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Mission and power in a time of social and political change: the Moravian mission field in South Africa between adherence and autonomy

ABSTRACT

In its mission policy of the 19th century the Moravian Church spelled out its mission aim as “the gradual development of independent self-sustaining congregations”, that would result in “independent ecclesiastical organisations taking the place of the preparatory missionary arrangements”. However noble these aims and objectives may be, all too often they are altered by the prevailing political and socio-economic conditions as well as the human factor of self-interest. In this article the author researches the period from the General Synod in 1869 till 1948 in the aftermath of World War II with a view of depicting the relationship between mission and power in the context of the Moravian mission field in South Africa. In such a context of mission and political power the disposition of mission board, missionary and indigenous church becomes an interesting missiological phenomenon. With regard to the mission policy, what dynamics would come loose between the polity and property management of the mission board and the aspirations of the indigenous church? How does ecclesiastical adherence manifest itself in times of political change with regard to self-interest of autonomy and property rights?

1. INTRODUCTION

Our period under discussion starts with the General Synod of the *Unitas Fratrum* in 1869 and concludes in the aftermath of World War II (1948). There were several factors that played in on the life and witness of the mission field in South Africa during this era, which caused much tension between Mission and Government, Mission and adherents and amongst the adherents themselves due to disposition of loyalty and criticism over against the Mission. Not only was there tension in these spheres of the Mission’s micro- and macro-environment in South Africa, but also between the local manifestation of the mission task and the policy of the General Synod as directed by the Unity Elders Conference (UEC) and the Mission Board in Herrnhut, Germany.

1.1 The aim of all mission operations of the world-wide Moravian Church

The General Synod of 1869 decided upon the aim of all mission operations to be “the gradual development of independent congregations, self-sustaining” with the ultimate aim “of independent ecclesiastical organisations taking the place of the *preparatory missionary arrangements* (own italics)”. When the Synod addressed “the limit of extension” of mission work “in view of the existing instrumentality and pecuniary means” it stressed, “as far as we are concerned the mission

work is and must remain a work of faith ... it behoves us to trust in the Lord, who alone can guide and direct us aright ... but with the faith must be coupled sober prudence”.¹

The Moravian policy for its mission outreach spells out a “gradual development” of the mission work amongst the indigenous people. This development should have as its outcome “independent congregations” – that are “self-sustaining”. This is a long-term process that entails education and training, equipping and empowering indigenous people that will be able to run and sustain organisation. It is abundantly clear that ultimately the mission would phase out and the outcome would be “independent ecclesiastical organisations.” It is a fundamental principle that the mission is a “preparatory arrangement”. The questions then arise: Who decides when a congregation or a group of congregations are independent and self-supporting to be a church ministered to by their own people? What about the process of decreasing the missionaries and increasing the indigenous workers (issues like training, qualifications, capability, appointment, the missionary’s position)? The issue of property: Whose property would it be and what financial arrangements would be made? What say would the local people have in policy, polity and financial matters? What tensions would be spurred on in the local church’s striving for autonomy in relation to the missionaries?

The Mission registered an institute with body corporative rights and ownership apart from the congregations, but which depended heavily on the labour and support of the adherents. Could this also be a cause of tension between what is mission and what is congregation? The issue of education that leads to emancipation: How would the disposition of the missionary cope with the ecclesiastical, political and socio-economic aspirations of the indigenous adherents? The Germans have been the aggressors in both World War I and World War II. What impact would that have on the Moravian Mission being an “alien” (German) organisation and how would it affect the indigenous adherents at a time when they at first were British subjects (until 1910) and later (since unification in 1910) belonged to the British Commonwealth (until 1945)?

1.2 Buchner’s² report of 1894³

Buchner’s report is of strategic importance for an understanding of the tension that the Mission experienced in its interaction with the adherents, the Government, the white farmers, economic and property issues, as well as policy and polity issues within the areas of religion and politics.

1.2.1 Property rights

At Mission-owned places like Elim, Wittewater and Goedverwacht the external order presented no problem. The chief missionary could regulate everything with the aid of his assistance. The

1 Moravian Church Archives (MCA), Minutes of the General Synod, 1869 (cf Nielsen, WS 1999. *The twin blossom of the pear tree bears fruit*, Port Shepstone, p 126).

2 Buchner, Charles 1894. *Acht Monate in Südafrika*. Gütersloh. Cf Krüger, B & Schaberg, PW 1984. *The Pear Tree Bears Fruit*. Genadendal: Moravian Church in South Africa, p 33. Buchner, Charles (born in 1842 in the mission field of Jamaica) became the leader of the Moravian Mission Board in 1899. His main achievement was that he led the Moravian Mission out of its isolation into the fellowship of the broad missionary movement in Germany. Germany at the time was following the other colonial powers in extending its influence into Africa, which presented new missionary opportunities. Together with the leaders of the other missionary societies, he represented and promoted the interest of the Mission in the colonial era. He visited the mission field of South Africa for eight months in 1892-1893 to acquaint himself personally with the work on the occasion of the celebration of the 150 years of Mission in South Africa (1738-1892; actually it was more the centenary celebration of Marsveld, Schwinn and Kühnel – 1792-1892).

3 Buchner 1894:91; cf Krüger & Schaberg 1984:41-52.

connection between the spiritual and the external work had its advantages: the claim that the Christian faith must permeate our daily life could be applied in practice. He also stressed that the circumstances in South Africa warranted this type of settlement for the time being for the protection of the inhabitants against exploitation from outside.⁴ A separation between spiritual care and external management could be introduced in due course. But at the old Grant Stations of Genadendal, Mamre and Enon, the position was not clear. The inhabitants, on the one hand, regarded the stations as their property, the Mission, on the other hand, acted as owner. Buchner, after an interview with Sir James Rose-Innes, Minister of Native Affairs, pointed out to the inhabitants that basically the Government was the legal owner and had appointed the Mission as trustee, and Parliament could alter the existing conditions any time. He also suggested that the Overseers⁵ should actually manage the external affairs of the Grant Stations rather than the missionaries; and that the regulations were antiquated and needed to be revised. However, any alterations to the regulations at the time required the approval of Parliament, which due to its unfriendly disposition towards the Coloured settlements could use the opportunity to declare the stations open. Therefore, as a start, it would be best to separate the ecclesiastical and the civic management at these stations.⁶

1.2.2 *The finances*

For the establishment of an autonomous national church the payment of regular contributions was of paramount importance. Buchner explained to every congregation that it should be regarded in the first place as for the furtherance of the kingdom of God and not in the narrow sense of the missionary's salary. He further confirmed that members who were in arrears for more than two years should lose their rights in the Church and that their names should be publicly announced.⁷

In order to make the mission work self-supporting he suggested the appointment of professional businessmen to manage the mission stores and other businesses.⁸ On the other hand it served the purpose of protecting the inhabitants from outside exploitation and the missionaries could demonstrate to them the Christian virtues of industry and diligence. Therefore this part of the work had to be continued; it was firmly based on Christian principles, and there was no way that the small Moravian Church could meet its world-wide missionary obligations without the income from that source.⁹

1.2.3 *The Constitution*

Buchner submitted a mission order for the whole Province, which was mainly a recast of rules of the Province which had been formulated from time to time and which had been supplemented by resolutions of the General Mission Conferences since 1862.¹⁰

4 Buchner 1894:91.

5 The village council elected by and from amongst the inhabitants for the secular control of the settlement (Buchner 1894:132-137).

