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Conflict and Protest in a Scottish Mission Area - North-Eastern Zambia 1870-1935

Marja Hinfelaar

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CONFLICT AND PROTEST IN A SCOTTISH MISSION AREA, NORTH-EASTERN ZAMBIA, 1870-1935

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ABSTRACT

In fighting the evils surrounding them, people in north-eastern Zambia from the end of the 19th century, had an alternative weapon, namely Christianity. It could be used to combat evils like witchcraft and disease. The people of this area, however, were faced with additional "evils" arising from the colonial situation: racial inequality, the lack of higher education, social problems as a consequence of labour migration, etc. Moreover, for this particular area, most of the "evils" of the pre-colonial era, like the consequences of the expansion of the Bemba empire, were not beaten by the introduction of Colonial Rule. For some, Christianity proved to be an important mechanism for dealing with these problems.

In this study three Christian organisations in and outside the sphere of the Livingstonia Mission of the Free Church of Scotland, will be addressed. Each organisation, as will become clear, dealt with evil in their own distinctive way. The three organisations are the Mwenzo Welfare Organisation, the Watchtower movement and the African Methodist Episcopal Church. All three came into existence in the early period of colonialism, the 1910s till the 1930s.

Many academics have contributed to the writing of the (church) history of north-eastern Zambia. However, what seems to be consistently lacking is adequate attention to the pre-colonial history of the area. Therefore this thesis will take into account the decades prior to the introduction of Christianity and Colonial Rule.
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<tr>
<td>AME Church</td>
<td>African Methodist Episcopal Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSAC</td>
<td>British South African Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>District Commissioner</td>
</tr>
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<td>LMS</td>
<td>London Missionary Society</td>
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<td>NAZ</td>
<td>National Archives of Zambia</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

At the end of the 19th century north-eastern Zambia underwent many changes. The people of this territory first saw the arrival of the bena Ng’andu conquerors, the royal clan of the Bemba. They forced the people away from their land and sold many into slavery. Then, from the 1890s on missionaries and evangelists of different denominations slowly "occupied" the area. The missionaries were highly competitive and in this way contributed to the deepening of the existing stratification. Soon afterwards the colonial rulers took the territory of north-eastern Zambia under control. They appointed "traditional" rulers, which in many cases implied that the bena Ng’andu conquerors were put into control, much to the dismay of the subjected people. Taxation was introduced and many people were forced into labour migration. The myth that British Rulers brought peace and order was shaken with the outbreak of the First World War, which for a part took place in north-eastern Zambia.

How did people respond to these changes which, for most of them, had such a negative impact? One response to the changes was Christianity. Gray (1990) has argued that people took up Christianity, not merely for its economic and social advantages, but to fight evil surrounding them. There were two distinctive ways in which Christianity was used according to two different concepts of evil. The first dealt with the evils of racial discrimination and white domination. This was, however, done mostly within the so-called Ethiopian churches, the independent churches which came into effect shortly after the introduction of Christianity. The source of their criticism was the Bible. The second dealt with the evils of illness, witchcraft, famine, and so on. The people used elements of Christianity within movements like the Watchtower, but also within the main-stream churches. They used, for instance, the element of baptism to protect themselves from witchcraft.

Of course this is a conjectural, and like all conjectures, it simplifies. Some features of the first perspective will inevitably be reflected in the second and the other way around. In the case of north-eastern Zambia I will show that both perspectives are reflected in movements within or independent of the Scottish mission realm. To put it simple, the first perspective is reflected in the Mwenzo Welfare Association, an association within the Church of Scotland, and in the African Methodist Episcopal Church (chapter four and six). The second perspective is reflected in the Watchtower movement (chapter five).

