

The History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe 1903 - 2003

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Cover picture: The church of Musume, photo Tord Harlin

Grafic form: Mats Lagergren

Illustrations editor: Tord Harlin

Printed at TK, Uppsala

Photos unless otherwise mentioned: CSM photo archive

ISBN 91-631-4073-X

Uppsala stift, Box 1314, S - 751 43 Uppsala

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The Centenary which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe now celebrates is also a celebration for us in the Church of Sweden and the Diocese of Uppsala. Our churches are bound together by a bond that takes us back to the year 1903. This bond is one of the many indications that the Church is a worldwide fellowship. Today we are happy that this fellowship has been renewed and strengthened through the twinning agreement signed in 1998 and again in 2002. This agreement was made between two independent and equal sister churches. Today we are not the ones who bring the gospel to you. Instead we have a fellowship characterized by mutuality and a conviction that there is much with which we can enrich one another.

This Centenary is being celebrated at a time of anxiety and insecurity and we have to support one another in the prayer that God will help us and bring us liberation. At the same time we bear within us that defiant hope which has always characterized the church, “afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.” It is in this spirit that we wish to remember the hundred years that have passed and we look with hope towards the years that lie ahead.

This book is a Centenary gift, written by four former missionaries, a few among all those who have worked in Zimbabwe during the last century, sent by the Church of Sweden Mission. Many names emerge in this history, both Zimbabweans and Swedes, people who have been important for the growth and emergence of the ELCZ. Today we can rejoice together with them and all the others who have been important in the history of the church, a host of witnesses who through the years have lived by faith in Jesus Christ the liberator and renewer.

I pray that God’s rich blessings will rest over this Centenary, the future of your church and of our continued church fellowship.

Ragnar Persenius
Bishop of the Diocese of Uppsala



Blowing the kudu horn. Long before the time of the first church bells, people came on foot from nearby villages and gathered under a shady tree to hear words from the Bible.

INTRODUCTION

When the African missionary evangelist blew the kudu horn in the bush, long before the time of the first church bells, people came on foot from nearby villages and gathered under a shady tree to hear words, which were brought out from a bundle of white leaves. It was a holy book, called the Bible, which only the preacher could read. “The LORD said: I will give my Spirit to everyone. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will have dreams, and your young men will see visions. On those days I will even give my Spirit to my servants, both men and women”, Joel 2:28. After several years this prophesy came true as the first locals saw themselves in dreams wearing white clothes, woke up and responded to the divine calling by baptism and for some of them even ordination. In brief, this is the spiritual history of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe.

The essence of Christian mission is the liberating transmission of divine love. Mission is more than a brave individual enterprise off the beaten track in distant regions. It is indeed very local, very universal, very spiritual, very much down to earth, always personal and always group-orientated. It is the humble and daring participation in God’s own mission through the church in the world. Mission work is a sign of hope, based as it is on the conviction that the promise of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ who suffered, died and rose again

for our sake will come true. Only from this perspective can we understand the words on the tomb-stone of Axel Liljestrand in the Mnene valley: “Mgwari Rudo”, God is love.

“Rudo moto unokuchidzirwa”, love is like fire, it needs to be kept alive by pushing sticks, according to an African proverb. This “History” of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ) provides many examples of such “loving pushes”. Many missionaries and temporary visitors from the Church of Sweden have returned home spiritually enriched and with a glowing love deep down in their hearts for Africa. Some of us have responded by “pushing bits and pieces” of this book closer and closer to its completion in time for the ELCZ centenary. Others, who may only have received visits from a twinning parish in Zimbabwe, have given support. I think especially of the staff and decision makers of Uppsala diocese. Others still, former missionaries and members of the Swedish twinning parishes, will try to keep the fire of love burning, by their personal visits to Zimbabwe and participation in thanksgiving services to God.

Dr. Hugo Söderström has written the main portion of this book. In doing so, he does not hesitate to inform about difficulties and shortcomings. Time and again the reader can feel how anxious he is to present things as they really were, giving facts and figures, names and places, setbacks and growth points, doubtful and good results.

Together with the educationist Tore Bergman and the medical doctor Sten Bergman, two well-known and well-informed senior missionaries, Söderström is able to cover in detail the educational and medical developments. Söderström himself spent a decade in Zimbabwe as lecturer at the United Theological College in Harare and, from time to time, he also served as pastor in charge of the Lutheran parish in the capital. The Bergman brothers were brought up in Zimbabwe by their missionary parents Johannes and Tora Bergman. After academic studies abroad they returned and spent most of their working life in or in relation to Zimbabwe. For some periods they were given key roles as chairpersons of the education and medical boards respectively. During those periods they also became members the Church Council.

The primary aim of this book is to inform the new generations of African students in the ELCZ schools about their Christian roots. The idea of producing such a book came from the former ELCZ Bishop Ambrose Moyo. After his term of office, Bishop Litsietsi Dube reconfirmed the request that we in Sweden should write a book of this nature, although our original plan was to cooperate with some African scholars. Due to the strained situation in Zimbabwe, this broader and more scientific approach had to be postponed.

However, the authors have done extensive research in the Swedish archives in order to dig down to the early sources of personal reports, articles and lots of old photographs. Most of the written material was only available in Swedish until Tore and Sten Bergman translated



Mgwari Rudo, God is love is the message on Axel Liljestrand tomb-stone in Mnene valley.

it into English. Some episodes in the stories of South African and Zimbabwean pioneer missionaries and co-workers are presented here.

Naturally, there are many more indigenous and Swedish church workers and important events which ought to be remembered, but in a brief history like this, a full scale presentation is impossible. History books, as we know them from our own school days, omit the social perspective, the environmental perspective, the female perspective and the experiences of voluntary workers and significant minority groups, the perspective of children and youth inside and outside the classrooms, not to speak about the blind. Thus our old school books do not present what it looked like from an opposite or complementary viewpoint, which is so essential for democratic development. In this book it has only been possible to give a few hints in such directions.

At the moment of writing, the Swedish government is about to launch what has been termed “a revolutionary proposition for global development”, in accordance with the aims and formulations of the Millennium Summit in September 2000. On that occasion the United Nations reaffirmed their commitment to “(1) work toward a world in which sustaining development and eliminating poverty would have the highest priority, (2) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, (3) achieve universal primary education, (4) promote gender equality and empower women, (5) reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, (7) ensure environmental sustainability, and, (8) develop a global partnership for development”.

It is interesting to read this little book in view of these brave statements. New goals and new people will have to become involved in order to improve the living conditions of the



1998 a twinning agreement, between ELCZ and Uppsala stift was signed

majority of humankind. Every good effort, however small, is important. In the past, local groups of women all over Sweden established a mission network. Later on the networks of Church of Sweden Aid and Church of Sweden Mission took over a major role. Recently, according to the new Church order, dioceses and local parishes of Church of Sweden have formally been assigned the duty of mission.

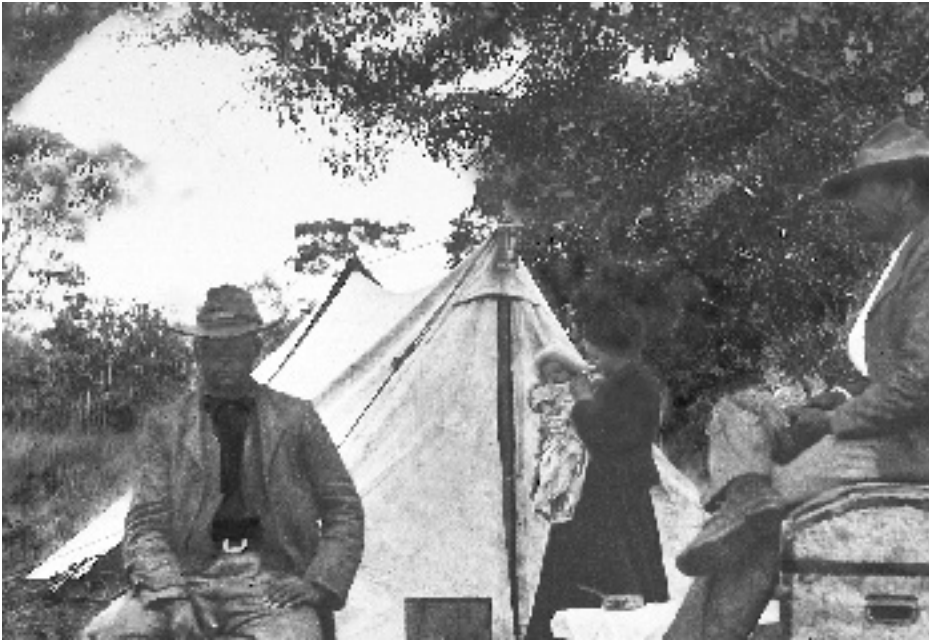
Unfortunately, the word mission invokes great uncertainty among Swedes. People in general do not know what modern mission work is about. The concept of mission is often misunderstood as part of a colonial attitude, although so many Swedish missionaries have dedicated their lives to the freedom and human value of others. It seems easy to forget that under the auspices of God's loving concern, cooperation in mission cuts across all sorts of barriers. For the health and survival of modern society it is crucial to be able to argue freely in efforts to convince one another. That is equally vital for modern church work and mission.

At the time of Martin Luther, European churches regained strength by singing. The same can be said about contemporary mission and church work in Sweden and Zimbabwe. The twinning agreement, signed in Bulawayo in February 1980 and in Söderhamn in June the same year, which has enabled us to print this book, is also inspired by music. This is exemplified by the Sondo project and the CD record with the same name, produced by the former Zimbabwe missionary and international secretary of Uppsala Diocese Martin Svensson (Svensk-zimbabwiska sänger för kör och församling, Verbum Music). Let us keep the fire of love burning through music and sing: "Mwari uyai, Come here, our God...we wait for you God, invite you to come. Give life to your word. Give peace to our earth."

Uppsala in May 2003
Tord Harlin



PHOTO: SVEN JÖNSSON
Martin Svensson, here during a Sondo-session, has written a special Zimbabwe-Sweden mass.



Selukwe 1903. Mrs Helldén, here seen with a baby and two african friends, travelled with her husband and the family Liljestrand from South Africa to Zimbabwe.

THE EARLY MISSIONARIES

Our Lord Jesus Christ said to his disciples: “Go and make disciples of all nations.” In obedience to His command the Swedish Lutheran Church began a mission in Natal, South Africa, in 1876. Two decades later about 20 Swedish missionaries were gathered in a conference in Natal. One told his colleagues that he had met a missionary from another church who had traversed Zimbabwe and who said that there was no Christian mission in the southern part of Zimbabwe and that the people there spoke Zulu.

Because of this information the Swedish missionary conference at Ekutuleni in 1898 decided to send Revs A.R. Kempe and J.F.Ljungquist on an exploratory journey to Zimbabwe. The two missionaries travelled by train to Bulawayo and by donkey cart to Hope Fountain, a mission station which the London Missionary Society had built 5 km from Bulawayo. There they were told that there was no other missionary society working in the Mberengwa area and that most people there spoke Ndebele, a Zulu dialect. Kempe and Ljungquist felt that this information was sufficient and returned to Natal.

On the basis of this exploratory journey and the recommendations of the missionaries in Natal, the Church of Sweden Mission (CSM) decided in 1900 to undertake mission work north of the Limpopo river. Had the CSM known that the people in the Mberengwa area were Karanga-speaking, they would have been more hesitant. However, even mistakes can



Travelling was a great adventure in the early years of 1900. Donkeycarts and oxen were used and the roads presented big problems. In this picture Rev Liljestrand is about to cross a river.

sometimes serve God's purposes.

The CSM decided that Kempe should go and work in Zimbabwe. For several reasons this decision was never carried out. The Boer War 1899 - 1902 lasted longer than expected and additional work in Zululand emerged. But in 1902 the CSM gave the commission to Revs A Liljestrang and A Helldén, who were missionaries in Zululand, to go and work in Zimbabwe. Both were married and felt that they should investigate the situation before they brought their families with them.

They asked the Zulu evangelist Jeremia Makubu, whom they knew to be a brave and devoted Christian, to accompany them. The three men travelled by train to Bulawayo and proceeded on foot into the Mberengwa area. To their disappointment they discovered that the common language was Karanga, not Ndebele. Helldén wrote later to the CSM: "A missionary in this area must learn Karanga. If he does not speak the language spoken by the local people he will to a certain extent remain a stranger."

At the end of October they reached the lofty Shurugwi. Makubu was then seriously ill with malaria. The three travellers rested at Shurugwi but after twelve days Makubu passed away. Obviously Makubu had been aware of the risks he took when he had agreed to go to Zimbabwe. A missionary in Natal wrote to the CSM: "When Makubu was asked whether he was willing to go to Matabeleland he consented and when he was asked what his wife Tabita would say, he replied: "She and I are unanimous that the work of the Lord should always have priority."

When the two missionaries were back in Natal they conveyed to Tabita the mournful tidings of her husband's death. They also gave a report to the missionary conference and to the CSM about their findings. The report was not encouraging. The climate was unhealthy, the distances between villages were great and the ability to speak Zulu was not sufficient for a missionary in Mberegwa – Shurugwi.

But the fact that no other church preached the Gospel in this area weighed very heavily for the missionaries. Like St. Paul they wanted to preach about Christ to those who had never heard the good message (Rom 15:20- 21). Therefore the CSM decided to open the new mission field in addition to the mission in Zululand.

Next year, in 1903, the families Liljestrang and Helldén left for Zimbabwe. In the Liljestrang family there were three small children, all under five years of age, while Rev and Mrs. Helldén, recently married, had one baby, two months old. The Helldén family left Ekutuleni on June 4th and arrived at Shurugwi one month later. They travelled almost the whole journey by train which made it much quicker and more convenient. In Bulawayo they stayed a fortnight to buy various necessities. In Shurugwi a white farmer transported the family and their utensils 20 km into the bush to Ndema Mountain. Helldén was given a friendly reception by the local people, from whom he got helpers to build a house for his family. They moved into their house on the first day of October.