6 Buchner 1894:132-137; MCA, Missionsordnung der Südafrika Westliche Provinz 1894, par 26, 27 (cf Krüger & Schaberg 1984:42).

7 Buchner 1894:132-137.

8 Samuel Will who was appointed as business manager in 1902 united all the business undertakings into the *SAW Handel*, which resulted in the separation of the businesses and the pastoral activities (cf Krüger & Schaberg 1984:44).

9 Buchner 1894:155-159.

10 MCA, Missionsordnung 1894.

It was patriarchal on the provincial and the congregational level: the highest body was the Helpers Conference (HC), which consisted of the Superintendent and two missionaries, who were nominated by the Mission Board at Herrnhut and had to give account to it. The General Mission Conference in the Province, which met every few years, had only an advisory function. Similarly, the chief missionary together with the local Missionary Conference bore the responsibility in every congregation. They nominated a number of male and female churchwardens, who met from time to time in an advisory capacity. The management of the communal life was different: a conference, consisting of the missionaries, the churchwardens and elected overseers, was the highest body and had to be held at least once a month. A financial report had to be submitted to it annually.

With regard to the civic life, every mission station had regulations, which were binding on the inhabitants. Whoever refused to accept them or continued to disobey them, was expelled. The admission to the civil community was a solemn occasion. Children who reached a certain age and newcomers were thoroughly instructed in the regulations and civic responsibilities; and afterwards admitted to the civil community in a public worship service by handshake on reciting the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. Every candidate had to sign the local regulations. It was still considered a great privilege to become a member of the community settlement.

The education and discipline of the children (from baptism to confirmation) received great attention on the mission stations. School attendance on the mission stations was compulsory, until the age of sixteen years or on completion of the highest standard (grade) in school (usually standard 5 or 6 [grade 7 or 8]). Public examinations, parents meetings and special sermons for children (later Sunday school) were held.

Thus the mission order that grew out of the practical experiences in the mission stations gives a good impression of the church and community life in relation to the missionaries.

1.2.4 The South African Fellow Workers

Buchner stressed the fact that besides the financial contributions and a good order, responsible South African indigenous workers were necessary for the establishment of an autonomous church.¹¹

In Buchner's opinion it was about time that full-time indigenous ministers should be trained to replace the missionaries.¹² But the Helpers Conference clung to the traditional training of teachers, who might, in addition, become ministers later. It was advantageous because the Government paid subsidies for the schools, which rendered the appointment of indigenous ministers without additional expenses for the Mission.¹³ Regrettably, the process of indigenous take-over was retarded. On the other hand, the calibre of teachers and ministers that was produced for the indigenous society at large and the church in particular was in high demand at the time.¹⁴

1.2.5 The ecumenical relations

Buchner, who led the Moravian Mission in Germany into fellowship with the other mission societies, also investigated the possibilities in South Africa in this respect. He found that the time

11 Buchner 1894:113-123.

12 Buchner 1894:113-123.

13 MCA, Minutes of the Advisory Board at Genadendal (also called the Helpers Conference, since 1900 the Provinzialkonferenz).

14 Round about the 50th anniversary of the Training School (1887) 125 students had entered its doors of which 69 had become teachers at mission schools throughout the country (cf Diaries of Genadendal 12.9.1888).

when the majority of the Coloured people belonged to the Moravian or to the London Missionary Society (LMS) was long past. According to the census of 1891 the Anglicans and the Dutch Reformed Churches, which could both claim to be national churches in the Cape, had by far the most Coloured members, the Dutch Reformed Churches (DRC) in the rural areas and the Anglicans in the towns.¹⁵ The Congregationalists and the Methodists had gathered most of the members of the LMS into their folds. It is interesting to note, however, that these four confessional groups had large established congregations among the whites in the country, which might have played a role in drawing their workers to their churches (most probably in the case of the DRC), especially in the rural areas where the farmers could later even determine for whom their workers were going to vote. On the other hand, there were also the political conditions that influenced the Coloured people to rather join the English churches.¹⁶

Buchner even examined the possibility whether the Moravian Mission should hand over its congregations to the DRC, because the same language was spoken in both, namely Afrikaans. But in his view the DRC did not have the right attitude to people of colour. He also had nowhere found any desire or need for such a step amongst the Moravian adherents. It was again realised that the Moravian Church had, in fact, a distinctive role to play in the Christian community in the Cape. Buchner was especially glad that the Moravians were not guilty of the terrible competition whereby churches were actually busy coaxing members away from each other. To him in this way human and financial resources were wasted and the variety of traditions just created confusion among the people. He was glad that the Moravians conscientiously respect the sphere of influence of the other churches. Buchner advised them not to accept members from other denominations without a certificate of transfer, and to seek fraternal co-operation.¹⁷

Buchner also took up the baton of the co-operation amongst the mission societies that existed amongst the Berlin-Lutheran, Rhenish, Dutch Reformed and the Moravian Missionaries since 1860.¹⁸ In 1896, an association of Congregational, DRC, Berlin Mission and Moravian school managers was established.

In 1899 the General Missionary Conference in the Cape was formally constituted with the aim of promoting mission work in South Africa. Part of their joint ventures were the circulation of the *Bode*, printed at Genadendal, amongst all the member societies on a monthly basis until the DRC began to produce their own paper in 1905. The Moravian Textbook and the Training School provided further links amongst them. Together they could approach the Government about education and they considered jointly methods of proclaiming the gospel and of fighting social evils.¹⁹

Thus Buchner's report and policy portrayed an urgent desire to propel the indigenous church into becoming autonomous, but in certain respects for reasons not always totally credible the local missionaries retarded the process. He reorganised the financial dispensation in order to attain

15 The DRC: 38 242 (rural), 25 332 (urban); Anglican: 17 392 (rural), 28 750 (urban); Moravian: 9 955 (rural), 1303 (urban). Statistics based on Krüger & Schaberg 1984:50.