The main question is, who joined a particular movement or took a particular perspective and why? In order to understand people’s decision concerning confrontation or co-operation with the mission church it is necessary to know and understand their background. For this reason this thesis will start with an overview of the pre-colonial history of north-eastern Zambia.
1.1 Geographical description of north-eastern Zambia

This thesis will speak of two districts, the Isoka and Chinsali Districts, which together with some other districts (see map below) form north-eastern Zambia. Both districts suffered severely from the boma Ng'andu expansion, the introduction of Colonial Rule and the First World War. Moreover, both districts were profoundly influenced by the Livingstone Mission of the Free Church of Scotland.

Isoka District, north of Chinsali District, borders Tanzania, or what was then called Tanganyika (German East Africa). Both districts border the Luangwa valley, an inhospitable area with many wild animals. The altitude is around 1300 meters and the humid, hot season starts in October and continues for the next seven months. Chinsali District, when compared to Isoka District, has meagre economic resources. Chinsali District is infected by the tsetse fly which makes keeping of cattle virtually impossible. Although Chinsali District has many lakes and rivers the soil is not very suitable for intensive agriculture. Isoka District has both cattle and commercial farms.

The area seems to be backward, a "bush", far away from all economic and political centres either in Tanzania, Malawi or Zambia. This was quite different in the 19th century. Both districts were on the cross-roads of the slave- and ivory trade, and the migrations and expansions of both the Ngoni and the Bemba. In fact, the trade was the reason for the Scottish Church to establish itself in this particular area.
Map 1: Isoka and Chinsali District (marked) placed within the Northern Province of Zambia, administrative boundaries (source: Meebelo 1971, first page)
1.2 Theoretical framework

For at least thirty years, African Church history, as an interdisciplinary field, has had its own identity. Even so, according to Ranger, over the years historians and anthropologist dealing with African Church history have ‘paid more attention to “independent” and “syncretic” movements than they have done to the mission churches to which the majority of Africans still belong’ (Ranger 1987:182). Basically, there has been three approaches within African Church history (Obdeijn 1983). The first one is the so-called Missiological approach, in which the missionaries, Catholic or Protestant, are generally portrayed as saviours of the heathen Africans. The second approach is Nationalistic. In the sixties and seventies especially, in which many Africa countries gained its independence, there was a tendency for academics to follow the ideology of the nationalists movements. The main-stream churches, regarded as a colonial device, were brought in contrast with the independent church movements which were regarded as progressive, liberal and one of the major forces in African nationalism. The third approach is the Marxist approach, in which missionaries were portrayed as imperialists, the Bible in one hand, the gun in the other. To a certain extent the last image may be correct. It remains, however, a simplified image which obviously does not explain why so many people converted to Christianity.

It would only be fair to mention the influence of the social sciences on African Church history. From the 1970s on many studies were produced in which African Christianity was put into context of its society. History, sociology and anthropology were combined. The book edited by Ranger and Weller (1975) is a classic example.

More and more the "African" voice is expressed in African Church history, although admittedly, most church historians come from either West-Africa or Southern Africa. Generally, their emphasis is on the African community rather than on the missionaries. Kalu (1986) has argued that Church history for too long has examined the history of institutions instead of the African communities in which the actual encounter took place. He wants to pay more attention to the African agents, since they played a major role in the spread of Christianity.

An interesting way of looking at the encounter between missionaries and converts, without being preoccupied with the political correctness or otherwise of the missionaries, is put forward by Hubber in the following question; ‘what are the discrepancies between missionary aims and achievements and contradictions between missionary ideal and practice’? (Ranger 1987:182) To which I would add: What were the expectations of the converts and what discrepancies were there between their expectations and practice of the mission, and how did they act on it? The model Gray presents, not withstanding its shortcomings, offers a good alternative to the existing ideas about the introduction of Christianity. It leaves first of all more room for the African initiative in this encounter. Secondly, it avoids the pitfall of categorising religious movements or independent churches as "political", or "non-political", or as "sect" or "church", a distinction which often is difficult to draw and which often confuses effect with intention.
In this study, however, attention will be given to the fact that concepts of evil change over time, and that different groups of people (stratification had already taken place) had different evils to fight. Rather than taking the Africans as a homogenous group, differences will be shown.