In a few words Helldén describes how a pioneer missionary worked: "Every Sunday I visit the kraals. I preach in Zulu which some can understand but not the majority. I have not noticed any obvious susceptibility to the Gospel albeit some people listen attentively to the Word. During the week-days I conduct morning and evening devotions with the young men who help me with the building work."

The journey of the Liljestrang family to Mberengwa turned out to be more adventurous and protracted than that of the Helldéns. On May 26 they left Oscarsberg in Natal. Not until three months later did the family arrive at Mberengwa. They had to stay 9 weeks in

Bulawayo, buying a sturdy wagon, donkeys and utensils, and hiring servants for the journey. On August 29 they reached Mberengwa. From there they proceeded to Vukwe and Liljestrand and his helpers started to build a cottage on the slopes of Vukwe. When the rains started at the end of October the family moved into their new home.

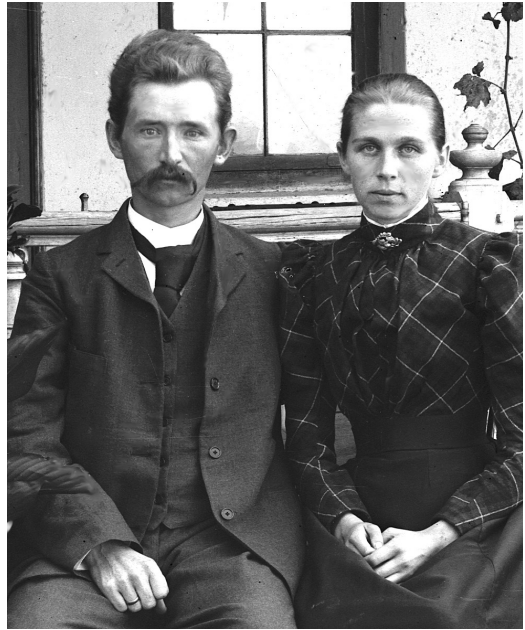
The Liljestrand and Helldén families settled 100 km from one another. Why? Would not these two Swedish families who lived in a foreign country need help and fellowship of each other? Certainly they did. But they wanted to cover and claim a very large area for the Lutheran mission. Especially Liljestrand evolved great plans for the new mission field. In a letter to the CSM he drew the outlines for a field of many square kilometres, almost as large as the area for which the Lutheran Church finally became responsible. The future of the mission had a higher priority for these two missionaries than fellowship and the company of friends.

However, both the Liljestrand and the Helldén families fell ill with malaria in November. After 3 days Mrs. Ester Helldén died and Rev Helldén was so ill that he was not able to attend the funeral of his wife. The funeral was conducted by a Methodist pastor in Shurugwi. When Helldén had regained some strength he returned with his little son to friends in Johannesburg for recuperation. But when he was strong enough he left his son in the care of Rev and Mrs. Norenus there and returned to Shurugwi, planning to continue his work.

The Liljestrand family also fell ill from malaria and had to return to Dundee in South Africa in the beginning of 1904. From there Mrs. Siri Liljestrand and her three children returned to Sweden, while Liljestrand himself hesitantly but dutifully travelled back to Zimbabwe. Having worked in Africa for almost ten years he felt a strong need for furlough in his home country. But his sense of duty towards the mission work in Zimbabwe was stronger.

Once again, when Liljestrand was on a preaching journey in the Mberengwa area, he fell sick and his illness lasted three weeks. The wagon in which he travelled had to serve as his sick-bed. Having recuperated he discussed with his friend Helldén the advisability of remaining in Zimbabwe. The two missionaries decided to ask the CSM for permission to return to Sweden. But before Liljestrand left he arranged with the Matabele Mining Company, which claimed to own the land, that the CSM should acquire an area of 6000 acres in the Mberengwa area.

The CSM actually authorized Liljestrand to buy four sites for future mission stations,



Rev Axel and Mrs. Siri Liljestrand came to Zimbabwe 1903.

but as the mission had met with such serious adversities he confined the purchase to one site. The purchase of Mnene was an indication that the mission work would continue in the Mberengwa area.

Hellmén remarried in Sweden and went back to Natal, not to Zimbabwe, for mission work. Liljestränd served as a vicar in the Church of Sweden. But the question which people asked when he left Vukwe – “When will you come back?” – kept burning in his mind. He knew that he could not bring his family with him. They had five children and Mrs. Siri Liljestränd was expecting one more. The CSM did not want to send Liljestränd alone to Zimbabwe.

FIVE YEARS LATER

However, in 1908 the CSM had at its disposal two new missionaries who were willing to accompany Liljestränd, Rev Axel Hammar and the deacon, Mr. Vilhelm Sköld. Neither Hammar nor Sköld were married. In June 1908 the three missionaries arrived at Mnene. The people there were surprised and happy to see Liljestränd again. Already next day the missionaries chose the site for the mission station, too hastily as it would prove later. They selected a knoll near a small river where a village had recently been deserted. During the first months they were mainly occupied with the building of their new home. Corrugated sheets and other useful material were transported from Liljestränd’s former house at Vukwe. On Sundays they conducted services for the local people. Liljestränd wrote home: “No country is better than Sweden, but my task is to work in this area. I enjoy my work. At home I always felt like a man who had run away from his duty. Here I get my greatest pleasure: plenty of work and strength to do it.”

At the end of September the missionaries moved into their new home in which Liljestränd was to live for only two weeks. On October 1st he fell ill with malaria. Next day he felt stronger and took part in fighting a big grass fire which threatened to destroy their house. Then a high fever ravished his body and he passed away after a few days, only 38 years old. Perhaps it was a combination of malaria and smoke poisoning that put an end to his life.

Later his son, Dean Gunnar Liljestränd, tells how his mother received the sad tidings: “She cried, not despairingly or loudly but silently and quietly in her immense sorrow. After a while she looked at us children and said: “God is love”. These brave words, full of faith, are engraved on the tombstone which the family Liljestränd later put on the grave at Mnene: MGARI RUDO.

The missionaries in Natal sent Rev Ljungquist to investigate whether or not the climate in Mberengwa was so bad that the mission work ought to be abandoned. He believed that the wrong location of the house had strongly contributed to Liljestränd’s death from malaria. Ljungquist remembered the advice which the LMS pioneer missionary Helm had given him when he had visited Hope Fountain in 1899: “Build on the hills.”

Ljungquist wrote to the CSM: “There should be no consideration of a retreat. Here there is a large territory without anybody to proclaim God’s mysteries. Our mission is the first to bring the divine Gospel to these regions and in spite of all mistakes, our mission has the glorious privilege of possessing three graves which radiate the love of Christ.”

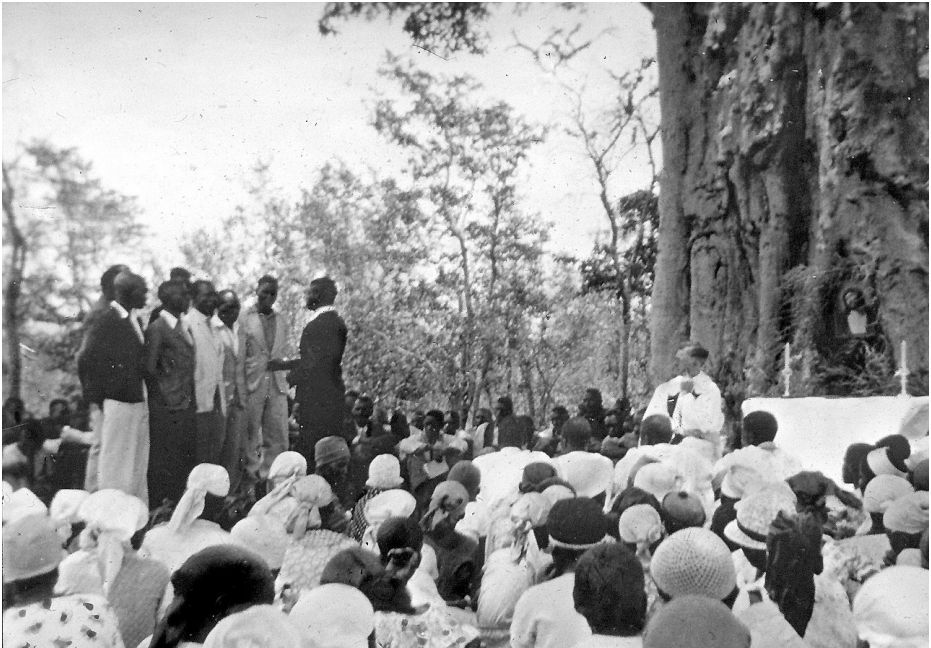
Ljungquist’s recommendations were followed. The mission societies knew during the 19th century that their missionaries had a short life-span of only a few years on the field. The CSM decided that Hammar and Sköld should continue their work in Mberengwa. In 1914 they moved the house to its present location, on a hill with a magnificent view of

the Mberengwa Peaks to the west Gradually one building after the other was erected, the church, the hospital, the schools, the staff houses, etc. For 75 years Mnene served as a centre for the Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe.

Rev Hammar served only two years in Zimbabwe. He wanted to dedicate his life totally to the service of Christ and renounce all luxuries. But he suffered from frequent malarial attacks and realized that he was not strong enough to serve as a missionary. He returned to Sweden, became involved in charity work amongst the poor in the capital and served the rest of his life as a priest in the Church of Sweden.

From 1910 to 1913 Mr. Sköld served as the only Swedish missionary in Mberengwa. He should be given credit for the fact that the work was not disrupted as had happened between 1903 and 1908. Sköld was physically and mentally a strong man. Africans who often gave missionaries nicknames denoting something typical for that particular person called him Stereka (the Strong One). Sköld was a bachelor and sometimes found his loneliness depressing. He felt very strongly that a man should not be sent as a missionary without having a wife. His view conformed with that of certain missionary societies in the beginning of the nineteenth century who did not send out bachelors.

Until 1934 the Lutheran Mission in Zimbabwe was a branch of the Lutheran Mission in South Africa. Once a month Sköld wrote a report to Rev Kempe, the chairman of the Swedish missionary council in South Africa. These reports give a vivid picture of the problems and the work of a pioneer missionary. He had to grapple with both spiritual and secular tasks. He often talks about such mundane matters as the purchase of mules, the



Service by the big baobab tree at Manama before the church was built, a holy place within the church.

repair of donkey carts and leaking house roofs, etc. But it is also obvious that Sköld did not entangle himself in practical matters so much that he lost sight of his main task: to convey the Gospel to the Karangas.

Sköld was a deacon, not a priest. Consequently he did not have the authority to baptize or celebrate Mass. A pastor was a necessity for the small congregation at Mnene if its spiritual life was to function properly. Kempe's sporadic visits were not sufficient. Therefore the CSM sent Rev J Sandström, who had worked in Zululand and spoke Zulu, with his family to Mnene in 1913, and the following year Rev J Othenius and his family also came from Natal. Othenius spoke Zulu but he rapidly learnt Karanga and later made some valuable translations.

As two pastors now worked at Mnene, Sköld could return to Sweden. He stayed at home for two years, studied theology at the University of Lund and was ordained. He also met a young lady who was willing to become his wife and accompany him to the far country on the other side of the equator. Rev Sköld was badly needed at Mnene. Othenius suffered from frequent bouts of malaria and depression and for health reasons he went back to Natal in 1917.

During the years 1923 - 1926 several missionary families arrived and their outstanding work substantially contributed to the growth of the mission: Rev G and Mrs. E Bernander, who served until 1941, Rev H von Sicard who wrote in Karanga the history of early Lutheran mission, the agriculturalist Mr. A J Bergman who taught African farmers how to get a good harvest, and Rev R Rickland who bravely took responsibility for an extension of the mission field west and south of Mberengwa.

Until 1928 the Lutheran Mission had worked only amongst the Karanga in Mberengwa district but in 1928 a significant extension of the work took place, which resulted in what is today called the Western Deanery. From 1920 the Dutch Reformed Mission at Morgenster had worked south of Gwanda at a place called Bethel. However, the distance between Morgenster and Gwanda is about 300 km and the DRC missionaries found it too difficult to cope with the work there. After discussions with the people in the Bethel area it was decided that the Swedish missionaries should be asked to take charge of the mission work in the Gwanda area. The two groups of missionaries had learnt to know each other because the Swedish missionaries used to take part in the courses in Karanga which were held at Morgenster.

But many Swedish missionaries were very hesitant. The new area was large and sparsely populated and three languages were spoken there – Ndebele, Sotho and Venda. The missionaries who had served in Zululand could easily learn Ndebele which is a Zulu dialect, but nobody understood Sotho or Venda. On top of these linguistic problems came the shortage of workers. Some Swedish missionaries felt that the mission's task in the Mberengwa district was already more than enough.

However, Rickland, who had recently arrived in Zimbabwe, declared that he was willing to assume responsibility for the new area. He was the pastor in charge of Masase Mission where some spoke Karanga and some Ndebele. Dean Norenus, who served as chairman of the missionary conferences in Zululand and in Zimbabwe, was also in favour of the extension of the work. Thus the Lutheran Mission took over an area where two small congregations already existed. The Gwanda-Venda parish in 1933 had 262 baptized members, while Mnene parish had 651 and Masase parish 464 baptized members.



Evangelists after a meeting in Gwanda in the early 1930's.

AFRICAN FRONTIERSMEN

We tend to believe that the missionaries were the ones who converted Africans into Christians. But this is not quite correct. The missionaries brought the Gospel to Africa but indigenous evangelists brought the Gospel to the Africans. Without the work of the evangelists the Christian Church would be a tiny tree in the dry African soil.

The obvious fact that the role of the evangelist is overlooked is easily explained. Most missionaries were prolific writers. A part of their job consisted of writing letters to the mission board and to people at home about the problems and progress in the mission work. Without proper information their supporters would cease to send money to the Mission Board.

The situation for the African evangelists was different. They lived mostly close to their friends and relatives. Their experiences, achievements and frustrations could be conveyed orally. And some evangelists knew only the basic elements of writing. When they met with colleagues they did not record their discussions and decisions like the missionaries did.

