this did not happen. Though Christian circumcision schools provided an alternative so attempts to explain Christian failure have been made. The traditional circumcision rites related themselves to the totality of the Hlengwe social institutions and activities. This claim stands firm whatever theoretical arrangement is used. It also follows that any functional substitute must integrate with the configuration of each theme and the total configuration of the whole social life and structure. The Free Methodist Church's aim was to change the circumcision rites into Western pattern. In the early days the Free Methodist Church was facing an integrated Hlengwe society which had a working solution to what were unsolved problems in the West. Apparently at that point the Hlengwe elders argued that their young people knew their role of life, their sex, their adulthood, their legal status and their relationship to the spirit world. The psychological problems to mystery and uncertainty so common in European society did not impinge upon the Hlengwe. Any Western advocate of the Christian Gospel in the early days was therefore at a disadvantage. Therefore, there was no obvious reason why initiation rites could be discarded though certainly now they need modifications. Christian missionaries must have understood that not only did the effect of the rites ramify through the whole pattern of society, but also when Christ enters he must do the same. Initiation rites with symbolism and accompanying teaching of higher life and responsibility would need to be Christocentric instead of phallic, Christian life centred and world life centred. However, the educative role of initiation can not be escaped. The major problem for Christian missionaries who wanted to incorporate the rites was one of application. The first problem was the capacity the Western missionaries had to prepare such a rite which would interlock with all aspects of society. Another difficulty was that sometimes when indigenous leaders suggested functional substitutes for one thing or another missionaries have been obstructive because of what they considered unorthodox suggestions. The Christian missionaries among the Hlengwe society should have given itself more scope to explore the social and religious potential of its own patterns.

Westerners often fail to see what a void they leave in the lives of people who are deprived of a rite because they see no particular value in it. The rejection of initiation rites is one of those void creators though the danger of the void may not work itself out for a generation or more. This is usually followed by what can be referred to as "delayed reactions of the void". The recent resurgence of Hlengwe circumcision rites is an attempt to bring back a mythical golden age and to reject the pressure of the Western life and Christianity has failed to supply a functional substitute and left a void. Voids create longings.

When the Christian church, European political, economic and social systems adopted a negative attitude toward initiation rites and failed to provide a substitute, many of the psychological uncertainties and dark mysteries of the West have appeared. Circumcision rites provided devices for sex education, meaningful orientation to the role of sex life, status and social relations in terms of tribal morality. Nowadays, with the influence of the electronic media, mass media and the film industry being felt in the four corners of the earth the void left by traditional rites can be easily felt and noticed. The Biblical expression of the house swept and left empty to be visited by seven spirits is now fulfilled.

It is clear that European style of life and Christianity have failed to sanctify the circumcision rites or eliminate them hence they must find a functional substitute to avoid a void. A void today certainly will produce a delayed reaction tomorrow. Therefore, the way forward is to introduce reforms within the traditional rites. The Free Methodist Church leaders who pioneered Hlengwe Christian circumcision rites were progressive though much has still to be done to make them totally replace traditional rites. The issue of Hlengwe male circumcision has every year drawn the attention of many people particularly the health and education fraternity, social workers, Christians, human rights groups, parents and the potential initiates. It has become a sensitive issue as of recent because of the outbreak of the HIV - AIDS epidemic. The definite fact is that circumcision schools are an annual event among the Hlengwe (Shangaans) of Zimbabwe since time immemorial and there has been a great resurgence after independence in 1980. There is a record of many attempts official and non-official to ban the rites, but all have failed. History has shown that draconian methods to destroy aspects of any culture have never succeeded, but drove them into secret societies or underground activities which became even more dangerous. Education has always been the best method to change people's traditions or culture when it makes them see and understand the advantages and disadvantages. Those culprits who want to use tradition for their selfish interest can be easily identified and flushed out by the people whom they try to mislead. The Zimbabwean Government through the Ministries of Education, Culture, Health and Social Welfare, supplemented by Christian and Human Rights groups must take the lead to understand the rites so as to gain confidence of the Hlengwe people particularly those who are involved in the circumcision ceremonies. Then the way forward would be to introduce reforms within the traditional rites. The Free Methodist Church leaders who pioneered Hlengwe Christian circumcision rites were progressive though much has still to be done to make them totally replace traditional rites. The issue of Hlengwe male circumcision has every year drawn the attention of many people particularly the health and education fraternity, social workers, Christians, human right groups, parents and the potential initiates. It has become a sensitive issue as of recent because of the outbreak of HIV - AIDS epidemic. The definite fact is that circumcision schools are an annual event among the Hlengwe (Shangaans) of Zimbabwe since time immemorial and there has been a great resurgence after independence in 1890. There is a record of many attempts official and un-official to ban the rites, but all have failed. On the other hand the Hlengwe must accept reform of this cultural aspect if it has to continue serving a noble purpose.