16 This reaction will be discussed with regard to the protests at Mamre and at Elim. At Mamre certain people even asked the governor to send an English minister to them and at Elim a woman said that the Queen would banish the German missionaries.

17 Buchner, 1894:131-132, 161-166.

18 For a discussion of that conference see Adonis, JC 1982. *Die afgebreekte mure weer opgebou. Die verstregeling van die sendingbeleid van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika met die praktyk en ideologie van die apartheid in historiese perspektief*. Amsterdam: Free University (Academic dissertation), p 72.

19 Cf Krüger & Schaberg 1984:51-52.

financial independence for the work. The re-organising of order and discipline by informing the inhabitants of their rights and responsibilities on the basis of the new constitution sought to restore the trust and to evoke the congregations to take up mutual responsibility in the civil as well as the spiritual life within the church communities. The Moravian Mission was challenged anew by the policy of fraternal co-operation amongst the different churches to live up to what was characteristic of the Moravian tradition at all times. Yet, he was sensitive enough to realise that his emphasis on the creation of a national Coloured church was, to say the least, controversial to the natural development of South Africa West and was not met with favour amongst the members within the Province at all.

2. THE GENERAL SYNOD OF 1899 AND ITS EFFECT ON SOUTH AFRICA WEST²⁰

Under the influence of Buchner, the policy statement regarding arrangements for mission administration was changed.²¹ Synod emphasised self-reliance, which required of the mission field:

- (a) that it should aim to bring about self-administration and self-supporting churches;
- (b) and in order to reach this goal, the training of indigenous workers;
- (c) and the participation of the congregations in the management of their affairs was imperative;
- (d) that the congregations should assist in carrying the financial burden of the work by means of contributions and collections; and
- (e) that full autonomy could only be reached after a transitional period, in which expatriate and indigenous workers would work under somewhat different conditions in respect of the furlough, the children's education and the pensions of the missionaries which would remain the responsibility of the Mission Board.

It is quite clear that these principles came about, as far as the total European represented synod was concerned,²² mainly due to the pressing financial needs of the ever-expanding work. One should not, however, rule out the role that the constant pressure from the inhabitants about property rights and the assets that they help to establish played. The work was not anymore an effort of reaping only "first fruits" as Zinzendorf had imagined. It had grown into a church of 11 000 members in South Africa West alone with assets and commercial enterprise.²³ Therefore it warranted even much more drastic steps in that Synod considered making the oldest mission fields autonomous as quickly as possible.

The consequences for South Africa West²⁴ was that:

- (a) Synod even expressed the expectation that South Africa West would become completely self-supporting and self-administering by 1909, the date for the next general Synod.

20 The General Synod of the *Unitas Fratrum*, which was held in Herrnhut every ten years, met from 16 May to 30 June 1899.

21 Schulze, A 1932. *200 Jahre Brüdermission*. II. Band. Herrnhut, p 637.

22 Only the German superintendents from the Cape, Hennig from SAW and Van Calker from SAE represented the South African Church.

23 Census 1894:129, in Krüger & Schaberg 1984:50. The SA East had 4 371 members in 1892 (cf Nielsen 1999:189).

24 MCA, Verlass der General-Synode 1899, Gnadau 1899, appendix nr 57.

(b) In order to expedite the supply of indigenous ministers it was decided that the superintendents in the more advanced mission fields should become bishops in order not to delay the ordination of indigenous ministers. In consequence, both Hennig and Van Calker were consecrated bishops for South Africa West and East respectively.²⁵

(c) South Africa West should cease to receive financial support from the Mission Board at once,²⁶ apart from the fringe benefits of the missionaries (see above). Everything else, including the salaries of the many European workers, should be financed from income generated in the mission field in the Cape (South Africa West).²⁷

Hennig, the new South African Director of Mission, was of the opinion that the financial policy of Buchner with its successful business enterprise outcome made the autonomy of South Africa West too dependent on the mission business enterprise and was not that adequate for the new requirements of an autonomous province. The Buchner policy resulted in the shortcoming that the members' financial contributions made up a relatively small part of the budget but that they had no part at all in the management of the work.

In order to rectify these, Hennig drafted a new constitution for the Province, which the Mission Conference of 1900 accepted with a few alterations. It was the first step towards self-determination. This first church order of the Moravian Church in South Africa West decreed that the congregations could elect their own church councils and could even elect representatives to the biennial general conference,²⁸ depending on their contributions to the annual budget.²⁹ It was also

25 General Synod 1899:211-214.

26 General Synod 1899:211-214.

27 From a Mission financial statement of 1899 (cf Krüger & Schaberg 1984:65) it appears that the total income amounted to (in British pounds) 5 871, which covered all the expenses, leaving a surplus of 809 pounds. The impression could be conveyed that because the contribution of the members amounts to "only a small part" (816 pounds, which represents 13% of the budget) the missionaries carried the major brunt of the budget (Krüger & Schaberg 1984:65). But it must also be recognised that the shops enjoyed the monopoly in the stations and were fully supported by the inhabitants: income 4 150 pounds. Then again, the major contributing factor for the success of the agricultural income was due to the cheap labour of the inhabitants: income 288 pounds. All these shops were built with the aid and labour of the inhabitants for "their mission". The wheat fields were laid on and cultivated by the inhabitants with the same motive in mind. The fact that "the members had no part at all in the management of the work" was not because they were unwilling, but because they were kept from being trained and equipped. The missionaries to a great extent contributed to the unholy dichotomy between what was mission-owned and what belonged to the common (communal property); which in the view of the researcher was the cause of the continuous suspicion on the part of the inhabitants about the property rights and the boundaries. It would be good to remember at this juncture the reaction of Africo already in the time of Georg Schmidt, when he expressed the fear that last-named was going to sell the property on his return and pocket the money, which he (Africo) spent such a lot of energy on in building up (cf *Das Tagebuch Georg Schmidt* (1737-1744), Bellville: University of the Western Cape (Institute for Historical Research, 1981:209). Therefore development should not take place with the people as the object of mission but as the subject: it should be people-centred integrated development.

28 The General Mission Conference was a consultative body, which met in close session about every two years in Genadendal. Up until 1900 it only consisted of all the missionaries. The indigenous ministers were allowed only occasionally as observers.