The missionaries were very much aware of the necessity of having indigenous co-workers. When a young man became a believer, had been instructed in the catechumen class and then baptized, he was often asked to become an evangelist. If he was willing, he was sent



The church is established in Zimbabwe. The first christian marriage at Mnene: Kleophas Hungwe and his wife Esther. An important role is played by the evangelist S. Sikakana and Rev F. Mkize from Natal. Baptism conducted by Bishop S. Sundgren.

to Emmaus or to Oscarsberg (Rorke's Drift) in S.Africa. Or he was sent to Morgenster Mission for training. That the Swedish Lutheran missionaries sent candidates to a Dutch Reformed school might seem surprising. But it was cheaper to send candidates to Morgenster in Zimbabwe than to Oscarsberg in S.Africa. Several missionaries also went to Morgenster to study Karanga.

In 1912 five evangelists were employed by the Mission: Petrus Kgobe and Jeremia Shumba who had been trained at Morgenster, and Ben Camane, Simon Sibanda and Kleophas

Hungwe who had received their training in Zululand. Of these five, Ben Camane deserves to be singled out. He came from Appelsbosch in Zululand and agreed to help the Swedish missionaries with their work in the new country in the north. He was a true missionary in his own right. For many years he worked in the Mnene parish. He learned to speak Karanga fluently. When Mr. Sköld studied in Sweden during the First World War Ben Camane was the prop of the working staff. Missionaries came and went but Ben Camane remained. Rev Kempe gives this testimonial: "He has faithfully and assiduously done his duties during these years in spite of all the indifference which the non-Christians initially showed to his preaching."

In the valuable book about the early evangelists which Mr. K T Bergman has compiled and translated from the archives of the CSM, Ben Camane gives a long and detailed report about his work in the Mnene parish.

Ben Camane was not the only evangelist from Zululand who spent years in Zimbabwe as a missionary. Filemon Ntanzu came in 1913 from Ceza in Zululand. He worked in many different places, especially at Mnene, and returned with his now large family to Natal in 1940. Like his Swedish colleagues he was periodically granted leave to spend a few months in his home country. Other Zulus who worked some time in Zimbabwe were Simeone Sikakana at Gwanda from 1931 to 1938 and Filemon Mkize at Handa in the Venda area from 1932 to 1935.

A number of teachers from Zululand must also be included among the African Frontiersmen who came to work as missionaries in Zimbabwe. They will be mentioned in a later chapter. Neither should the work of the evangelist Dick Dube in the Masase parish be forgotten. For many years he worked together with Sköld. He was a Karanga by birth but had grown up amongst Zulu-speaking people and preferred to preach in Ndebele. Many at Masase understood Ndebele well.

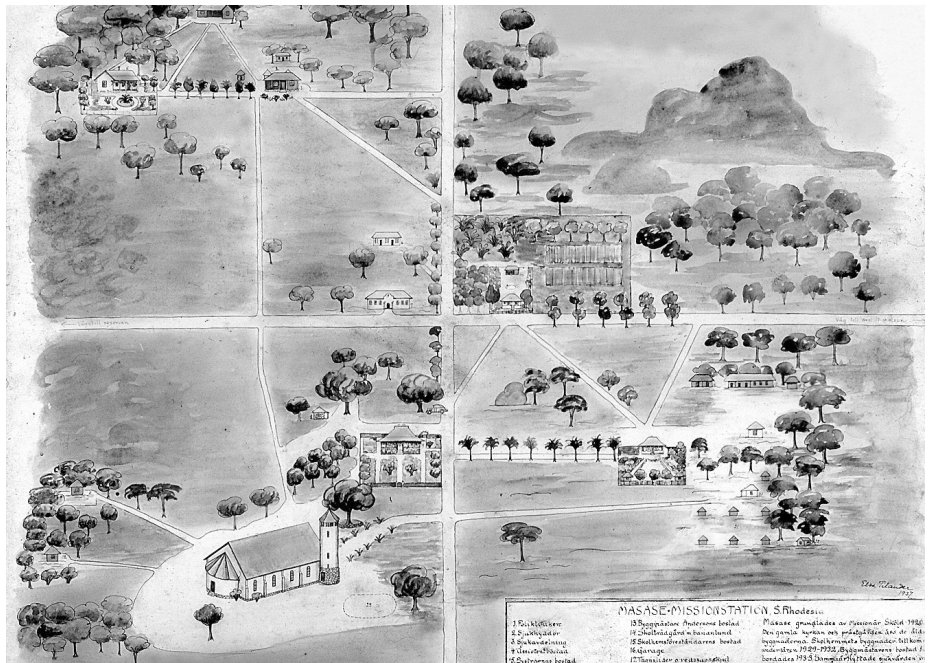
Once a month the missionaries used to call together their evangelists for instruction in Bible knowledge, preaching and singing. Sköld wrote in 1919: "The evangelists are very eager to learn. Constantly they cry for more education. It is imperative to meet their demands, not only because of their work but also because the evangelists in neighbouring missions are usually well educated."

The missionary conference at Mnene in 1916 discussed the possibility of regular training of the evangelists. They found that it was not feasible, until von Sicard arrived and held courses at Masase from 1928 to 1930. Five evangelists passed their examinations in 1928, and in 1940 no less than 14 students were enrolled.

The early evangelists were both preachers and teachers. The Mission started kraal-schools in which the evangelists taught reading and writing and some arithmetic. But some evangelists were released from their teaching tasks and became district evangelists.

In the 1920s the Rhodesian government commenced giving financial support to the kraal schools. Subsequently the requirements for better theoretical qualifications became greater and the teaching duties heavier. In the long run, as the educational system in Zimbabwe developed and the government raised its demands, it became increasingly difficult to combine the task of an evangelist with the work of a teacher. It therefore became necessary

to introduce separate training for evangelists and teachers. Preaching and teaching have always been intertwined in the history of the church from her very beginning. And the missionaries who were few in numbers saw clearly the need of indigenous co-workers. In the beginning, as has been mentioned, they sent their helpers for training to South Africa. But the need for an evangelist training school was very urgent. The training of evangelists started in 1928 at Masase with Rev von Sicard as teacher. More comprehensive training began there in 1937 when Rev E Sundgren was in charge. Sundgren also held a course for evangelists at Mnene in 1943. But the majority of evangelists were trained by Dean S Strandvik at the Masvingo Bible School before he became bishop. The number of evangelists grew rapidly. In 1962, 117 evangelists served in the Church. Until the 1950s there were two kinds of evangelists: evangelist-teachers and district evangelists. The latter had a whole parish as their working area. They conducted services, taught catechumens, made home visits and tried to reach non-Christians with the Gospel. The district evangelists were rather few: Dick Dube, who worked at Masase, Filemon Ntanzi and Simon Makhurane working at Mnene, Thomas Shava at Gomututu, Andries Noko and Josefa Phaswana who were stationed at Manama. The evangelist-teachers had teaching responsibilities 15 hours per week. The remaining time was to be used for parish work, for preaching on Sundays and for home-visits in the afternoons. These evangelists did not hold proper teachers' certificates but were capable of teaching the children to read, write and do simple arithmetic. They also taught children the elements of the Christian faith and the history of the Church.



Masase, one of the important places in ELCZ's history, on a drawing from 1937 by Elsa Tilander.



Getting their own liturgy, hymnbook, Bible etc is one of the important tasks for a young church.

TRANSLATIONS

LANGUAGE

St Paul could easily communicate with Jews, Greeks and Romans because from his childhood he spoke Hebrew and Greek and many people around the Mediterranean understood Greek in the same way that people today understand other languages besides their vernacular.

The first Swedish missionaries who came to the Karanga country could convey the Gospel through English and Zulu. But only a minority of the Karangas understood Zulu and still fewer of the Karangas understood English. The missionaries discovered very soon that they had to learn the Karanga language.

The missionaries found valuable help with the language problem at Morgenster Mission,

which was located in a Karanga-speaking area. They attended courses there when they came from Zululand. As we said in a previous chapter, some of the first evangelists also came from Morgenster Mission.

THE BIBLE

Besides preaching, teaching and healing, the Christian mission in a new country has a fourth task: to translate the Bible into the vernacular. The Lutheran mission did not need to do this work, since the Bible had already been translated into Shona, Zulu, Sotho and Venda by others. The Swedish pastor, Rev O Särndal in Natal, contributed to this work by improving the Zulu translation. However, we must realise that common people in Zimbabwe in the beginning of the last century were not able to read. The Gospel was brought by preaching.

LITURGY

An order for services of worship, for baptism and Holy Communion, a Lutheran hymnal, etc., were badly needed. Therefore the missionaries had to devote a great share of their time and strength to linguistic work in this regard.

Othenius, who worked in Zimbabwe 1914-1937, translated parts of the Swedish "Handbook" containing orders for the services in the Swedish Lutheran Church. Most likely the evangelists helped him to find the right words in Karanga. Mrs Bernander, who came to Mnene in 1923, also took up translation work for the "Handbook". Her translation was duplicated in two versions, one complete for the pastors and one abbreviated for the evangelists.

Mrs Bernander's translation was the basis for all the other translations. The alterations in the later editions are marginal. The most important alteration was that of the name of God. Mrs Bernander used the word Wedenga (The Heavenly), but von Sicard preferred the old Shona name Mwari, which in traditional religion signifies the rain-god. But names can also be given a Christian content. Mwari is used in the Shona Bible and consequently in liturgies and sermons.

In Zimbabwe a new Shona translation of the New Testament was printed in 1942 and a new Swedish "Handbook" was edited in Sweden at that time. Consequently, von Sicard made a revised translation of the "Handbook" into Shona and changed its name to "Liturgia". It was printed in 1960 and is still in use in the ELC. The "Liturgia" was also translated into Ndebele, Sotho and Venda.

LITERATURE

For centuries Martin Luther's Small Catechism has been used as a textbook for catechumens in the Lutheran churches. The first translation into Karanga was made by Othenius and Kempe. For a long time this translation was used for the instruction of evangelists and catechumens. But in 1945 Rev Strandvik published an enlarged and modernized version of the Small Catechism, "Dudziro", through which all catechumens in the ELC received their instruction. In 1971 Strandvik revised this book which he gave the name "Nzira YoUpenyu" (The Way of Life). Mr T Holgersson illustrated the book with instructive drawings. Apart from the Bible no other book has exerted such an impact upon



Missionaries in Rhodesia about 1940.

the spiritual life of the ELC as “Nzira YoUpenyu”.

In 1960, as a help for preachers, von Sicard and Rickland published a book, *Tora Urave*, containing three series of sermon outlines for the church year. This book is not so often used by preachers today. The way of preaching changes for each generation, but the Christian message is the same with the Holy Scriptures as the foundation.

HYMNS

The hymnal from Morgenster, “Nziyo”, was adopted by the Swedish missionaries, to which some Lutheran hymns were also added. The hymnal which is now used, “Nziyo dze Evangelical Lutheran Church”, also contains the Lutheran Order for Sunday Service with the Holy Communion.

The order of worship is identical in Karanga, Ndebele, Sotho and Venda but the hymnals used are different. The Ndebele parishes use the Zulu Lutheran hymnal, the Sotho parishes a hymnal from Lesotho and the Venda parishes a hymnal from their neighbours south of the Limpopo River.

“Nziyo”, the Karanga hymnal, is most frequently used in the ELC. As has been said, this is to a large extent a legacy from the DRC at Morgenster. The hymns are mainly of

a European reformed stamp, but 32 hymns are translations from the Swedish hymnal. Othenius translated most of these hymns, but Bishop A Albrektsson made some translations too. The 32 hymns were included as an additional section in the Morgenster hymnal at the end of the 1930s.

INDIGENOUS IDIOM IN MUSIC

Some missionaries, like Othenius, were aware that the intonation of the words and the melody should be in harmony with each other. And they encouraged African music. A strong impetus toward the development of indigenous church music was given by Dr H Weman, the musical director at the cathedral of Uppsala, when he visited Zululand, Zimbabwe and other parts of Africa several times between 1954 and 1969. A Music Committee was appointed in 1954 with Mr K T Bergman as chairman. The committee arranged church music festivals at the main stations and encouraged the formation of church choirs. Valuable contributions were given to the development of the music as the years went by, by teachers such as S M Gumbie, A Gambiza, Eneas Hove, B M Marufu, E Mashingaidze, John Nduna, and Obert Shiri. The activity of the music committee resulted in mimeographed booklets entitled "Imbirai" with liturgical music for church services and morning and evening prayers. From the end of the 1960s, Mr O Axelsson, a professional church musician, made great contributions towards the further development of music in the church through the introduction of African cultural elements. Axelsson expanded the activities of the Kwanongoma College of Music as an institution within the United College of Education in Bulawayo, and established ecumenical contacts in church music.

Mr. Martin Svensson, the son of one of the missionaries, has lately made valuable contributions to an exchange of musical idiom between the ELCZ and the Church of Sweden.



The first church at Mnene at a baptism on June 27, 1915.

TOWARDS AN AFRICAN CHURCH

The thirty year period between 1933 and 1964 was the most expansive in the history of ELC. In those years the membership grew from 1.600 to 18.800. Some churches have grown rapidly because of a great revival amongst the people but in the ELC there has been no great revival. Some missionaries were hoping that their church would become a church for all Karanga, such as the Church of Sweden had become for all Swedes a thousand years ago. They hoped that the chiefs and their headmen would be converted and that the people would follow their example. But this did not happen. The leaders of the Karanga were not easy to convert. The greatest of all missionaries, St Paul, reminds the Christians in Corinth of what had happened there, that not many powerful, not many of noble birth had become Christians. No chief in the Mberengwa district was baptized until 1946. But no chief tried to forbid his tribesmen from becoming Christians.

THE SEPARATION OF THE MISSION FIELDS

In the history of the Lutheran Church between 1934 and 1964 two trends dominate, firstly, the transition from a mission field to an indigenous church, and secondly, the increase in the number of church members and the building of churches and chapels, schools and hospitals. In the pioneer period between 1903 and 1933 the Swedish mission in the Karanga area was an off-shoot of the Swedish mission in Zululand. The missionaries came via Zululand to the Karanga area. They spoke Zulu and had to learn Shona. The chairman of

the missionary council in Zimbabwe lived in Johannesburg, about 1.200 km from Mnene. The missionaries in Zimbabwe had to send monthly reports to Johannesburg. And the chairman living there could only visit the mission field north of the Limpopo twice or thrice a year. The mission field in Zululand took most of his time.