A consequence of using Gray's model (that is, putting an emphasis on studying the African community) is the necessity of using non-traditional sources.

1.3 Methodology

The Scottish missions, Lubwa and Mwenzo, provided north-eastern Zambia with a level of education exceptionally high as compared to the rest of Zambia (chapter three). Therefore, many political and religious leaders of post-independent Zambia have their roots in this particular area, which is the reason why there is, relatively, so much material available on north-eastern Zambia.

Because Chinsali District was the home of the former president of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda and his father David Kaunda it is not always easy to find reliable information (see chapter three).

In the 1960s little use was made of sources like the oral traditions and so on. Rotberg (1965), for instance, leans heavily on archive work, which provides insufficient information (chapter four), Guthrie (1978), on the other side, who conducted his research in the 1970s, relies too much on interviews. It is unlikely that the information provided by a mission-educated elite on their response to the arrival of missionaries more than fifty years ago is reliable. The short biographies of mission educated people, provided by Guthrie in one of the appendices, are more useful material to work with. Meebelo (1971) is a typical "nationalist" writer (the introduction is written by former president Kaunda), who looks for signs of political protest before the actual foundation of nationalist parties took place. Every sign of protest is explained as "political" and "nationalist". He has, however, an eye for detail which makes his work interesting. Academics like Fields (1985), Ipenburg (1992), Hinfelaar (1989) went beyond the political and economic development of north-eastern Zambia and paid more attention to the changes within the African community (including women!).

The basic criticism of all writers mentioned above, is twofold. First, the emphasis they put on the actions of certain individuals. According to their versions it seems as if north-eastern Zambia only consisted of people like Robert Kaunda, Rev. Mushindo, Donald Siwale, Rev. MacMinn, Rev. Chisholm, and so on. The origin of this can be found in the fact that these individuals are educated people who either have written studies themselves or have been interviewed on several occasions. This does not necessarily mean that they were the main actors in the history of the area. Secondly, almost nobody, except for Meebelo (1971) and Hinfelaar (1989), take the pre-colonial history into account. I would agree that writing pre-colonial history is extremely difficult, however, omitting this part of history leaves too much
unexplained. The consequence of not paying attention to pre-colonial times, for instance, is the overemphasis of the impact of colonialism on African society. Everything is explained in terms of outside forces, in which Africans merely respond, but do not initiate.

In this thesis I make use of both primary and secondary sources. In the several visits I have made to Zambia I have collected many unpublished materials and have spoken, mostly informally, to people from north-eastern Zambia. My first visit took place in 1990, when I spent four months in Chinsali District. After six weeks intensive course in the lingua franca of the area, ichi-Bemba, I travelled around the area, reading mission diaries at several (Roman Catholic) mission stations. The second and third visit were spent in the National Archives of Zambia and the library of the University of Zambia. Hugh Macmillan, lecturer of history at the university has been most supportive in helping me to do so. The biggest influence on my work has been the conversations and work with Dr. H. Hinfelaar, a White Father, who has been thirty-five years in Zambia, not coincidentally, he spent most of the time in north-eastern Zambia.

CHAPTER TWO

2. STRATIFICATION IN NORTH-EASTERN ZAMBIA 1870-1890

2.1 Introduction

At the end of the nineteenth century, shortly before the arrival of the missionaries, north-eastern Zambia was in turmoil. The Bemba were conquering and raiding the area forcing local people to move away. Many people resorted to migration, others were sold as slaves. The two decades between 1870 and 1890 before the beginning of colonial rule were dynamic and many changes took place. To get an understanding of the different ways in which people responded to the missionaries a thorough knowledge of the pre-colonial period is necessary.