29 A congregation that contributed half the salary of its minister would be given the right to elect its own church council, and a congregation that raised the full amount would even have the right to send elected delegates to the General Mission Conference (Appendix to the General Mission Conference 1900:10-17, in Krüger & Schaberg 1984:66). In this way the congregations were motivated to endeavour to raise the salaries of their ministers for which they would receive more rights in return. Thus the principle of no rights without responsibility was entrenched.

laid down that all the ministers, not only the missionaries from Europe, should participate fully at the conferences, and that all should elect the members of the Helpers Conference (excepting only the Superintendent) from among them.³⁰

Although, due to the duration of the Anglo-Boer War, the constitution was not put into effect for many years, a mind shift was affected and it became evident that Hennig realised that:

(a) the congregations in the Cape had the duty and the ability to alleviate the financial burden of the Board;

(b) the structure of the work was deficient in respect of the fact that the congregations had no part in the management of their affairs (the elected overseers were just policemen to assist the missionary in the keeping of order and the churchwardens, who were simply nominated by the missionary, and who only met with the missionary once a year, scarcely dared speak on that occasion);

(c) the considerable number of missionaries at some stations was a hindrance to progress in the direction of the empowerment of the indigenous members and at places where only one missionary was stationed, it was much more evident that responsible co-operation of the members was needed; and

(d) the neglect or exploitation of the creative abilities and the suppressed urge of the members for a share in the management were the causes of rebellious behaviour in the past and could lead to future disunity.³¹

The next 46 years would be crucial for the quest of an autonomous church in South Africa West. This period characterised the strive for a self-supporting church as Province of the world-wide *Unitas Fratrum*, first “in transition” and then fully equal to all other Unity Provinces (1960). The church found itself in the interacting internal and external political environment of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) – which changed into prolonged guerrilla warfare until 1902 – the political conscientisation and aspirations of the Coloured and Bantu people, the Unification of the country in 1910, two world wars and the coming into power of the National Party in 1948. And in all these it was regarded as a church under the auspices of an “alien entity”, albeit ecclesiastical.

The position of the Mission during this period will be analysed in relation to the ecclesiastical and political aspirations of the inhabitants and the missionaries’ handling thereof and the exertion of the indigenous church to take responsibility for what it considers to rightfully belong to it if the German expatriates were to be considered as “alien” and the quest for an authentic expression of an African Christianity.

3. SOUTH AFRICA WEST: FROM THE ANGLO-BOER WAR TILL 1910

During the Anglo-Boer War many Coloureds and Blacks fought on the side of the British. This is a reflection of the fact, in the case of the Coloureds in the Cape at least, that they had the right to vote for Parliament under British rule (every citizen who had an income of 75 pounds or more and could write was regarded as civilised and could vote).³² In the Boer republics, on the other hand, only whites had the vote, while Blacks had to carry passes and were subjected to other discriminating practices. It is also necessary to point out that it was common knowledge amongst

30 Cf MCA, The Appendix to the General Mission Conference 1900, pp 18-37.

31 MCA, Appendix to General Mission Conference 1900, pp 10-17.

32 Walker, EA, 1959. *A History of South Africa*. London, p 432.

the Coloureds that Paul Kruger had the support of the German Kaiser during the war. In some mission stations missionaries made public their sympathies with the Boers in their resistance to British imperialism.³³ The Coloured inhabitants, on the other hand, engaged themselves passionately on the British side. The Progressive Party slogan of equal rights for all civilised people inspired them with hope for a better future.³⁴ Whilst the community leaders, especially the teachers, were actively demonstrating in public their loyalty to the Queen and recruiting men for the war,³⁵ missionaries persuaded the people to remain neutral, some even tried to stop people from enrolling.

In Mamre, the missionary on two occasions even cancelled the celebration of Holy Communion and used his sermon on Pentecost to call the people to order, because the people celebrated the British victory of Mafeking by dancing and singing in the streets. The reason of his reaction against the joyful behaviour of the people was that the missionary Kunick had the impression that the majority of the inhabitants of Mamre regarded the missionaries as supporters of the *Afrikaner Bond*.³⁶

In Elim, Martha Jantjes and two young women even had to appear in front of the magistrate in Bredasdorp and face a fine or imprisonment because of their refusal to repent for instigating people to riotous demonstrations of flag waving, not greeting and jeering at the farmers who came to the shop and for instigating people to boycott the “Bond church and schools”³⁷ and working on the farms.³⁸

In Genadendal, at the Training School, three pupils were dismissed because the missionary denied them the right to enroll for the war, which caused them to rebel. Some inhabitants even reported the missionaries to the Government, after which some were investigated.³⁹

The Enon episode, between the leader Petrus Sampson and the missionary Rauh, was the most pointed in the process of self-realisation against suppression of political ideals. Petrus and his followers disliked the autocratic leader style of Rauh. When commandos of Boers appeared in the Colony to the north of Enon, Petrus and his followers accused the missionaries to be hand in glove with the Boers in the neighbourhood.⁴⁰ It resulted in the missionaries being arrested on suspicion of high treason.⁴¹ In court Rauh was accused of having advised the inhabitants to put their British flags away and to put no obstacles in the way of the approaching commandos of the Boers. Chleboun, the other missionary, had been accused of selling ammunition to the Boers from the

33 Cf Krüger & Schaberg 1984:69.

34 Marais, JS 1939. *The Cape Coloured People 1652-1837*. London, p 277.

35 In Elim, RD Rasmus and Martha Jantjes; in Wittewater, F Adams, whose house the missionary *Schütz* called “a nest of spies”, because of his informer activities on behalf of the British; in Mamre, it was M Heathly who challenged the missionary to declare his loyalty to the Queen in public (cf Krüger & Schaberg 1984:70-72).

36 Cf Krüger & Schaberg 1984:70.

37 “Bond” means *Afrikanerbond*, intimating that the missionaries were hand in glove with the Boers and therefore the church and schools of the Mission were regarded as institutions of indoctrination and oppression (cf Krüger & Schaberg 1984:71-72).

38 This episode reached the public newspapers with the caption: “Where is the government? Startling affairs in Elim. Persecuted for the crime of loyalty! British subjects under Queen or Kaiser?” (in Krüger & Schaberg 1984:73).