However, the mission in Zimbabwe grew steadily in size. In 1934 there were five mission stations: Mnene, Masase, Gomotutu, Gwanda and Majini. The church workers consisted of 72 indigenous Christians and 28 missionaries. A considerable workforce of altogether 100 people was employed in the mission. The need to separate from the mission in Zululand grew stronger each year.

When the Swedish missionaries were gathered for a conference at Mnene at the end of 1934 all the participants voted for a separation of the two missions. Even the missionaries in Zululand voted for it. Accordingly the CSM decided that the two missions should have separate administrations.

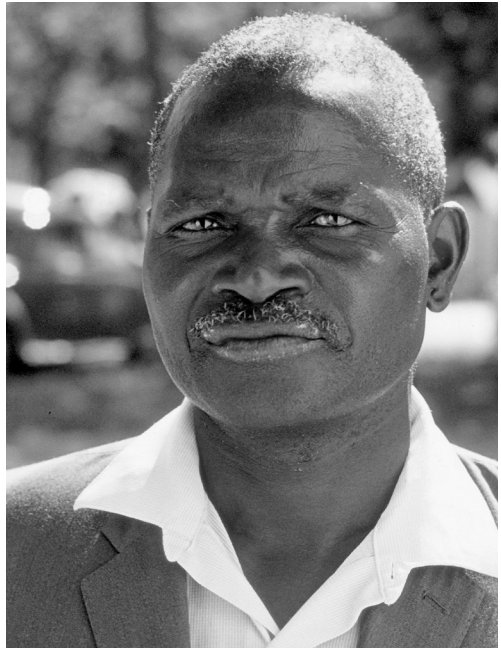
The separation was well motivated but the connection during the first 30 years had been very valuable. The new chairman of the mission in Zimbabwe wrote in his report for 1934 to Sweden: "First of all a word of appreciation must be expressed for the love and perseverance with which the CSM and the missionaries in Zululand have supported the mission in Rhodesia. When it was in peril, even in deadly peril, reinforcements arrived from Sweden and Zululand."

THE FORMATION OF THE AFRICAN SYNOD

For the Swedish missionaries the division of the two mission fields was an important event. But for the African members of the Church it was rather insignificant, because they were not at all involved in the mission administration. Therefore the formation of an African synod, which began in 1934, was a much more important event.

It started with a request from the parish meeting at Bethel (the parish which had been taken over from Morgenster Mission) that delegates from all the parishes should meet to discuss matters of common interest. Rev Albrektsson, who was in charge of the Masase parish, realised the importance of their request and invited all the other parishes to send delegates the following year to Masase for a Rangano ye Kereke, a Church Assembly.

When the delegates assembled at Masase in 1935 in the newly built church, the following



Mr. Jotam S Hove



In 1927 Josia B. Hove was ordained by Rev J. Othenius.

was decided: 1. A Synodical Assembly should be held every third year. 2. A Synodical Council should be formed of delegates from all parishes in the Church. 3. The chairman and the secretary of the synodical council should be appointed by the chairman of the Missionary Council who should also be a member of the Synodical Council.

The statutes for Rangano were mainly drafted by Rickland and Albrektsson. But all the missionaries were in favour of the formation of the synod. They felt the need for a counselling body. They also realized the necessity of responsible African partnership in the mission work. Ten years earlier a synod had been formed in Zululand while Rickland was serving there and his experience of the synod was very positive.

In 1941 the statutes of the Synodical Council and the Synod were worked out in detail and approved by the CSM. The first draft from 1935 was altered so that the chairman of the missionary council did not elect the officers of the Synod and the Synodical Council. They were to be elected by the Synodical Council and the pastors of the parishes.

The Synodical Council was authorized to appoint, discipline and dismiss African pastors, to propose a budget for the parishes, and to supervise the work in the parishes, schools and hospitals - a supervision which had to be carried out in the Spirit of Jesus Christ

The formation of the African Synod was a step in the right direction but an independent African church was not created by this formation. However, it strengthened the self-confidence of the indigenous Christians and stimulated their willingness to assume leadership in the Church. "Responsible partnership" was a term often used by white politicians in Rhodesia in the middle of the twentieth century when cooperation between blacks and whites was discussed. But many white politicians used this term for blocking the blacks from real influence in the government of the country. In the mission work it was a stepping stone to an independent, indigenous church. The goal for responsible leadership was indigenous leadership.

Mr J S Hove, who had been trained at Umpumulo in Natal as a teacher, became the chairman of the Synodical Council and the African Synod. A more suitable person could not have been found. He always chose cooperation rather than confrontation. He was fully aware of the words of the Lord Jesus, "He who is the servant of all is the greatest amongst you."

Especially in matters pertaining to African culture and customs the Synodical Assembly

and Council exerted great influence. The statements of the Synod regarding baptism of polygamists and prohibition of beer-drinking became the official policy of the church. Although some missionaries expressed fear that the abolition rules could lead to legalism, the Synodical Council had seen so much evil caused by beer-drinking that it considered that the abolition rule was necessary.

When Mr Hove as an old man was asked about his time as chairman of the Synod he replied: “At the beginning of my work as chairman I really enjoyed it. The missionaries paid due attention to the views of the Synodical Council. I do feel that the formation of the African Synod was an important step toward African self-government of the church.”

When J S Hove’s cousin J B Hove became a pastor and some members of the Synod felt that their leader should be an ordained pastor, J S Hove resigned and J B Hove took over the leadership. (The life and work of Mr J S Hove is told in more detail in a booklet by Erik Johansson and Hugo Söderström with the title “Shona Wisdom and Christian Mission.” Shona proverbs collected by Hove are also printed in the booklet.)



Three representatives from South Africa: The evangelists F. Ntanzi and S. Sikakana with Rev F. Mkize.

INDIGENOUS MINISTRY

The first African member of Mnene parish was Kleopas Hungwe, baptized by Rev. Norenus in 1911. Later he became an evangelist. The first African pastor in the Church was Filemon Mkize who, like the early missionaries, came from Zululand. He came in 1934 to work amongst the Venda-speaking population. But he did not come to stay permanently and in 1936 he returned to South Africa. His presence was a first step toward an indigenous ministry and as such significant.

The first Zimbabwean pastor in the Lutheran Church, J B Hove, was ordained in the Masase church in March 1937 by Rev Othenius, who had received the commission of the Swedish archbishop to perform the ceremony. Hove had first worked as a teacher in the church until he received his pastoral training at the Oscarsberg Seminary in Natal in 1931. But he had to wait six years for his ordination because the policy of the CSM demanded that the parishes should pay the salaries for African pastors. The evangelists were paid from the Central Church Fund but not African pastors before 1963. The demand that the salaries should be paid by money collected in the country was a serious obstacle to the growth of an indigenous ministry.

On the other hand, the Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe was not alone in acting slowly to obtain indigenous pastors. The Roman Catholic Church ordained her first Zimbabwean

priest in 1947.

After J B Hove's ordination in 1937, six years passed before the Lutheran Church got her second Lutheran pastor. On the Day of Pentecost in 1943, Mberek Mathibela was ordained in the Manama church by Dean Rickland. Most of the pastors travelled the same road to the holy ministry as J B Hove and M Mathibela had done. They worked as teachers and evangelists for a length of time, finally being sent to Oscarsberg and Umpumulo for their pastoral training. Until 1967 all indigenous pastors had received their theological training in South Africa. Ten years passed after Mathibela's ordination in 1943 before the next ordination of more African pastors took place. Bishop Sundgren then came from South Africa in 1963 and ordained M Moyo, J Phaswana and W Hove.

The slow growth of the indigenous ministry - four pastors in fifteen years - did not depend on any shortage of willing and suitable candidates. The slow growth was to a great extent caused by the stipulation of the CSM that the salaries of the indigenous pastors had to be paid by the parishes. And the parishes were economically too weak for this.

The policy of the Rhodesian government was also an obstacle to the ordination of African pastors. In all the parishes there were schools to which the Department of Education allocated money if they were supervised by a school superintendent. As a rule the pastor of the parish also served as the school superintendent. But the Rhodesian government did not accept African pastors as superintendents, only missionary pastors.

THE EPISCOPACY

The fact that there were so few African pastors in the Church during her first half-century contributed to the delay in obtaining a bishop for the Church. A bishop was not elected until 1959. But already in 1927, when von Sicard translated the Swedish "Handbook" into Karanga, he included a chapter on the consecration of bishops. And he gave this motivation: "For spiritual uniformity, for the uniform management of the work, and as a living reminder that the most important task of the mission is not the spreading of western culture but the salvation of souls, the episcopacy is urgently needed. In the proposed 'Handbook' it is consequently taken for granted."

Some of von Sicard's colleagues disagreed with him but in the 1940s a strong section of the missionaries in Zimbabwe demanded the introduction of the episcopacy. However, the CSM felt that priority should be given to the consecration of a bishop in Zululand. The Lutheran Church there was 25 years older than the Church in Zimbabwe. And this bishop could then travel to Zimbabwe when an ordination of pastors was needed. Therefore, in 1949 Rev E Sundgren, who had served as a missionary in Zimbabwe, was consecrated as bishop in the church at Oscarsberg, the place where the Swedish mission began in 1876.

Due to differences of opinion at the Missionary Conference the CSM postponed the consecration of a bishop for several years. But in 1952 a unanimous request came from the Conference for a bishop and the next year the same request came from the African Synod, which wanted a missionary to be bishop of the church and chairman of the Synodical Council.

The CSM acted accordingly. It elected Dean Albrektsson, who was then consecrated by Bishop H Ljungberg at Mnene in January 1959. Albrektsson had served as a missionary since 1932, and knew the people in the country and African customs and traditions well. He spoke two indigenous languages, Karanga and Sotho. He had many friends amongst



The four African bishops of the Lutheran Church, from the first J Shiri (left) and then in order D. Siphuma, A. Moyo and the present bishop of the Church, L.M. Dube (right).

Africans and Europeans and his wife kept their home open for all who lived at, or visited, Mnene. It was planned that Albrektsson should be the first and the last missionary bishop in the Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, but his untimely death in 1963 wrecked this plan.

Dean Strandvik was elected bishop by the Church Assembly in 1963. Thus he was not elected by the CSM but by the Church in which he served. Like Albrektsson, Strandvik had served more than a quarter of a century as a missionary in Zimbabwe. When he was elected he was serving as principal of Masvingo Bible School. He spoke Karanga fluently and was very familiar with the life, challenges and problems of the Church. His preaching and teaching was lucid and firmly founded on the Holy Scriptures. Strandvik was the last missionary bishop in the ELC. When he retired in 1975 Rev J C Shiri was elected and consecrated as the first indigenous bishop in the ELC. The people in the church were very happy to see this peaceful, important step toward africanization, at a time when the white population fought a bitter war to preserve their dominance in Zimbabwe.



PHOTO: AXEL LILJESTRAND

Male students outside their school in the very early days.

Formal education

As has already been said, the first missionaries who came to the ELC area a hundred years ago taught people to read and write to enable them to study the Word of God. But they could not stop there. They had to go along with the wishes of the local population which strongly pressurized the mission for schools. They had to commit themselves to programmes of expansion and improved standards, admittedly receiving financial and other government support in the process. Justification for their participation in this process was seen in the advantages provided for evangelization and in the instilment, hopefully, among both pupils and teachers, of standards and attitudes commensurate with the ideals of Christianity, the training of capable leaders and the growth and independence of the Lutheran church.

LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL EXPANSION AND TEACHER TRAINING

The first thirty years of CSM work in the Mberengwa - Gwanda areas had resulted in the establishment of about 50 primary schools with about 3100 pupils spread throughout the area. Most of the schools went no further than about Std 2 (fourth year) and had only one or possibly two teachers. Altogether about 60 teachers were employed, no more than about 10 of whom were ladies. Those who had teaching certificates had been trained at Morgenster



Mr Willie Makubu and his family at Mnenne.

or some other mission training school, most of the others had only had some elementary teacher training at Masase, where courses were run by missionaries, notably von Sicard, Othenius and Sundgren. These courses included both theological and secular subjects and were recognized and partly financed by the education authorities. Two qualified teachers from the CSM work in Natal were of great assistance at this time in the training programme, namely Amos Ntuli who had arrived in 1924 and Allan X Palmer who came in 1932. Both actually remained in the country with their families for the rest of their lives.

Other qualified teachers from Zululand who also worked a few years in the early days, especially at Mnene, were Johannes Luthuli from 1921 to 1922 and Willie Makubo from 1925 to 1931. Willie Makubo was the son of the evangelist Jeremia Makubo who had accompanied Liljestrand and Helldén on their exploratory trip in 1902 and who died of malaria at Selukwe. Willie's wish, no doubt, was to make a contribution to the mission work in Rhodesia, which his father had been unable to do through his untimely death.

All the teachers who worked away from the main centres, then Mnene, Masase, Gwanda and Gomotutu, were expected to perform as both teachers and evangelists. Many of them experienced this as a heavy burden, understandably, and many tended to neglect one or other of these aspects of their work. The missionaries, however, preferred to retain

this arrangement as long as possible, seeing that the government paid the salaries of the teacher-evangelists and that it was through this combination of work that many people were converted and baptized.