THE IMPACT OF MODERN AND SCIENTIFIC MEDICAL SERVICES ON THE HLENGWE LANGUAGE

In all societies medical services and professionals are suspect of specific restrictives. This has to do with to a specialized language related to this human initiation. Medical practioners have to pass some term of examinations of test depending with a particular society as to be capable to treat future patients. Among the Hlengwe the Medical Practioners qualified through inheriting recipes from an elder relative, apprenticeship or being possessed by some spirit of a dead practioner. In all cases there was an element of paying a token of appreciation to the possessor of the medical knowledge. This was in the form of an ox or more demonstrating the importance of the profession. However, practional medical practice is still though it had received a lot of impact from Surgeon or Scientific reduces. In Zimbabwe, the ZINATHA, - Zimbabwe National Traditional Healer's Association represent the Hlengwe Shangaan are well represented in this organization.

The general technical name given to the Shangaan physician is n'anga specialist in specific names, before Shangaan colonial and missionary contamination the Hlengwe Shangaan medical services referring to illnesses, sicknesses, drugs, medicine and symptoms has its own language. Today the Hlengwe Shangaan language has coined imitated, absorbed or adulterated medical words from English, Shona, Ndebele, Venda, Zulu and other language spoken in Central and Southern Africa.

The Free Methodist Mission introduced effective scientific medical services among the Hlengwe Shangaan in 1939. Before then the Hlengwe Shangaan were on the fringes of medical reduces from far off Fort Victoria (Masvingo) and the Mission of the Dutch Reformed Church. Migrants had a test of this modern treatment at the mines in Johannesburg. Thus for a long time the Hlengwe Shangaan remained to practice and respect their traditional medicines without interference and interruption from European colonialism and missionaries. If a field where Hlengwe Shangaan language is still largely origin. Unfortunately this language has not yet transferred with an adequate written form.

Ralph Jacobs, the Free Methodist Mission Pioneer Missionary had a dream of union to bring Christianity formal education and scientific medical services among the Hlengwe people. If they began to see and believe in the missionary's medicine they would begin to see and believe in the power of the Lord the missionaries brought.

The Free Methodist Church's invitation by the Hlengwe Chief Sengwe to build churches, schools, and a hospital among the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe has been accused earlier, the welcoming of Rev R. J. Jacobs and his wife by Assistant Native Commissioner Mr. Ling on behalf of the government and the establishment of Lundi Mission in 1939, has already been related.

Xitswa was the language used by the missionaries in church activities, education and medical services because they were fluent with that language and written material available. Missionaries were going to work among the Hlengwe and Shona. XiTswa was

a dialect similar to XiHlengwe, but each language has its own patent characteristics. The Hlengwe spoken in Zimbabwe is an identical language different from that medical services used specialized and sensitive technical language. Language was going to be used during diagnosis of sickness or illness, communication between doctors, names of other medical personnel with patients, written and verbal, the amount of medicine, the types of medicine, how to take medicine, medical or questions from patient living verbal misunderstandings between medical practioners and patient could result in consequences too ghastly to contemplate. Medical staff workers in the Medical services had to learn much and more of the local Hlengwe language compared o their colleagues in the church and educational services. On the other hand the Hlengwe patient had to learn a bit of English Medical terms.

THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE XIHLENGWE (XICHANGANA) LANGUAGE IN ZIMBABWE UNTIL 1980

BACKGROUND

The Hlengwe identified themselves as the Hlengwe and their language as Xihlengwe related to the Xitswa, Xitsonga and Xironga since time immemorial. When they settled in Zimbabwe after the 1840's the Karanga whom they conquered or with whom they co-existed identified them as the Hlengwe speaking Xihlengwe language. However, sometimes the Hlengwe accepted the name Shangaan or were called Shangaan by the Karanga because of their association with Soshangana's Nguni Gaza State.