39 MCA, Letter from the Superintendent at Genadendal to Mission Board (MB) at Herrnhut, 1.6.1900.

40 MCA, Letter from the Superintendent to MB, 13.4.1901.

41 The matter caused a country-wide sensation. A Port Elizabeth newspaper reported: “Two German missionaries arrested. Charged with high treason. Sensational evidence forthcoming” (cf Krüger & Schaberg 1984:75).

mission store. However, they were both acquitted after Frederik Balie, the teacher with twenty men from Enon, appeared for the defence and explained that Rauch only advised them to stay out of the war for it was not their war. In Chleboun's case they explained that ammunition was always sold at the mission store for purposes of hunting.⁴²

From the above the impact of this period of the Anglo-Boer War on the Moravian mission stations is abundantly clear. It caused much tension and division between the political and budding national aspirations of the inhabitants and the understanding of the missionaries of the church's role of non-involvement in a time of war. Hennig noted that ministers, who combined spiritual and worldly authority, were tempted to fight difficulties in the worldly management with spiritual means and regarded opposition in communal (civic) matters as opposition against themselves as servants of God.⁴³ It is to be regretted that they could not differentiate between the temporal and the spiritual matters. But then again, was it ever easy in the Church's history for the state church or national church to do that? Were the missionaries really impartial and quietist? Could it be possible that the missionaries, due to the country-wide suspicion against them by their adherents, to a large extent identified with the Boers as German nationalists (who were earlier in context of the Elim episode called the "Kaiser Reich" interest) and that they were fundamentally in competition with British imperialism? On the other hand, the suspicion was aroused in connection with the mission station property and the delay with the passing of the Mission Station Act, whether it was a plot on the part of the British colonial authorities to instigate the mission station people against the German missionaries in order to get their co-operation in the war.

Albeit, the Coloured people sided with the British because they hoped for equal rights for all under British rule and because they feared new oppression if the Boers should win the war.

In Mamre, Heathly and his friends, founders of the Coloured Political Association of Mamre in 1900, had the aim of expelling the Moravian Mission and replacing it with the Anglican Church. It was the first political organisation of Coloured people, a predecessor of the country-wide African People's Organisation (APO), which was founded two years later (1902) in Cape Town.⁴⁴

The African People's Organisation founded by Dr Abdullh Abdurahman in 1902 fought for the extension of the franchise to all people in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Inhabitants of the mission stations were enthusiastic members of the APO, whose official organ, the APO newspaper, kept the people politically informed and was widely read in the mission stations. Abdurahman (a Muslim) would, on occasion, attack the missionaries in the Grant Stations that, in his opinion, enriched themselves instead of promoting the advancement of the inhabitants.

In reviewing this period, it becomes clear that the Coloured people, especially on the mission stations, awoke to a new consciousness of their human rights during the war. This subsequently led to clashes between them and a number of missionaries, who still thought they could rule the people in a patriarchal and feudal manner.

Would the political aspirations of the people for full citizenship and universal franchise be fulfilled and how would this experience influence their quest for a self-governing, fully responsible church?

42 MCA, Letter from the Superintendent to MB, 9.2.1901; 16.3.1901; 30.3.1901; 13.4.1901; 10.5.1901.

43 MCA, Letter from the Superintendent to MB, 13.7.1901.

44 Cf Krüger & Schaberg, 1984:71.

4. THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA IN 1910

When the Union of South Africa under one Parliament was proclaimed in 1910⁴⁵ and it became evident that the Coloureds would not be allowed to become members of that body, they were bitterly disappointed and the APO mouthpiece spoke of a political death sentence for the Coloureds by the British.⁴⁶ In the light of Abdurahman's critique of the missionaries,⁴⁷ it could be argued that, for the majority of missionaries, coming themselves from the economic class of the workers in Germany, it was the mission station set-up that rendered the opportunity to live as feudal lords in a colonial setting. And what is more, given the overwhelming social setting of the neighbouring farmers with whom they as fellow Europeans at that juncture had good social intercourse, it would have been a great temptation to resist not to act out their "baasskap" (position as master) over their "volk" (the people) in the mission station.⁴⁸

In view of the Coloured disappointment and dissatisfaction regarding the national political arrangement, which totally excluded the indigenous people from political power, superintendent Wolter felt that the administration of the Grant Stations more than ever should be handed over to the inhabitants.⁴⁹ The Government in 1902 already produced a Mission Land Bill, but the submission to Parliament had been delayed. Wolter, together with Van Calker from South Africa East went to the Secretary for Native Affairs time and time again, stressing the urgency of the matter. It was only at the end of 1909, during the last session of the Cape Parliament before Union, that the Mission Station and the Communal Reserve Act was passed through the efforts of John X Merriman, who was Prime Minister at the time.⁵⁰

5. THE MISSION STATION ACT

The Mission Act stipulated that the consent of the Mission should be obtained and the inhabitants consulted at every Grant Station.⁵¹ After that, a Board of Management under a Government official and consisting of elected and nominated representatives should administer the settlement, while the Mission would become the freehold owner of the mission glebes. The Act met with much

45 The Union of South Africa brought colonies together and united the whites, but the British colonial powers deliberately excluded the Blacks and Coloureds who fought on the British side; and therefore failed to unite all the people of the country (cf Nielsen 1999:248). It served their purpose to exclude the indigenous people, but because of that they have to bear a large part of the blame for the subsequent dehumanised development in South Africa.

46 *Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa 1*, 1976. Nasou Ltd, p 4.

47 MCA, Genadendal Diary, 1907.

48 "Baas" would be the manner that the farmer would prefer to be addressed and "volk" would be the manner to refer to his workers to denote in a derogatory way their worker status. An individual worker would be referred to as "jong" (male worker) or "meid" (female worker). This was not restricted to the rural areas. Could it be a perpetuation and transplant of the feudal system of 18th century Europe to South Africa? Thus, it is doubtful whether this way of regarding the indigenous people did not border on the degradation of them to subspecies not really human. It is noted that already Georg Schmidt referred to the first group that agreed to gather with him as my "volk", and how he, in the accepted style of the farmers, would even sometimes give them hidings. Surely it is not surprising of the farms, but the domain of the church should reflect the values of the Gospel whatever the reigning social conditions; but it just shows how he was indirectly influenced by the prevailing social conditions.

49 Cf Krüger & Schaberg 1984:81.

50 Cf Krüger & Schaberg 1984:81.

51 A "Grant Station" was not the property of the Mission, but granted by the government for mission work. In most cases these areas were originally occupied by the indigenous people.

opposition and resistance in all the Grant Stations, because the Mission became the owner of part of the land and because the inhabitants would have to pay more taxes. The inhabitants of Mamre, Genadendal and Enon reacted with petitions, demonstrations and court cases in which the Mission was sued.⁵² At one meeting at Genadendal with the Assistant Secretary of Native Affairs, the inhabitants stated the following claim: a management board of Coloureds and not under a Government-nominated chairperson, no division of the land between missionaries and inhabitants, and the Mission to be subjected to the board like everyone else. This led to huge tension with and suspicion against the Mission, which was very harmful for the spiritual life.⁵³ In retaliation Wolter complained in a letter that due to the court cases, the Mission Land Bill, the debacle of SAW Handel⁵⁴ and the rebellions in the Grant Stations, he did not deem it fit to progress towards an autonomous church.⁵⁵ He thereupon summarily shelved the plans for a new church order and an autonomous church.

6. THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE *UNITAS FRATRUM* IN 1909

The General Synod of 1909 in Herrnhut, influenced by Hennig, strongly emphasised as a priority the growth towards autonomy of the older mission fields.⁵⁶ Of special importance is the decision that a church conference with elected representatives had to be created for the indigenous church.

In order to affect the decisions of Synod, the Mission Board instructed the Provincial Conference at Genadendal to revise the 1901 draft constitution along the line of the latest mission policy. In 1911 they sent out Kluge, a board member, to have this draft thoroughly discussed at a General Mission Conference at Genadendal. This brought the Mission to the threshold of a new era. The aim of an autonomous Moravian Church in South Africa was agreed to by the missionaries.⁵⁷

7. THE MORAVIAN GENERAL MISSION CONFERENCE OF 1913

The Moravian General Mission Conference of 1913 had as main agenda point the final discussion of the new constitution. This time with the exception that all three the indigenous ministers (J Jonker, FJ Balie and ES Dietrich) participated in the conference and took an active and critical part in the proceeding throughout. Dietrich, for instance, protested against the exclusion of indigenous ministers from certain sessions, in which the finances of the mission, the salaries of missionaries and similar matters were discussed. He also spoke on matters pertaining to the ministry: the training and ordination of the indigenous ministers that had to be increased and expedited after it had been retarded for so long. He submitted various proposals with regard to church work. The final approval of the new constitution was to be given by the General Synod in 1914.⁵⁸ However, the introduction was unfortunately delayed by World War I.

52 Cf Krüger & Schaberg 1984:81-83.

53 Cf Krüger & Schaberg 1984:84.

54 This company (SA West Trade) consisting of a number of shops and other business undertakings, which had become a separate body under an inspector in 1902, according to Buchner's idea, was expected to contribute 3 000 pounds annually to the account of South Africa West, but was unable to contribute from 1908 onwards as it accumulated a big debt. This affected the reduction of European missionaries by eight from 23 to fifteen in the period 1904-1913 (cf Krüger & Schaberg 1984:89).

55 MCA, Letter from the Superintendent at Genadendal to Missionaries and others in South Africa, 13.8.1909.

56 Cf MCA, Minutes of the General Synod 1909, par 74-85, 99-100.

57 MCA, Genadendal Diary, 1911:9-10.

58 Cf Krüger & Schaberg 1984:92-93.

8. WORLD WAR I AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE MISSION

The outbreak of World War I brought the starkness of nationalism to the fore, which like an invisible barrier separated and destroyed the people of the world. The gathering of the world-wide Moravian Unity on the eve of the war from May to June 1914 in Herrnhut, Germany was of great symbolic value. No special resolution with regard to the mission province of South Africa West was passed. In very vague terms it was stated, “General Synod considers it its foremost duty ... to work for the advancement and extension of our mission work on the new and older mission fields.” Surprisingly, the mood of Synod seemed to have totally changed since the previous one when Wolter was not present,⁵⁹ although it was resolved that the general retrenchment of missionaries and the further extension of responsibilities to indigenous workers should not be lost sight of.⁶⁰

World War I caused many problems for the administration of the church. The mission field was cut off from its base in Herrnhut, official correspondence ceased, financial aid ran dry. Decisions were the superintendent’s own responsibility or had to be postponed for an uncertain future.

The Government appointed a “Commissioner of Enemy Subjects”. He had to be approached for travel and change of residence permits. The meetings of the governing board, the Provincial Conference, could no longer be held.⁶¹ Many missionaries of German descent were sent to internment camps. Marx and Van Calker drew the attention of the authorities to the fact that the Moravian Mission was an international body and that those working in the Mission were twenty Britons, eighteen Germans, three Swiss and one Dutch person. They further submitted the original letters written by Lord Charles Somerset inviting the Moravians to come to the boarder area. Subsequently, nobody from South Africa West was sent into concentration camps, but two missionaries were instructed to move more inland away from the coast. The Government, on the other hand, vested every Moravian property and the business company in 1917 in the “custodian of enemy property”, but fortunately the administration remained in Moravian hands. Many hundreds of men from the mission stations became soldiers and worked in military installations from all mission stations and urban congregations. They served in places as far apart as Europe, Palestine and Egypt. Consequently their experience and self-consciousness grew, but also their willingness to help in church and social matters.⁶²

The end of the war in 1918 brought new challenges as the Peace Treaty of Versailles, signed on 26 June 1919, in paragraph 438 decreed that “mission property ... shall continue to be devoted to missionary purposes ... The Allied ... Governments will hand over such property to boards of trustees appointed or approved by the Governments ... The Allied ... Governments, while

59 This time (1914) Wolter was present, as one of the three representatives from the mission fields. With regard to 1909, Kruger and Schaberg (1984:91) state that “Wolter did not feel happy” about the fact that Van Calker was the only Moravian representative from South Africa (Bishop of South Africa East) to represent both provinces at General Synod in 1909 which, influenced by Hennig, issued new guidelines for the development of the older mission fields, and after which Kluge (1911) made an official visit to South Africa, which changed the minds of the missionaries in favour of autonomy for South Africa West. Can it be deduced from this that the South Africa West missionaries under Wolter’s influence as superintendent were not favourably disposed towards South Africa West’s autonomy? If this was the case, one wonders why. What influence did Wolter exercise at the 1914 Synod regarding Synod not following up on its 1909 decisions and 1911 initiative in connection with South Africa West’s autonomy?

60 MCA, General Synod, 1914, par 51, 4.

61 According to Krüger & Schaberg (1984:96) the last minutes was dated 25 September 1915. The minutes began again in 1918.

62 Cf Krüger & Schaberg 1984:97.

continuing to maintain full control of the individuals by whom the missions are conducted, will safeguard the interests of such missions ... Germany ... waives all claims on their behalf.”

The South African Government decreed by proclamation Number 7 of 14 January 1920, “The immovable property of German missions ... be transferred ... to Boards of Trustees ... all other assets of such missions now in the hands of the Custodian shall be returned to the mission concerned ...”⁶³ With the aid of Krige,⁶⁴ the speaker of Parliament, the Government appointed him Judge Van Zijl of the Cape Supreme Court and Bishop Marx as trustees. This meant that Marx could act as superintendent almost as freely as before.