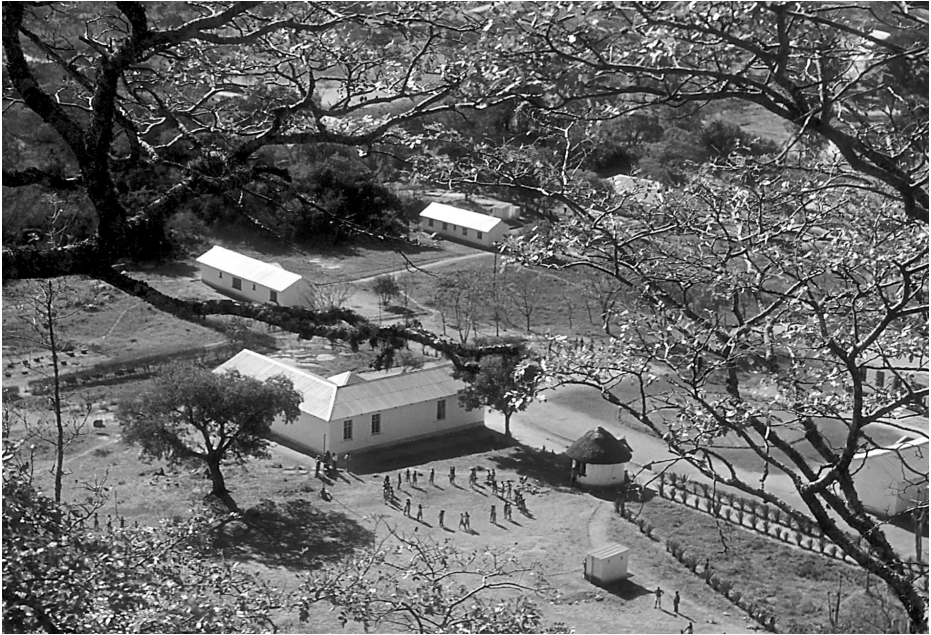
The first boarding schools for Stds 4 to 6, called Central Primary Schools, were established at Mnene and Masase. Initially the school at Mnene was reserved for girls, while the one at Masase was for boys. In 1940/41 the boys and girls changed places, as the farming facilities at Mnene were more suitable for the training of the boys. One of the teachers with the longest service, first for the girls and then the boys at Mnene, and who has to be mentioned in this context, is Mr J S Hove. He was trained in Natal, began teaching at Mnene in 1931 and served until 1956. He has already been mentioned in another context in an earlier chapter in this book.

The number of pupils in the schools increased rapidly and the government also demanded more and more of the teachers as far as training, efficiency and school hours were concerned. In 1936 the government ruled that only teachers who had passed at least Std 3 (5th year) could qualify for a salary. This forced many evangelists to resign from their teaching jobs, and the mission had to begin preparations to provide recognized training for its teachers.

The proposal to start a teacher training school came from the African Synod in 1938. Rev J B Hove argued that students who were trained at non-Lutheran institutions easily became alienated from their church and that text-books other than those used in the Lutheran



Mnene primary school children singing.



Mnene primary school

schools were used. The missionaries were divided in their opinions. Some argued that the running of a training school for teachers did not really belong to the task of a mission. But the majority agreed with their African friends.

The first training school for teachers finally opened at Mnene in 1940 with 12 students, 11 male and one female. Its first principal was Sundgren, assisted by Miss M Dahl and later by Mr G Linell. The school was well supported financially by the government and consisted of two years training conducted according to government syllabuses. The entrance qualification was Std 6 (8th year) and many of the first students had already worked some years as unqualified teachers in different parts of the area. The courses still included some theological subjects and training was also given in preaching practice. The teachers were still generally expected to assist with congregational work at their schools. In actual fact this remained an unofficial expectation well into the 1950s.

In 1952 the training school was moved to Musume, as the Lower Primary School at Mnene which served for teaching practice became too small. At Musume Mr S Gumbie and Mr (later Rev) S Ndhlovu played important roles in the coordination and development of the training programme.

UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOL EXPANSION

In the meantime the number of lower primary schools grew and the pressure on many of these to expand beyond Std 3 increased. The only Upper Primary Schools (UPS, Std 4-6) in the mid-1940s were those at Mnene, Masase, Manama and Musume. However, it proved extremely difficult to find teachers for these. A missionary who was headmaster at Musume

at the time, told how he had heard that there was a qualified teacher available at Gobatema south of Gwanda. He immediately set out in the night by car and drove all that distance to make sure he could have him for Musume before anyone else could pick him up. And he was successful!

By about 1948 there were over 110 primary schools with about 7850 pupils in the Lutheran area, but UPSs had still only been established at the main mission centres.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The officially recognized qualification to teach in an UPS was the Primary Teachers Higher Certificate (PTH) and the entrance qualification for this was at least Junior Certificate (10th year). Such secondary school training was then only available in not more than about 10 schools in the country, including some government schools. The nearest to the Lutheran area was at Dadaya and at Zimuto near Masvingo (Fort Victoria). Training schools for the PTH certificate were far fewer.

Discussions were then held among the missionaries whether secondary school education was to be initiated in our area. In the same way as prior to the establishment of the teacher training school, some of them felt that this was not part of our obligation as a mission, it should be strictly left to the secular authorities. Fortunately it was the Ministry of Education that insisted that a start had to be made. As a consequence the first secondary school Form I class was started in 1954. To begin with it shared temporary facilities with the training school at Musume. Mr A Engdahl was then its Principal while KT Bergman became mainly responsible for the Form I class. In 1954 the secondary school moved to Mnene, where it shared facilities with the UPS, before moving finally into new and custom built premises at Chegato in 1957. Bergman continued as principal there most of the years until 1966. Miss M Linge and Mr J M Shava shared with him the important pioneering years of the school at Chegato.

Many of the first students from Chegato, who passed the so-called Rhodesian Junior Certificate, were now admitted to the training school at Musume in 1958 as the first group to be trained for the Primary Teachers Higher Certificate (PTH). This training in our own institution now gave a new impetus for a more rapid development of the upper sections of the primary day schools in the whole area. The principal at Musume with responsibility now for both the PTH and PTL training was Mr R Stenlund. Others who later came to teach there were Miss S Bergling, Mr T Holgersson as well as a graduate teacher from Natal, Mr P O Sikakana, who later also moved to the United College of Education in Bulawayo (see below).

THE ELC TAKES OVER FROM THE CSM

In 1963, when the ELC was constituted as a church in its own right, it took over the administration of the work that had previously been directed by the CSM. The work of the Mission Council was taken over by the Church Council (CC). According to the constitution of the church, a new body, the Education Board (EB), was appointed as advisory to the CC in educational matters. The chairman of the EB was termed Education Secretary, and became responsible for the coordination and administration of much of the educational work of the church. The first Education Secretary, elected by the Church Assembly, was Mr Stenlund. There were now over 150 primary schools in the Lutheran area, of which more than 20 had



Vashandiri women serving four blind men.

upper primary sections. There were about 620 teachers in these schools, of which about 180 were lady teachers, and 22.780 pupils.

The secondary school at Manama was opened in 1964 and at Masase in 1966. Teachers in the secondary schools had to be university graduates or, for Forms I and II, trained at the so-called Training College at Gweru. The first Form III-IV stream at Chegato was started in 1965 and A-levels a few years later.

In the 1960s the church, with the financial assistance of the CSM, launched an ambitious scholarship and study loan program for students wishing and able to further their education at different levels. It was to a large extent this that resulted in that, by the 1970s, most of the teachers in the secondary schools were trained and qualified Africans, most of them from the area of the church. The first African Education Secretary was Mr E C Hove. He was appointed in 1970 and was at the same time headmaster of the secondary school at Chegato. Very few expatriates were now needed for the educational programme of the church.

THE HOME CRAFT SCHOOL

It should also be mentioned that a Home Craft School for girls was opened at Masase in 1946, buildings for which were funded by the Beit Trustees. Masase was one of only three such schools that were opened in the country at that time. The only entrance qualification was that the girls should be able to read and write. Subjects taught were scripture, reading, hygiene, home care, child care, sewing, knitting, cookery, gardening and elementary health care. The aim of the course was to raise the standard of living in the girls own homes and

when they married. The school was subsequently closed due to lack of interest for that level of training.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BLIND

The Methodist Church at Waddilove in Mashonaland introduced a special approach to education for blind children in the early 1960s. Teachers were trained in Braille (a system of writing and printing for the blind) the design and function of special resource rooms for blind children, methods of teaching etc that made it possible to integrate a small number of blind children in ordinary school classes. Initially four of the best teachers were sent from the training school at Musume to undergo this training. Support both from the British Council for the Blind and the educational authorities, as well as gifts and contributions from various sources made it possible for these four to start such resource rooms at Musume, Mnene, Masase and Beit Bridge. The system was highly successful: people who were earlier considered a liability in the family now acquired a new dignity and could play a useful role in society. Blind pupils from the primary schools could acquire the same education as others. Facilities for them became available also at the Secondary School at Chegato and some blind pupils even managed to continue with graduate training at university.

RADICAL CHANGES – PROFESSIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE

In the 1960s radical changes came to affect the involvement of the ELC in primary school education. Up until now the primary schools had as a rule been administered and supervised by the parish pastors. These had to fulfil government regulations for this aspect of their work:



The United Collage of Education in Bulawayo.



Bus departure from Manama.

each school had to be visited at least four times per year, each visit had to last at least 5 hours, books had to be ordered, teachers employed, prescribed standards maintained, salaries paid etc. In return the government provided travelling and certain other grants to the pastors. The pastors obviously also made use of these compulsory visits to encourage the teaching of scripture, for which the ELC produced special guides, and to maintain contact with the local congregations, evangelists and catechism groups. However, with ever increasing demands being made by the authorities as regards school and educational standards, many pastors found their double tasks becoming more and more burdensome. It therefore came as a relief when the church was permitted to employ so-called Managers of Schools, full-time qualified and experienced teachers whom the church could appoint to take over the administration and supervision of most of the primary schools. Some missionary teachers sent by the CSM also worked as Managers of Schools.

This change, however, was only one in a series by which the government ultimately removed the control over most of the primary schools in the rural areas from the missions/churches. Missions and churches were increasingly being viewed by the regime as obstacles in its political ambitions.

In 1969 the government passed legislation for the establishment of new local authorities which were tasked with a number of functions in defined geographical areas, namely District Councils. The missions/churches became obliged to hand over most of the primary schools to these new authorities or to school committees appointed by these. Consequently the Managers of Schools now became council employees. As far as the ELC was concerned, the only primary schools that were not handed over were those with boarding establishments,

i.e. at Mnene, Beit Bridge and Zezani. This change was fully implemented by the end of 1971.

The requirements as regards higher standards of performance in the primary schools obviously meant that the training of teachers for these also had to be improved. Most of the mission/church teacher training institutions in the country were small and did not meet recognized so-called standard requirements. The urge for a change also in this regard resulted in the establishment of the United College of Education (UCE) in Bulawayo in 1967, an ambitious ecumenical venture in which seven different churches, including the ELC, jointly cooperated. As a consequence, the training school at Musume was closed (thus making it possible to open the secondary school there) and some of its staff was relocated to the UCE., among them Mr P O Sikakana and some missionaries. Sikakana was later appointed Deputy Head of the college.

The high standards according to which the UCE was built were made possible by generous grants from overseas donors, mainly Germany. The CSM also made a minor contribution.

It should also be noted that a training college for musicians, Kwanongoma, was instituted within the UCE in Bulawayo. Its first leader was Mr Axelsson, who had first been Manager of Schools at Masase and then Gwanda.

UPHEAVAL, POLITICAL CHANGE, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

During the second half of the 1970s the struggle for liberation seriously affected the ELC schools. Many of the primary schools in the rural areas had to close. Most of the CSM missionaries left the country. The “exodus” of the Manama students and some of its teachers to Botswana in January 1977 and the commandeering of the secondary school buildings by the regime forced the school to close. Buildings at both the secondary schools at Masase and Chegato were demolished. Many of their students and staff were temporarily relocated to premises offered by authorities in Bulawayo. Special circumstances at Musume, whose principal at that time was Mr K Nyati, fortunately saved its school from closure.

The independence of Zimbabwe in 1980 resulted in new opportunities and fresh developments. All the schools reopened, much thanks to generous reconstruction grants, particularly, as far as the ELC schools were concerned, from the Lutheran World Federation and other agencies. The government rapidly expanded its day secondary school programme into the rural areas. The ELC retained its own secondary schools with their boarding facilities, maintaining a consistently high standard of education. A new secondary school was also opened at Zezani. All of them expanded rapidly and were able to bring their students up to A-level of the Cambridge School Certificate. New and ambitious building programmes were carried out to improve the facilities yet further.

It has been gratifying to see how former students from the ELC have attained and continue to attain high positions in the leadership of the ELC as well as in many spheres of Zimbabwean society.



Mnene, the first clinic

HEALING

THE PIONEER PERIOD UP TO 1950

Care for the physical welfare of the people has always been an integral part of Christian mission. The Church followed the example of her Lord who often used his divine power to cure sicknesses – the blind, the lame, the lepers, the tormented by demons, etc. Early missionaries had always sought to cure people from their ailments. One well-known instance is that of the Ndebele king Mzilikazi. Rev. Robert Moffat was able to alleviate Mzilikazi's painful gout. Whenever a missionary left his homeland to build a mission in the bush, his luggage always included a box of medicines.

When Mr W Sköld began his mission assignment at Mnene he had some knowledge of medical matters. Before he became a deacon he had worked at a hospital. He writes: "At all operations I assisted the doctor who handled the instruments. By watching the operations I got good experience, which was most valuable on the mission field in Rhodesia. I learnt how wounds should be dressed, how to extract teeth, etc." Sköld's medical chest was often used. People came to him when they heard of his ability to help. But some first tried a traditional healer and came to Sköld when the healer had failed. When Sköld visited kraals together with the evangelist he usually enquired whether there were any sick people who needed help. Some cases he cured and people's confidence in the missionaries' treatment grew steadily.