Early European hunters and traders in the southeastern areas of Zimbabwe before 1980 identified the existence of two major ethnic groups who spoke two distinct languages Xihlengwe and Chikaranga.

Native Commissioners of the British South Africa Company in their official records they referred to the Hlengwe as a separate ethnic group from the Karanga and related to the Shangaans largely located in Mozambique where they had originated. During this era the Hlengwe were mainly located in Chibi District, Zaka, Beitbridge, Melsetter and Chipinge Districts. Then small pockets in Nyajena, Bikita and Belingwe. When British South Africa Company rule came to an end in 1923 Nuanetsi District was excised from Chibi District and contained the largest population of the Hlengwe ethnic group in Zimbabwe. After independence in 1980 Nuanetsi District was split into Mwenezi and Chiredzi South Districts. Zaka District was split into Zaka and Chiredzi North Districts.

After 1923 Native Commissioners later on to be called District Commissioners of the White Settler government still referred to the Hlengwe in their official records until 1931. The few missionaries especially of the Dutch Reformed Church who had contact with the Hlengwe also referred to them as the Hlengwe who spoke Xihlengwe related to the Xitsonga. The Dutch Reformed Church missionaries were familiar with the Tsonga in the Transvaal.

In 1928 the White Settler Government asked the International Institute for African Languages and cultures in London for assistance in standardizing Shona orthography. The Institute recommended that Clement Doke popularly known as C. M. Doke in linguistic circles, Professor of Bantu Languages at the University of Witwaterstrand in South Africa to make proposals for the unification of Shona dialects into one standard written language with one standard Orthography. The recommendations in Doke's Report on the Unification of the Shona Dialects was published in 1931.¹

Doke's focus was on Shona but there was no way he could avoid referring to other languages spoken and related to Shona in Zimbabwe. It is then that the Xihlengwe was

identified to have many similarities with Xichangana an invented term unifying Xitsonga, Xitswa and Xironga in South Africa and Mozambique.

In South Africa the name Xichangana (Shangaan) had already been officially accepted. Ndaou or Xindau related to the Xichangana because of Soshangana Manukosi of the Nguni Gaza State influence was placed under Shona by Doke. However, close relationship between Xindau and XiChangana was noticed. In fact, in Zimbabwe the term Xichangana or Shangaan is easily understood to refer to the Xindau and Ndaou people. However, after 1931 official records began to replace Hlengwe and Xihlengwe with Shangaan and Xichangana. This was the case until at independence in 1980.

When Free Methodist missionaries opened formal schools in Zimbabwe in 1939 they taught Xichangana mainly Xitswa and Xitsonga at the expense of the Xihlengwe spoken by the majority of the Shangaan in Zimbabwe. This was the scenario until the government prohibited the official teaching of minority indigenous languages in 1962, which included ¹Xichangana. Thus, the period 1962 to 1980 there was no official teaching of Xichangana in Zimbabwe.

In 1980 the ZANU PF government officially recognised indigenous minority languages – Xichangana, Venda, Kalanga and Tonga. Xichangana had the largest speakers 63,169 compared to the other minority languages.² In 1985 these indigenous minority languages were introduced as languages of instruction for grades 1 – 3 in relevant schools. Promotion of these minority languages in schools was and is a responsibility of the Curriculum Development Unit of the Zimbabwe Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture. The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation especially Radio Four now National Radio programmes focus on promoting minority languages. A few newsletters contribute to this objective.³ Let it be recorded that the pace of development since then has been very slow. This is due to lack of maximum government support in form of financial and material resources, manpower, lack of commitment on the part of government and Shangaan recipients themselves.

However, in 2005 the government accepted the principle of the teaching of what is now termed marginalized languages from grade one to seven whenever and wherever possible. The government has also an open mind to introduce at secondary, high school, colleges and university level. The creation of the Shangaan Promotion Association in Zimbabwe has given an impetus to the promotion of the language. The coming on stage of the Centre For Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS) and Harmonization of Shangaan varieties with Mozambique and South Africa has taken and is taking the promotion of the Xichangana language in Zimbabwe to a higher stage on its course to the summit of development.

¹ Sayce (Kathrine ed), *Tabex Encyclopaedia*, Zimbabwe, Quest, 1987.

² *Ibid* p. 212

³ *Ibid*