9. SOUTH AFRICA WEST AND THE FOUNDING OF “DIE BROEDERKERK”: FROM THE POST-WORLD WAR I UNITY SYNOD OF 1919 TO THE POST-WORLD WAR II UNITY SYNOD OF 1946

The international character of the *Unitas Fratrum* as a fellowship of believers was demonstrated when as early as 1919 the representatives met at Zeist in the Netherlands – the Moravian answer to the cleavages of war (Hamilton 1967:334).⁶⁵ It was agreed that the division of the mission fields amongst the four home provinces, namely the Continental, the British and the Southern and Northern Provinces of the USA, as necessitated by the war, would continue. The British Board assumed the administration of South Africa, which was to be returned to the Mission Board in Herrnhut as soon as political circumstances would permit. The International Mission Board was abolished, which led some with great apprehension lest it may bring about the end of the Moravian Unity. True, the constitutional bonds were loosened, but the oneness of the church remained strong, still today, independent mission activity developed in the various provinces, the Unity was renewed by regular General Synods, called Unity Synods since 1957, and by continual “koinonial”⁶⁶ communication.⁶⁷

In 1924 General Hertzog and his National Party succeeded General Smuts and his South African Party in the election of 1924.⁶⁸ Hertzog dissolved the Board of Trustees after the superintendents of the three German missions, the Rhenish, Berlin and Moravian Societies, had requested the Minister of Interior, DF Malan, in an interview to do so.⁶⁹ Once again the Mission was free from all the restrictions, which World War I and the Peace Treaty of Versailles had brought about.

The constitutional development since the *Unitas Fratrum* had suggested a constitution for South Africa West in 1848 at long last came into fruition when, between 1920 and 1922, the draft

63 The Government Gazette extraordinary, 14.1.1920, in Krüger & Schaberg 1984:99.

64 In these Germans descendants that integrated into the Afrikaner society, the missionaries found loyal champions for the cause of the Mission. Krige in an earlier exercise just after the war, helped the Mission to waive the claim of 59 000 pounds by the Custodian of Enemy Property with respect to the administration during the war, which was the cash value of all the property and the businesses (Krüger & Schaberg 1984:98).

65 Hamilton states with humble pride that “this was perhaps the very first meeting between any Protestant leaders from the nations formerly at war” (cf Hamilton, JF & Hamilton, KG 1967. *History of the Moravian Church Winston-Salem: Moravian Church of America – Northern Province*, p 334).

66 This concept is taken from the Greek, *koinonia*, which means fellowship and is being used as one of the manifestations of the church, meaning Christian fellowship across divides or barriers. This concept is preferred to “fraternal” or “brotherly”, as we tend to use more inclusive language today.

67 Hamilton 1967:334-338.

68 Hintrager, O 1952. *Geschichte von Südafrika*. München, p 444.

69 Reports 1924:6, in Krüger & Schaberg 1984:103.

constitution was introduced and accepted in all congregations, one by one (at Genadendal only in 1926 when the old Church Council was dissolved on October, 6 1926). With the approval of all congregations the first Church Conference could convene at Elim in 1922, where the constitution was accepted and the *Broederkerk* in South Africa West was officially founded. Twelve delegates, each elected by their respective congregations, five indigenous ministers and fourteen missionaries constituted the conference. Marx summarised the results as follows, "... a milestone of the greatest significance" was reached, the "foundation stone for the autonomous 'Broederkerk in Zuid Afrika-West' was laid."⁷⁰ A further very important step forward was again taken at the fourth Church Conference at Elim in 1930. Thus far, all three members of the Provincial Board, the governing body of the *Broederkerk*, were missionaries. Under the influence and goodwill of Dr Baudert, the visiting Director of Mission, the three members of the board agreed that the Church Conference could elect an indigenous member. The church order stipulated that an indigenous minister could not be elected until one third of all congregations were served by indigenous ministers.⁷¹ Baudert was convinced that the time for a courageous step forward had come and that able persons were available.⁷² In this way *koinonia* and goodwill triumphed over legalism. The decision was received with profound satisfaction and Dietrich was elected as the first indigenous, South African member of the Provincial Board.⁷³

Now everything had to be adapted to the new dispensation. With regard to finances, the *Broederkerk* was entirely responsible for meeting its own expenses, in particular the salaries of the indigenous ministers. At the third Church Conference in 1927 a motion was carried that the *Broederkerk* contributed 750 pounds annually to the salaries of the missionaries, which demonstrated the proposer's and the house's far-sightedness that the *Broederkerk* would take over the whole Mission one day, and wanted to prepare the congregations for this eventuality.⁷⁴ The South African West mission field had completed the first phase of its history, in which strong congregations were founded. Now it had entered the second phase: a growing indigenous church alongside the remainder of the Mission. Both were on their way to the third phase, when everything would be in the hands of the *Broederkerk*.⁷⁵

A conflict developed in due course over which way the church should take to independence and when it took its course through four conferences,⁷⁶ the main, nearly only subject, was autonomy. It found its amicable end at the fifth Church Conference, when the right path was finally agreed upon. In 1939 Schaberg, the new superintendent, strategically went on his first furlough to Germany when World War II broke out. The concern in the church, with the experience of World War I behind it, was about the safeguarding of the *Broederkerk* and the property from confiscation because of the German connection.⁷⁷ But a conflict developed about this concern. On the one side, Schmidt (the acting superintendent), most of the missionaries and a few South African ministers wanted to preserve the Church by remaining loyal to the existing constitution.

70 Reports 1922, in Krüger & Schaberg 1984:105.

71 This stipulation was a reflection of the autocratic eurocentric manner in which the whole church order was imposed in a "top-down" fashion on the mission fields. However, as a first step, and with only five indigenous ministers, it was a start in the right direction.

72 Beck, H 1981. *Brüder in vielen völkern*. Herrnhut: *Unitas Fratrum*, pp 417, 418 (cf Schaberg, PW 1955. *Silberblätter aus Südafrika*. Hamburg, p 101).