The Rhodesian government were mainly concerned with the health of the white population. Therefore it did not build any hospitals in African areas. It was cheaper and easier to let the various missions care for the health of the Africans. The missions tried

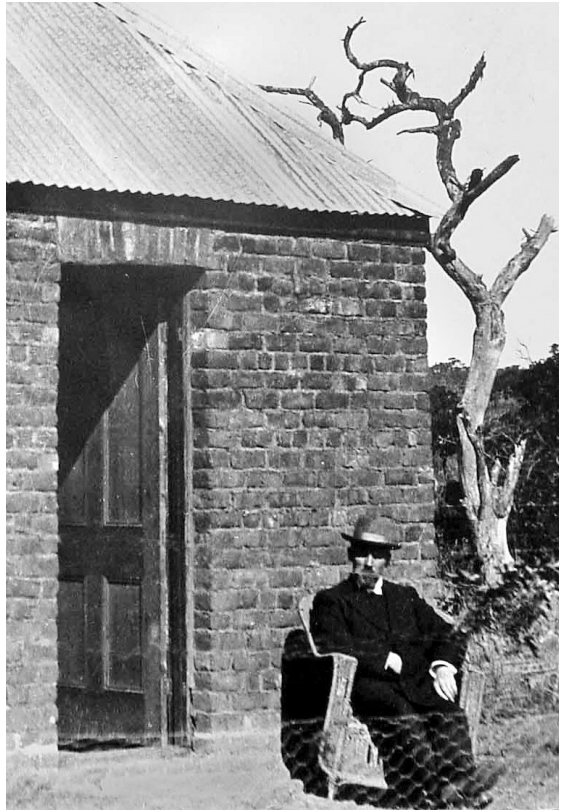
their best but their financial resources were very limited. In 1930 only five mission hospitals with a doctor were established in Rhodesia.

The first qualified nurse at Mnene was Sister Maria Köhqvist who arrived in 1915 together with Rev J Othenius and his wife. In the same year Miss Ingegärd Ehn also came. She was a teacher but had been trained as a nurse too. These ladies were the first to offer medical services at Mnene. The bathroom of the missionaries' house first functioned as clinic but when the number of patients grew the veranda of the house had to be used. Most of the patients were suffering from dreadful sores. Sister Köhqvist performed a long and faithful service for the sick. She retired in 1943, but for several years, whenever there was a lack of sisters, she was prepared to help out. Sister Elin Persson was the third sister to join the medical

work at Mnene. She arrived in 1921 but moved to Masase in 1924 and remained in service until 1947. It was Sköld, who was now a pastor, who had started the medical work at Masase in 1920.

The need for a doctor soon became very real. Rev G Bernander managed in 1924 to get a promise that the government would grant the mission £250 per year plus medicines and requisites in case a doctor were placed at Mnene. Venereal diseases ravaged the population in the Belingwe district so gravely that the Commissioner realized that something had to be done, lest there be no labourers left for the mining industry. Gloomy reports described the condition of the people. One pastor wrote: "The terrible syphilis sickness has made many into invalids and cripples. I often see people with swollen legs, knees and joints. I see school children with sores on their heads and some who speak with a voice destroyed by sores in the throat. Eye diseases make people blind. Many children and adults die an untimely death."

In 1925 the CSM commissioned Dr N Tilander, who had served for some years at Betania Hospital in Dundee, to move to Mnene and take charge of the medical work. He immediately started treating large numbers of syphilis patients with injections of Salvarsan, which gave quite miraculous results, even the ugliest sores healing rapidly, and his fame spread rapidly. The first sick-rooms consisted of three small huts only and were entirely



Wilhelm Sköld while at Mnene.



Hospital work by sister Elsa Källström and a nurse.

inadequate. Soon he put up some rondavels for patients. Then he worked very hard to erect a proper building with rooms for examining and treating patients, with operating facilities and laboratory. On the hill where the big building was to be located there were large boulders and Dr Tilander personally attended to the blasting of these. For that reason he received his familiar name Chipanda. Later he erected the magnificent male ward at Mnene, at that time one of the finest buildings in the country. Dr Tilander performed a long and very valuable pioneering service until 1939, when he returned to Sweden.

Dr O Nordesjö took over Mnene Hospital from Dr Tilander in 1935 and continued to develop the work very rapidly so that the hospital became the centre for the care of the sick in the entire Belingwe district. In 1950 Mnene had the largest mission hospital in Rhodesia, having 160 beds and treating about 4000 in-patients per year. It had the reputation of being a first-class hospital, not only amongst the local people but also with the medical authorities.

From the beginning the hospital had employed untrained African workers to help with the care of the sick. The first of these was Jeremiah Shumba who started in 1922, and he was soon followed by Gideon Hove. They and many others that followed their example learnt their skill through practical experience and their contribution to the work was invaluable. But in 1941 a school for training nurses was opened at Mnene. The first class wrote their examinations in 1943. The number of trainees grew each year and by 1950 there were 42 trainees, with about 15 in each class. Up until that time courses had included a midwifery section, and trainees qualified as "Nursing Assistants", but as from 1950 standards were

raised, and “Medical Assistants” were qualified, conforming to Government standards. The first Nursing Assistant to work at Mnene was Williette in 1937, from Morgenster, and the first of those trained at Mnene to work in the mission was Mary Makombere.

Since the late 1920s there was a small leper colony at Mnene, accommodating at most 50 patients. The patients had fields to plough and there was a small chapel there for services. In 1949, when there were very few lepers left, those remaining were transferred to the government leprosarium at Ngomahuru.

The Lutheran mission had taken responsibility for a large area south of Gwanda from the Dutch Reformed Church and in 1938 a start was made to establish a mission station at Manama. The first sister to run a clinic there was Mrs Ruth Andersson, one of the pioneering sisters, and she soon handed over to Sister Köhlquist.

The doctor from Mnene visited the clinic at Masase regularly once a week, and the one at Manama once a month.

In 1949 two new mission stations were opened, one at Musume and one at Masingo and at both these places a start was made to help the sick. Sister Köhlquist took the lead at Musume until she was relieved by Sister Karin Svensson and Mrs Ruth Andersson, again, took the first steps at Masingo.

Looking back over the 25 years since the arrival of Dr Tilander and the widespread use of Salvarsan injections, one is pleased to note that the health of the people had become vastly better. The terrible sores that had afflicted so many were no longer seen. Also malaria, which



Nurses training at Mnene.

had caused so many deaths in the early days, was no longer greatly feared. Leprosy had become rare.

A FUNCTIONING MEDICAL SERVICE.

By 1950 the general shape of the medical work of the Lutheran church was clear, with hospitals at Mnene, Masase, Manama and Musume. During the subsequent 25 years the hospitals increased their capacity, until Mnene Hospital had over 200 beds and the others over 100 beds each, enabling them to cater for a very large number of patients. At the same time the CSM was able to place relays of doctors at all the hospitals. Manama received its first doctor, Dr S S Bergman, in 1959 and Musume in the late 1960s. Missionary sisters swelled the ranks of the nursing staff so that by 1965 there were 15 of them. In the course of time, however, African State Registered Nurses became available and were recruited, gradually replacing the expatriate sisters. The first African State Registered Nurse to be recruited was Sister Sikhangele Dube, daughter of the evangelist Dick Dube at Masase, and the first qualified African doctor to join the staff at Mnene was Dr Mushori Zhou in 1974. Tragically, he was murdered during the civil war in 1977. Thanks to the nurses' school at Mnene there was never a serious lack of trained African Medical Assistants.

In 1963 the ELC gained a degree of independence from the CSM and formed its own Church Council. It had two advisory boards, one of which was the Medical Board, and its first chairman was Dr Bergman. This board was responsible for planning and coordinating



Sister registering a patient at Musume Hospital.

all the medical work on the field, such as budgeting, staffing, and development.

The major developments during this time included the establishment of rural clinics at selected spots in the districts served by the respective hospitals. In the Manama area, where distances were great, there were 7 such clinics, all manned by Medical Assistants and visited regularly by the doctor. There were several similar ones in the Mnene catchment area. At all the hospitals and clinics routine antenatal examination of pregnant women was begun, thus greatly reducing risks in connection with deliveries. The next step was to organize mobile child health clinics (“under-fives Clinics”) so that mothers could bring all their children for courses of inoculation against dangerous diseases – diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus and measles. These measures brought enormous benefits by completely blocking the greatly feared epidemics of these diseases.

Tuberculosis remained a real problem and in the 1960s the health authorities initiated a tuberculosis program in close cooperation with all the mission hospitals, supplying the necessary drugs free and financing the care and subsequent follow-up of all tuberculosis patients. By 1975 great progress had been made in bringing this disease under control.

Developments along these lines were interrupted in 1976 at the height of the civil war, when the CSM abruptly withdrew all its medical staff. Highly trained and motivated African sisters and many experienced nurses kept medical services going to a considerable extent at Mnene, Musume and Manama, although the latter had to close for some months. Masase, however, was pillaged.

After Independence in 1980 work was begun to repair the damage. A new era began, under a new regime. Sadly, this new era comes under the cloud of a new and terrible disease. AIDS knows no cure and is invariably fatal. What can be done to stop it? Since AIDS is a sexually transmitted disease the only hope for the future lies in the abandonment of all promiscuity among the unmarried, and total avoidance of adultery among the married. This message must be preached by the church, as it is now being preached by those in the church who are devoting their energies to alleviate the sufferings of AIDS patients and their families. These sufferers need the compassion and the guidance of the church.



Painting on the wall in the hospital of Masase.



Church Council meeting at Mnene 1965.

CONSTITUTION AND CONFESSION

The main responsibility for the Lutheran mission work in Zimbabwe was shifted from the CSM to the ELC through an agreement in January 1963. This agreement, called the Document of Understanding, brought to an end the system in which the CSM, the Missionary Conference and the African Synod had been administered separately.

The Document of Understanding declares that “all the work administered or managed by the CSM within the area of the Church shall form an integral part of the work of the Church.” As a consequence, all schools and education facilities, hospitals and clinics were to be registered in the name of the ELC.

The CSM offered to send missionaries to the ELC but the power of placing and determining their work rested with the Church Council after consultation with the CSM field secretary and the missionaries. As long as a missionary was working in the ELC he or she would be a member of the ELC.

The CSM promised financial support as far as possible for such church work as the ELC was not able fully to finance from its own resources. The CSM realized that the young

church needed strong financial backing in order to carry out the same work as before.

The new constitution of the ELC was adopted on the first of January 1963, replacing the constitution of 1941. Six members of the Missionary Conference and six members of the African Synod had drafted this new constitution. The main reason for adopting a new constitution was the introduction of the episcopacy in 1959, since divided authority between the Missionary Conference and the African Synod no longer applied when a bishop was appointed for the Church.

The second paragraph of the Constitution states: "The foundation upon which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe stands is: Firstly, the Word of God, namely the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments and, secondly, the Creed of the Apostles, the Nicene and Athanasian Symbols and the pure Lutheran Doctrine in accordance with the Small Catechism of Martin Luther and the unaltered Augsburg Confession."

The identity of the ELC is firmly anchored in the confession. As a Lutheran church she adheres to the Holy Scriptures as "the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachings alike must be appraised and judged" (Formula of Concord). And as a branch of the universal Church she also adheres to the three ecumenical Creeds.

The ELC is organized into two deaneries with parishes and congregations. A parish consists of several congregations, sometimes 5 or 6, in some cases up to 12 to 16. The parish is governed by its pastor, its evangelist and a delegate from each congregation. There are also delegates from the Vashandiri, the Zvapu, the Youth group and the Sunday school teachers. The Parish Council is in charge of spiritual and administrative matters in the parish. Once or twice a year a parish assembly is held in which all confirmed members of good standing can partake and vote.

The parish assembly elects delegates to the Church Assembly, which is the highest governing body in the Church. All pastors are ex officio members of the Assembly. But the majority of the members in the Assembly consists of delegates from the parishes.

There is no election of pastors in the parishes. The pastors are appointed to the various parishes by the Church Council. In theory the parishes wield no power either in the appointment or the removal of their pastors. But a parish which considers its pastor inefficient or heretical can carry its complaints to the Church Council. If the complaints are grave and well founded their pastor will be suspended or moved to another parish. But in most cases a pastor is very independent in his pastoral work. He receives his salary from the Central Church Fund and is therefore not dependent on the trust of his parishioners in order to obtain his monthly salary.

According to the constitution of 1963, at the election of a bishop the Church Council nominates three candidates. The Church Assembly elects one of these three as the bishop and spiritual leader of the Church. The bishop was chosen for lifetime but could retire at 65 years of age, like the pastors in the Church. The duty of a bishop is: To be a pastor for the pastors and other workers in the Church, to visit the parishes at least every third year, to see that the rules and laws of the Church are followed, to be the chairman of the Church Council and the Church Assembly, to call all pastors to a meeting every second year, etc.

The two deaneries in the ELC, the Eastern and the Western, are very different from each other. In the Eastern deanery the dominant language is Karanga, a dialect of Shona which after independence in 1980 together with English became an official language in Zimbabwe. But in the Western deanery an additional three languages are spoken, Ndebele, Sotho and

Venda.

The political leadership in Zimbabwe consists of Shona-speaking politicians and people in the south-western parts of Zimbabwe do not have much influence in the government of the country. The parishes and the members of the Western Deanery also felt in the beginning of the 1990s, that the ELC was governed by people from the Eastern Deanery. The first African bishop, J C Shiri, was elected in 1975 and was a rather young man. As he was elected for life-time the Western Deanery would have to wait a long time before a person from their area could be elected. In order to put an end to this dissatisfaction the Church Assembly decided in 1991 that the bishop of the ELC should be elected for only five years and that bishops should be elected in alternating order from the two deaneries.



Bishop Dube is the second bishop from the Western Deanery. In 1991 the Church Assembly decided that a bishop should be elected for five years and in alternating order from the two deaneries.



Rev F Hove at Holy Communion.

LIFE AND RULES

Jesus said to his disciples: "I am the vine, you are the branches." These words could also be applied to the many Churches in the world. Jesus Christ is the vine, the trunk, and the churches are branches. But a branch that is cut off from the stem will wither and die.

No branch in a tree is an exact copy of another branch. In the same way the churches differ from each other. But all churches believe in the triune God, the Creator of all things, the Saviour of all men and the Holy Spirit, the giver of life. A church which does not believe in one God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is not a Christian church. But churches can differ from each other in the sense that they emphasize differently God's activities, Creation, Atonement, Guidance.

What are then the characteristic features of the Lutheran Church? She stresses very strongly justification by faith, not by good deeds, and the authority of the Holy Scriptures. Justification by faith is a theological term which is not so easy for common people to understand. But it means that we can never by our good deeds earn God's grace and

forgiveness. By grace alone God forgives all our sins through Jesus Christ.