73 Schaberg 1955, VI:18.

74 MCA, Minutes of the Church Conference 1927.

75 Krüger & Schaberg 1984:106-107.

76 MCA, Church Conferences 1941, 1942, 1943, 1947.

77 Especially since Germany was the aggressor in both World War I and World War II.

They did not see any danger regarding the debt of the Moravian Mission Trading Company (MMTC)⁷⁸ which amounted to 30 000 pounds if thrift was applied, and they wanted to await the end of the war. The other side was led by Winckler, a British subject born in Jamaica as the son of a missionary, and Daniel Moses Wessels, born in Genadendal and an indigenous minister of Lansdowne congregation, principal of a school and independent thinker. They were supported by most of the ministers and some prominent delegates to the Church Conference, like Martinus Steenveld from Moravian Hill (born in Elim), father-in-law of Wessels, and Frederik Daniels from Elim. They asked for the immediate transfer of all Mission property to the *Broederkerk*, in order to safeguard it against possible seizure by the Nazi government of Germany. Besides, they warned that should Germany be defeated, the connection with Herrnhut might be cut off permanently. After much pressure from within to hold a church conference and restriction from without by the Government who declared itself "... strictly against a meeting of enemy subjects" (whilst only four missionaries were German), Schmidt succeeded eventually to gain permission from the magistrate for a Church Conference in Cape Town from 5 to 10 January 1941 at Moravian Hill (Cape Town) "because of the improvement of the political situation in the country".⁷⁹ At the conference a Commission on Autonomy, "Kommissie in Sake Selfstandigheid" (KISS), was elected which was mandated to report within six months. Its members were the Provincial Board (PB), its substitutes DM Wessels and H Freymark and the delegates Daniels and Steenveld. Schmidt declined to serve. At the Conference, where the majority of members were against Schmidt, a motion was carried according to which only ministers who had at least served five years as chief minister in a congregation, would in future qualify for election to the Provincial Board. In this way, a re-election of B Krüger, who supported Schmidt, was blocked and Winckler replaced him, as was intended.⁸⁰ In the aftermath of The Moravian Hill Conference an Elim Conference took place from 12 to 17 January 1942, where KISS pushed for immediate autonomy and the transfer of properties.⁸¹ Preceding the Conference, KISS petitioned the Unity Board to free the "trust property" from the bond of 30 000 pounds and to acknowledge the *Broederkerk* as completely autonomous, but the Board advised KISS to wait till the end of the war as the repayments of the bond were not possible. Subsequently KISS expressed its dissatisfaction and intent by telegram. "Local Mission authorities repeatedly declared inability assisting church financially stop British subjects unwilling tolerate Nazi control of Church stop self-dependence subject to later approval by General Synod only way out of our difficulties stop instruct superintendent fully co-operate with Church for self-dependence stop ..."⁸² Although the expected telegram from the Mission Board in England was not forthcoming, the Conference who first deliberated on the elaborate document of KISS,⁸³ voted with a 4/5 majority in favour of all motions concerning autonomy. A Council of Trustees was created as legal owner of the property of the Mission. KISS was replaced by a Commission of Five (K5) with Kroneberg as chairperson, Winckler, Wessels as substitute for Schmidt, Daniels and

78 The MMTC was established in 1935 after the SAW Handel was liquidated because it ran into huge debts with banks and individuals. The business undertaking could not offer any security and thus the immovable property of the Mission, buildings and even the landed property of mission stations, had to be mortgaged. This led to much anxiety amongst the members and indigenous leadership. This happened in the year 1929, when the whole world was plunged into an economic crisis due to the Wall Street crisis, which had grave effects on South Africa, too.

79 MCA, Report of Schmidt 1942-1948.

80 MCA, Minutes of the Moravian Hill Church Conference 1941.

81 MCA, Minutes of the Elim Church Conference 1942.

82 MCA, Report of Schmidt 1942-1948.

83 MCA, KISS, Rapport 1942.

Steenveld. K5 was entrusted with the right of leadership and was to take over the functions of the Provincial Board as soon as the property could be transferred and the new church order introduced. In the meantime, it only made use of its “right of leadership” in questions of autonomy. Everything else was managed according to the old church order by the newly elected Provincial Board, with Schmidt, Kroneberg and Winckler as members.⁸⁴

After the Conference, K5 had requested the Government for help with the transfer of the properties from the administrator of the trust, the Mission, to the beneficiary, the *Broederkerk*, if necessary by legislation.⁸⁵ But, as the tide of war turned in favour of the Allied forces, the unexpected outcome to the request of K5 came only in 1944 after the Allied forces had won the war. On December, 11 1944, the Minister of the Interior placed all properties under the “Custodian of Enemy Property” – as in World War I – and appointed Schmidt to administer it.⁸⁶ After World War II, on the renewed request of K5 that the *Broederkerk* be considered as the only channel for negotiations on autonomy, the Unity Board asked for a memorandum to be laid before the post-war Unity Synod in 1946. The Unity Board endorsed the request of the *Broederkerk* Provincial Board that the status of self-supporting Province be granted to the mission field of South Africa West.⁸⁷ At the local conference of 1947, Conference rejected a motion by the Unity Board that the chairperson of the Mission should be appointed in Europe as usual, while the chairperson of the *Broederkerk* should be elected in South Africa. Conference was determined and clear that when the Church became autonomous all responsibilities would be united and fall under the auspices of the *Broederkerk* and that all assets had to be transferred to the one Moravian Church in South Africa. Having achieved a positive result and being satisfied with the outcome of the property and autonomy process, K5 announced its own dissolution, which was accepted.⁸⁸

10. SUMMARY

The fact that amidst all these identity, constitutional, economic and international political tensions, the ecclesiastical life within the South African Mission did not suffer to the extent that it led to *schism*, was a sheer miracle. The *Broederkerk* became an autonomous church in 1960 with the full blessing of the world-wide unity (the *Unitas Fratrum*) in accordance with their mission aim expressed in 1869.

On the basis of the above, the quest for selfhood and self-reliance of the South African indigenous church is self-evident, and is also manifested in the indigenous adherents’ claim to the mission settlements and urban church property in the face of the mother body, the *Unitas Fratrum*, being declared an alien entity in South Africa during both world wars with regard to property and in its constitutional disposition as it pertains to legal interpretations and the judiciary. In both cases lawyers were consulted and it was even necessary to call on the political authorities in its administrative capacity and also as legislature. In other instances, judges and the high courts were involved. And yet the indigenous church wanted to remain an integral part of the *Unitas Fratrum*.

Albeit, it was in its dignity and integrity as indigenous church that its true nature in fellowship with the world-wide Moravian Church was manifested when it spanned the divides of paternalism, of dehumanising systems, of war and nationalism through its quest for retaining the Moravian

84 MCA, Minutes of the Elim Church Conference 1942 (cf Report of Schmidt 1942-1948).

85 MCA, KISS, Rapport 1942.

86 MCA, Report of Schmidt 1942-1948.

87 MCA, Report of Schmidt 1942-1948.

88 MCA, Minutes of Genadendal Church Conference 1947.

settlement identity, which to a large extent became the culture of the indigenous adherents. The Church would be granted autonomy status by the Unity Synod in 1960 and would be registered as *Die Broederkerk* in South Africa's Western Province, which eventually resulted in the establishment of the Moravian Church in South Africa.⁸⁹

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89 In 1994 the Xhosa-speaking (SAE) and the Afrikaans-speaking (SAW) regions united in the one Moravian Church in South Africa, which was partly a witness in the political reality of the day.