The constitution of the ELC states: "Members of the Church are all adults and children who are received into the Church through baptism." The door into the Church is baptism and like all Lutheran churches, the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Church, the ELC baptizes children whose parents are Christians.

But what are the rules for the baptism of adults and of children of non-Christian parents? Concerning small children there are some exceptions from the main rule. If one of the parents is a Christian or if a member of the family, for instance a grandmother, is Christian, then the child will be baptized and become a member of the Church.

If an adult wants to be baptized he or she has to receive instruction in the Christian faith as a catechumen.

In the pioneer period of the Church the catechumens had to receive instruction for three years. This lengthy instruction was considered justified by the missionaries because most people knew very little about the Christian faith. In the traditional religion there is a belief about a god as creator of mankind, and a belief in some form a continuation of life after death. But there is no knowledge of one almighty God, of Jesus Christ who died for all men and of his resurrection from the dead.

However, in 1961 the catechumen instruction was shortened to one year. This was for two reasons. Firstly, those in the catechumen classes had a better basic education than those in the first decades of the century, many catechumens being pupils in schools run by the church. Secondly, the requirements of pre-baptismal instruction were less in the Roman Catholic Church and in some other churches, especially in the Apostolic Faith churches. Some catechumens did not want to wait three years for baptism. They asked, "Why should a person who believes in Christ have to wait such a long time for baptism?"

The constitution of the ELC also declares: "A member who is found guilty of error in doctrine, manifest sin, disorderly life or wilful negligence may be disciplined by the Church." To be put under church discipline meant that a person would not be given Holy Communion, would not have the right to vote, nor hold office in the Church.

Church discipline is not an instrument for punishing sinners. All Christians are sinners before God. The difference between a believer and a non-believer is not that one is a sinner and the other a saint but that a believer seeks and receives God's forgiveness while a non-believer walks his own wilful, sinful way away from God. Church discipline is an instrument to help a brother or sister in Christ to abandon a wrong way of life.

The ELC keeps statistics of her members but there are no statistics of the backsliders or the causes of their backsliding. These are many, yet some are more common than others. But the real cause underlying all sins is the transgression of the first commandment: "You shall have no gods besides me." In his letter to the Galatians St. Paul enumerates the most serious sins: immorality, impurity, jealousy, selfishness, party spirit, drunkenness, etc. These sins became idols for some members of the church in Galatia, and do so in the ELC as well.

In Matt.18 Jesus gives a rule for church discipline: "If your brother sins, go and talk to him." If this rule were better followed, many backsliders could be helped to return to Him who is the true Way. Love and concern amongst the members of a parish is the most efficient form of church discipline.



Vashandiri woman assisting with homework.

VOLUNTARY MOVEMENTS

VASHANDIRI

The Vashandiri organization began with the special meetings for women which the early female missionaries Miss Ida Granquist, Miss Ingegärd Ehn and Mrs. Elisabeth Bernander arranged, and where instruction was given in Bible Knowledge and practical matters such as cookery, child care and sewing. Mrs. Ester Ngwenya, wife of the evangelist Peter Ngwenya, became the leader of the first women's group in the church. Mrs. Bernander narrates: "I was struck by the way some of these women, who could not even read, knew their Bible stories and how they put forth their message in a concrete way."

When the women's group started in the Manama area the wife of another evangelist, Mrs. Phuti, was also a leader. We see here the same pattern as in the foundation of new congregations. Missionaries, in this case female missionaries, took the initiative, but indigenous Christians, evangelists' wives in particular, played an important role in the weekly work.

The impulse to organize Christian women into Vashandiri came both from Zululand and from Zimbabwe. Mrs. Bernander had met the Lutheran Prayer Women in Zululand and the Ruwadzano (The Peace Fellowship) in the Methodist churches in Zimbabwe. The women's

groups in the ELC were first called The Mothers' Union. But this name could be associated with the trade unions. Therefore a new name was introduced at the missionary conference in 1937, namely Vashandiri, The Servants (of the Lord). At the same conference Miss Greta Edström gave information about her work amongst the women and it was suggested that rules and a dedication ritual should be worked out. Some missionaries were critical of these ideas but in 1941 the conference approved the rules and the ritual after some alterations.

A Christian woman who wants to become a Mushandiri would first have a year of probation before she was received. She would promise to be a good wife and mother, to pray diligently and read the Bible, to partake regularly in the Sunday services and the Holy Communion. The tasks of the Vashandiri were to help sick and needy people, to visit non-Christian homes and to witness about Christ The pastor in the parish and the evangelist in the congregation would be permanent members of the Vashandiris groups.

The Vashandiri became the strongest organization within the ELC. In 1962 there were 1.250 members and in 1975 about 3000 women were Vashandiri. In the years between 1965 and 1980, a very critical time for the churches and the country, the Vashandiri were the backbone of the church. The expansion of the Vashandiri and the competition from communal clubs without any Christian program motivated the employment of a full-time working Vashandiri secretary. Therefore Mrs. Anna Söderström was appointed to hold this post in 1971.

Mrs. Söderström realized that the programme of the Vashandiri had to be broadened without omitting the spiritual elements. Therefore she held courses of one week's duration, both on the parish level to which all Vashandiri in the parish came, and at the two Bible



Vashandiri women visiting a family.



1971 Mrs Anna Söderström became full-time working secretary for the Vashandiri movement.

Schools, Masvingo and Manama, to which the Vashandiri leaders in the parishes came. The pastor in charge held devotions and gave Bible studies, Mrs. Söderström instructed in child care, nutrition and health care, cooking and sewing, and the upkeep of the church and its altar.

The 1970s were a very difficult time in the whole country and in the ELC too. The membership in the church did not grow. But the Vashandiri grew steadily. In 1970 there were about 2000 Vashandiri and in 1976 about 3000 members. Today they are about 5000 members.

ZVAPUPU

In the ELC there is also an organization for male members of the Church -Zvapupu (The Witnesses). The initiative for this movement was taken by the evangelist John Shonga who in 1954 proposed that a counterpart to the Vashandiri be formed.

The Synodal Council approved Mr. Shonga's proposal. The organization was first called Varwi veKereke (The Warriors of the Church), but at the Church Assembly at Musume the name was changed to Zvapupu and Rev Finiel Hove became its chairman. The number of Zvapupu grew, especially at Musume where F Hove was pastor in charge. Rev Hove writes: "Backsliders returned to the church, heathens left their idols and received Jesus Christ as their saviour. Three witchdoctors made repentance and turned to Christ."

The membership of Zvapupu, however, is today small in comparison with the Vashandiri, about 1000.

THE YOUTH ORGANIZATION – LUTHER LEAGUE

The third movement in the ELC which gained momentum in the 1970s is that of the

youth. Already in the 1940s in the boarding schools Scout groups had been started for boys and Guides for the girls. The scout activities gradually merged with the work of the Luther Leagues, but the Girl Guides, encouraged particularly by the untiring zeal of Mrs. A Nordesjö with the assistance of a number of local teachers, continued to grow throughout the area of the ELC as an integral part of the National Girl Guide movement in the country, concurrently with the Luther League groups. The Luther Leagues started at the secondary schools and the programmes for these were entirely religious. The students gathered for Bible studies, prayers and choir practices. The youth meetings made welcome breaks in the daily life of the boarding schools and were well attended.

In the beginning the youth groups did not have any central board. But as the groups grew in numbers, a central leadership became necessary. In 1964 Rev Sture Hallbjörner from Sweden was appointed Youth Secretary.

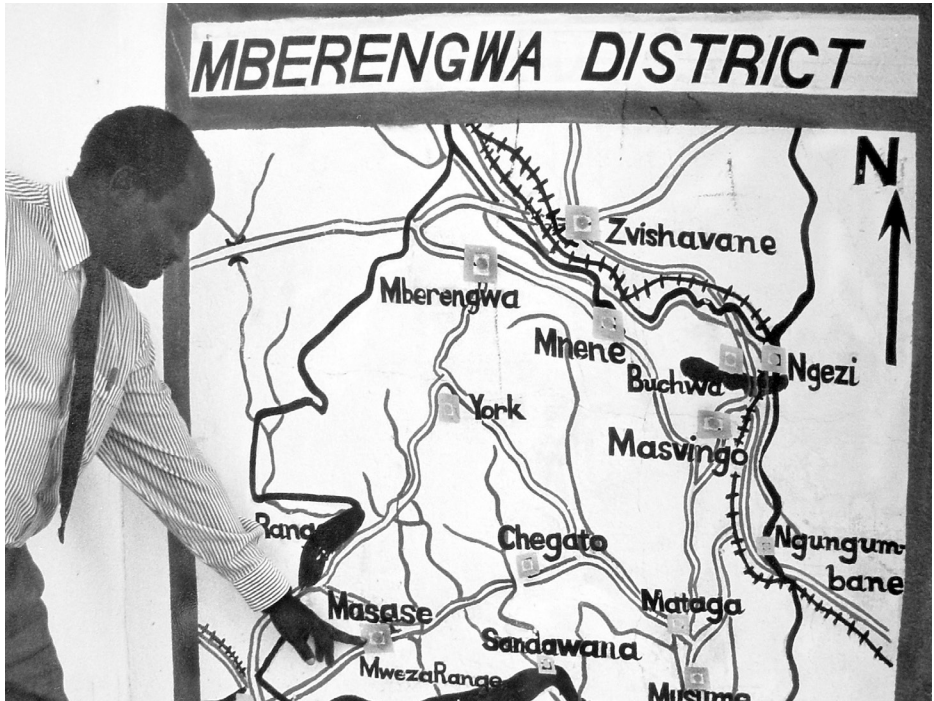
A new attempt to strengthen the youth movement was made in 1968 when Mr Lars-Erik Lindquist and Mr Albert Malala were given the task of reorganizing the Luther Leagues. More attention was given to young people's need of games and physical activities. A camp centre was built in the neighbourhood of the Masvingo Bible School.

In 1973 a large youth centre was built at the Njube church in Bulawayo and a number of courses were held, including, for girls, a house-keeping course of two years and a course for seamstresses. 68 girls were enrolled in 1974 and two teachers were employed.

From 1965 to 1975 the youth groups almost tripled in membership, from about 870 to 2,400. But this growth could not be maintained during the liberation war. Meetings could not be held in the rural areas. Male teenagers were recruited as freedom fighters. Between 1975 and 1980 the membership dwindled to about a hundred. However, after 1980 when Zimbabwe became independent the organization began to grow.



The Manama Quartet at a youthcamp.



The headmaster is showing Masase on the map within the Mberengwa District. For a long time the Lutheran mission was concentrated in the Mberengwa-Gwanda-Beitbridge area, according to the Comity Agreement from 1934.

RURAL AND URBAN CHURCH

The Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe was born in the countryside and remained for several decades as a typical rural church. The early missionaries built their stations in an area which from the urban point of view would be regarded as wilderness and bush country. But in the first part of the century the biggest part of the population lived in rural villages. In 1934 the majority of the missions in Zimbabwe arrived at an agreement, called the "Comity Agreement" with the aim of avoiding undue competition among missions in some areas, while leaving other areas unattended. Thus the Lutheran Church would work in the Mberengwa-Gwanda-Beitbridge area. Founding a congregation in Bulawayo or Harare would therefore be considered a breach of the agreement.

However, in the 1940s and 1950s, extensive migration of people from the villages to the cities began. Lutheran workers from Mberengwa-Beitbridge districts moved to Bulawayo,

Harare, Gweru, Kadoma and other industrial centres. These workers would, of course, have been welcomed as members of the Catholic, Anglican and Methodist churches which were from the very beginning both rural and urban churches. But the Lutherans were not willing to change their church membership. It was not theological reasons that deterred the Lutherans from joining Anglican or Methodist churches. Common people are not conscious of doctrinal differences between the churches. But the Lutherans wanted to attend Sunday services that were familiar to them, where the hymns were sung from “Nziyo” and the sermons preached in Karanga. And after the services they wanted to meet relatives and friends from their home villages and hear the latest news from home.

More than to any other city Lutherans moved to Bulawayo. When a dozen Lutherans had moved to a township they sent a request to the Church Council for an evangelist and when their congregation had grown they applied for a chapel and a pastor. When the request for an evangelist in Bulawayo came to the bishop, he first appointed the evangelist in Gwanda to become responsible also for the services in Bulawayo. When the flock of Christians there grew steadily the need for a pastor in Bulawayo became urgent. Therefore Rev H Thönell was moved from Musume to the city in the 1950s.

At first Thönell doubted that his presence in Bulawayo was justified, and other missionaries shared his doubts. They believed that God had given them the Mberengwa-Beitbridge area as their mission field, and as long as non-Christians lived there they should not leave it. However, as time went and Thönell became involved in his work in Bulawayo his doubts vanished and he strongly stressed the need for pastoral work in the city. He diligently visited the Lutherans from the villages and his parish grew steadily. In 1958 a church at Njube was dedicated. In 1972 a youth centre adjacent to the church was built, where also young girls were trained as seamstresses. Thönell also founded congregations and initiated services in Gweru and Kadoma. Churches were built in these cities and an evangelist was allocated to each congregation.

In Harare Lutheran congregations were established at a very late stage, because Harare is far from the area of the Lutheran Church, being around 500 km from Mnene. The Mission Board in Sweden was also reluctant to start work in Harare. They referred to the Comity Agreement of 1934. But the African Synod expressed a strong request that a congregation be founded in Harare. Rev N Sköld, son of the pioneer missionary W Sköld, was sent to Harare in 1962. He was given the double task of organizing the church work and also to produce films for the ELC and CSM. Two experienced evangelists helped him with the congregational work, Dick Shoko in Harare, as one of the townships was called at that time, and John Shonga in Highfield. The Sunday services were first held in the Anglican churches in Harare and Highfield. In Mufakose they were held on a school veranda. Congregations were soon formed in all three locations. The first baptismal service was held in 1963 at which one woman and seven young men were baptized. The churches in Mufakose and Kadoma were built in 1964, in Mbare (formerly the Harare township) in 1966 and in Highfield in 1974. In 1976 a church for German and African Lutherans was built in the centre of the capital of Zimbabwe.

DIFFERENT PROCEDURES

In the rural areas congregations were founded wherever evangelists or pastors held regular services, taught catechumens and opened schools where pupils were taught in both secular

and religious subjects. It would take some years before the first baptismal service could be held, six to ten Christians eventually forming the nucleus of a young congregation. In the cities the procedure is different. The nucleus is formed by those who are already baptized and confirmed, but who have moved from their home parish. This group takes the initiative in founding a new congregation.

However, there are special problems in the urban setting. Firstly, there is the tendency to concentrate efforts on gathering the stray sheep of the Lutheran fold, while devoting too little effort in reaching non-Christians with the gospel. Secondly, there are many who live for most of the year in the city and visit their home parishes only at Christmas and Easter. They refuse to be transferred from their home parishes, because they think that one day they will move back to their villages. Thirdly, married men leave their families in the rural home because their wages are not sufficient to sustain the whole family. Living most of the time far away from the wife puts a heavy strain on the husband's morality and faithfulness.

The transfer of the church office and the bishop's residence from Mnene to Bulawayo was also an important step in the urbanization of the Church. Since Rev Liljestrand began his work in 1908, Mnene had been the centre for the Lutheran Mission and the Church in Zimbabwe. But, as the church grew, the inconveniences of having the head office at Mnene became apparent. People from the Western Deanery who wanted to see their bishop had to travel all the way via Bulawayo. When the bishop had a meeting with other church leaders in the capital he had to travel 200 km by car and then take the train to Harare. And at Mnene the treasurer of the church did not have direct access to banking facilities for his money transactions. He had to make an expensive and time-consuming journey to Bulawayo at least once a month.

The treasury moved to Bulawayo in 1966 and this transfer was accepted by the people in the Eastern Deanery. But when the bishop moved to Bulawayo in 1973 there were heated discussions. The main objection was that the bishop no longer lived amongst his people. To adapt her confession to the wishes of the majority is disastrous for a church. But an administration has to be adapted to changes in the society.



Church opening in Mufakoso, Harare in 1974.



Rev. Arote Vellah, here seen with students at Manama, was imprisoned by the Rhodesian Government. Many in the Church opposed the unrighteous system of apartheid.

STATE AND CHURCH

Some early Swedish missionaries were very interested in studying indigenous culture and religion. Rev Othenius devoted much time studying the customs of the Lemba tribe. He thought that some customs went back to the old Hebrews. Rev von Sicard was very interested in the history of the Karanga. Both these had intimate knowledge of Shona idiom.

But they were not interested in politics, how the British settlers governed the country. When Rev Hammar came to Morgenster Mission he reacted against the apartheid practices that he saw at the mission. But neither he nor Rev Liljstrand ever tried to stimulate the Karangas to take political power in the country. This policy was followed in the mission work until 1965 when the white minority in the country declared unilateral independence from Great Britain and the civil war began.

In 1969 the Rhodesian government submitted a new racial constitution to a referendum. The Christian Council unanimously condemned this proposed constitution. And when the government passed a law that all Churches should register as charity organizations in order to retain legal rights to own land in European and African areas, most churches refused to submit to such a registration. Bishop Strandvik declared at the Church Assembly in Chingezi 1970: "We affirm that the new constitution and the Land Tenure Act cannot be reconciled with the Christian faith. We affirm that we will not register as a voluntary

association under the provisions of the Land Tenure Act.”

Preaching, teaching and healing was the task of those who followed in the footsteps of the apostles and there were no walls between these functions. Children and youngsters in the mission schools learnt to read the New Testament. Services were held in the hospitals for the sick people. Without education the people in Zimbabwe would have been ignorant of happenings in the world, ignorant about the rights which other nations enjoyed.

Students have always been in the frontline for reforms. Theological students do not differ from other students in this respect. At the United Theological College (UTC) in Harare, where candidates for the Ministry in five protestant churches studied, there was no dissention about the goal for both state and church: equal rights for all men of all races. Many morning prayers in the college chapel compared the situation of the Africans in Zimbabwe with the slavery of the Israelites under the Egyptian dictator. The Rhodesian government regarded the theological college as a hotbed of revolutionaries. One teacher at the college, Kåre Eriksson, was refused entry when he returned from furlough in Norway. A pastor in the Methodist Church, Canaan Banana, was hindered from teaching by restriction, and an 18-year-old son of a lecturer at the college was deported to Sweden because he had together with other students taken part in a peaceful demonstration in Harare.

When the Lutheran students at UTC were ordained and became pastors in various parishes, the Rhodesian police forces considered them as instigators and informers for



United Theological Collage library in Harare. The Rhodesian government regarded the theological college as a hotbed of revolutionaries.

the freedom fighters. The following pastors were arrested, interrogated under torture and then placed in the HwaHwa detention camp: A Vellah, E Masiane, N Ramakgapola and N Ndhlovu, as well as the ELC Youth Secretary Mr A Malala. They were kept as prisoners in the camp indefinitely. But in 1978 when Ian Smith and Bishop Muzorewa governed together they were released from detention, like many other prisoners.

The ZANU election manifesto of 1980 declares: "The right of a person to believe in a religion is a fundamental freedom. Accordingly, a ZANU government will respect and promote the role of the Church and completely avoid interfering with the spiritual work of the Church. The Church and the State must thus feature as partners in the promotion of the welfare of the human being." The battle for equal rights of all men of all races destroyed many lives in Zimbabwe. But it was won in 1980. However, we must be aware that nothing is won forever. In the battle against evil powers the State and the Church are given their special tasks. The State shall maintain law and order, ensure that justice and not violence rules, that the economy of the country is sound and that people do not starve.

The divine task of the Church is to preach the Gospel, to teach that we all are members of one family under God, to help those who carry heavy burdens and to give praise and glory to the triune God for his wonderful works.



The old Gomututu Chapel build by Strandvik for £5.

INDEPENDENCE AND FINANCES

A baby is completely dependent on adults in order to survive. A new church is also dependent on those who sent missionaries to proclaim the gospel to them. When Swedish missionaries came to Zimbabwe a hundred years ago, Swedish Christians through the CSM paid their travelling and living expenses, as well as salaries for evangelists and the building of houses, chapels, schools and clinics.

But a person who has reached mature age does not want to be dependent on his parents for his living. In the same way a church strives to be economically independent. But this independence is not so easily achieved. During the pioneer period at Mnene, from 1903 to 1914, no collections were taken at the services, because the Christians were very few. However, on Sunday the 17th August 1914, when more than 100 persons attended the service, a collection was taken, amounting to 5 shillings.

The pioneer missionaries were fully aware of the need for the young Church to become financially independent as early as possible. Therefore they introduced offerings as a regular part of the Sunday service, as soon as a congregation was founded. Although the income

from these offerings weighed very lightly in the budget of the mission, they were still held. They served an educational purpose. The new Christians had to learn that they were God's stewards and that some of their assets, no matter how small, should be given as thanks to God.

The African independent churches have concentrated all their means on the preaching of the gospel, not on the building of chapels, schools and hospitals. Because of this policy they are not dependent on grants from Western churches. Should the Swedish missionaries have followed the same way? Is it then really defensible to build a church which is dependent on the contributions from a church in another country?

When we read the letters of St. Paul we see that the churches in different countries round the Mediterranean Sea gave financial help to each other. In his second letter to the church in Corinth, which obviously was richer than some other churches in the Middle East, the apostle ends his plea for help to the poorer churches with these words: "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows abundantly will also reap abundantly."

If we tested the opinion of the people in the Mberengwa-Gwanda-Beitbridge area they would most likely say: "The missionaries have followed the right policy. The schools and hospitals are of great importance to us. We want our children to be educated. We want our sick ones to get medical care. Financial independence is not our highest priority."

Sixty years ago the CSM had two alternatives, either to spend Swedish money on education and medical care, or to do without schools and hospitals. The missionaries and the African Synod chose to go ahead and build institutions which would serve the people physically, practically and spiritually, instead of waiting for a future economic development of the country. If immediate self-support had been chosen, then at least one generation in the area would have missed out on education and medical care.

The missionaries faced the same dilemma regarding evangelization. Should the mission and the church employ only those evangelists and pastors whose salaries could be paid by the indigenous Christians? Should only those chapels and churches be built which the local parishes could pay for? Some missionaries said Yes and some said No, but the mission and the church said: "Let us take all the help we can get from CSM and hope that the church one day will be able to take over all financial responsibility."

There is another crucial point regarding the salaries of church employees. Should not a pastor in the ELC have the same salary as a pastor in the Church of Sweden? This question cannot be answered with a simple Yes or No, because the pastor's salary must be related to the living standard of his parishioners. In most countries a pastor is not paid more than a teacher, and in some cases less. St. Paul did not want any salary for preaching the gospel. He was a single man, without any family, and supported himself by making tents. But other apostles, like St. Peter, had families and needed support. And in support for a salary to his fellow apostles St. Paul quotes a law of Moses: "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading on the grain."

In the first decades of the history of the ELC the money given by its members was very little in comparison to that given by the CSM. In 1970 the offerings of the members had grown to Z\$ 140.200, while the contributions from the CSM were Z\$ 240.200. These figures show that the grants from CSM were still almost twice as large as the offerings of the members. But in 1980 the proportions were roughly equal, in fact the members gave



The new church in Highfields in Harare.

Z\$30.000 more than the CSM had given. Yet, the financial problems of the ELC have not been solved. Rather the contrary, because the financial situation of the country today is much worse than it was twenty years ago. The budget of ELCZ is now c. Z\$ 100 million, 1 million as income and a little more as expenditure. 40 millions are collected in Zimbabwe and 60 millions consist of overseas grant. When unemployment is high, when a deadly disease like AIDS kills a large percentage of the population every year, when insufficient food is produced and people are dependent on what they receive from other countries, even the churches suffer. Political independence is not enough for the welfare of the people.



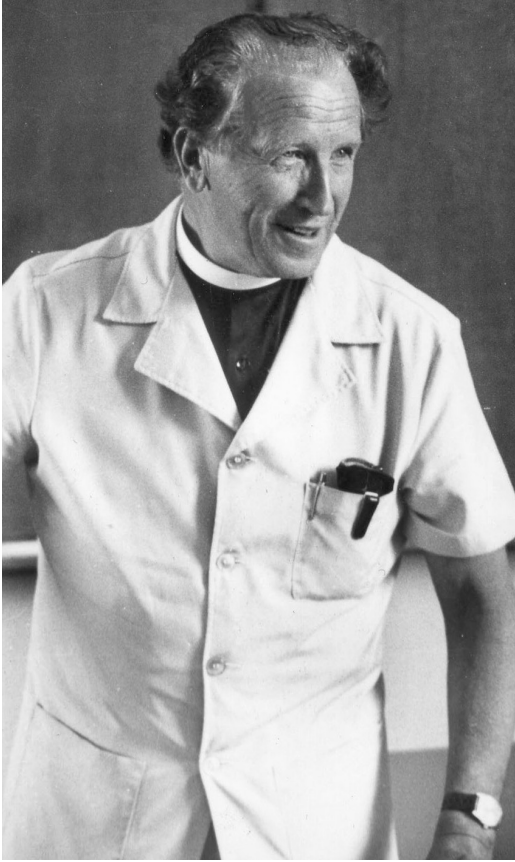
The rainbow over Chamakudu chapel.

GROWTH AND FUTURE

In 1963, when the Lutheran Church formally became a church and no longer a mission, there were 10 African pastors and about 100 evangelists in service. Bishop Albrektsson was pleased to note that all parishes except Bulawayo and Salisbury were led by African pastors. At the same time there were 11 missionary pastors in the church. And the need for more pastors became very urgent in the mid-1960s. The church grew steadily. Many parishes consisted of 10 to 12 congregations. In such a parish there was usually one pastor and 5 or 6 evangelists. The latter were responsible for most of the preaching, the home visiting and the catechumen instruction. This state of affairs was not satisfactory. Two months could elapse between Holy Communion in a congregation. The pastor did not meet with the catechumens and the parishioners as he should do.

Bishop Strandvik made the CSM aware of the problem and in 1966 the CSM decided to support the training and the employment of a substantially increased number of indigenous pastors. At that time 14 African pastors and 8 missionary pastors worked in the ELC.

The place where the pastors' training was to take place was another question with which the Church had to grapple in 1966. Candidates for the ministry had been sent to South Africa, originally to Oscarsberg (Rorke's Drift) and after 1962 to Umpumulo Theological College. Due to the apartheid policy of the South African government the students could



Hugo Söderström

not get visas for their families, and the journeys back and forth from Zimbabwe were very expensive. The Church Council therefore decided to send the students to the United Theological College, as it came to be called later. Thus, in 1967 ten students were sent to the UTC in Harare and CSM sent a Swedish tutor to the college. During the period between 1967 and 1976 the number of indigenous pastors increased from 14 to 42.

That the Africanization of the clergy had been a sound and necessary policy became very obvious during the last years of the liberation war from 1977 to 1980. If the Church had still been dependent on a few, if any, missionary pastors, then many parishes in the rural areas would not have had any pastors at all. A Swedish pastor, not known by the guerrilla fighters, could easily have been identified as a white oppressor.

From 1963 to 1980 the baptized members of the ELC increased from 18.000 to 30.000. This considerable increase in membership during a time of great turmoil and fighting

must be related to the increased pastoral activity in the parishes, since the number of pastors there had more than doubled. Today there are 50 pastors working in the ELCZ. The membership has grown to 130,000 in the Eastern Deanery 80,000 and in the Western 50,000. However, we should not pay too much attention to the number of members. King David was punished by God for trusting more in the multitude of his people than in God's power. A church is strong, not because of a large membership, not because of worldly wealth, but because she is an obedient and faithful servant of the Lord.

The first hundred years of the ELC is a story of people who, like the Virgin Mary, have said: "I am the servant of God." But it is also a story of human weaknesses and shortcomings. God alone knows how the next hundred years will be. Our Lord talks about wars and natural catastrophes and tribulations, false prophets and false doctrines at the end of this world. But He also says: "He who endures to the end will be saved. And the gospel of the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world."

Glory be to God, Father, Son and Spirit!

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