In this chapter, a rough distinction is made between three groups of people. The first are the conquerors, the bena Ng'andu, the royal clan of the Bemba. The second group are the "vanquished" people, the Namwanga, Iwa, Sukuma, and so on. They were either chased away from their land or ended up as slaves. They can be found in Isoka District, but also in Chinsali District. The third group are the people who were "incorporated" in the Bemba empire, who mainly live in Chinsali and Kasama District, they are called the original Bemba or proto-Bemba.

To make this distinction, intensive use of "traditional" myths is made. These stories relate how the split between certain group of people occurred. The aim is not to establish whether these stories are historically correct, but to get an
understanding how people in north-eastern Zambia explain and experience the differences amongst themselves.

2.2 Original inhabitants of north-eastern Zambia

The Bisa used to be one of the biggest and powerful tribes in northern Zambia. The Bisa are of the same offshoot as the Bemba: both have their origins in the Lunda-Luba empire in the west (what is now called Angola and Zaire). The Bisa claim that they arrived in north-eastern Zambia before the Bemba did. Therefore they are more entitled to the land than the Bemba. They consider themselves the "owners of the land". The area the Bisa occupy was probably already occupied by different groups of people when they arrived, but it is not clear who these people were.

A myth explains why the Bisa and the Bemba, although culturally and linguistically identical, consider themselves different from each other. Each group has its own explanation for the split. The Bemba, or to be more precise, the bena Ng'andu (the royal clan of the Bemba), offer the following explanation;

'Chanda, the mother of the Bisa family, offered some samfwi mushrooms to Chiti's (the leader of the bena Ng'andu) sister. The next day the sister asked for more but Chanda, although she had some, refused. Chiti was angry at the lack of respect that the refusal showed. He stuck the branch of a fig tree (mutaba) into the ground saying: You Bisa will stay here; you are no longer of our totem but of the Bena Ngona (samfwi mushroom). It is said that the branch grew into the big fig tree at the source of the Luchinashi stream.' (Roberts 1973:41)

This place, the source, is occupied by the Bisa ancestor Mungulube-we-Sunga. The Bisa, naturally, give another explanation for the split. According to the Bisa the bena Ng'andu showed disrespect to the Bisa people and treated them as their slaves. For that reason the Bisa decided to go their own way. Thomas and Roberts both believe that this myth actually relates to a more recent past, in which the Bisa were in fact slaves or send into slavery by the bena Ng'andu (Roberts 1973:55, Thomas 1958:5). Whatever happened, the Bisa and Bemba have sufficient reasons to feel different and therefore have a different history to tell.

The Bisa were involved in the long-distance trade between the Lunda Paramount Chief Kazembe, in the western part of Zambia, and the Swahili/Arab traders of the east coast. When the Bisa were cut off from this trade through intervention of the Ngoni and the Bemba, the Bisa engaged in their usual activities, agriculture and fishing.

The Bisa, although a large group of people occupying a substantial part of northern Zambia, never organised themselves as the Bemba did. The Bisa don't have a Paramount Chief or any central institution. Every Bisa chief operates, more or less, on his own. In the confrontations with the Ngoni and the Bemba, this lack of unity proved fatal (Roberts 1973:192-193).
The Bisa have altogether a different reputation from that of the Bemba, which becomes clear in the story Thomas heard in the 1930s. When Thomas asked a Bisa chief to explain to him why the list of chiefs was so much shorter than the list of the Bemba chiefs, although the Bisa claim to have arrived much earlier:

'(he) pointed out in this connection, not without a sly glance at a Bemba messenger, that Bemba chiefs in war actually do more fighting, and in peace married many wives and drank so much more than a Bisa chief, that their expectations of life would be shorter.' 4

The other major ethnic group in north-eastern Zambia are the Namwanga people. Nowadays this group is confined to Isoka District and its surroundings, but they used to live in a much wider area.

The Namwanga are quite a distinctive people from the Bisa and the Bemba people. The Namwanga came from the north of what is now called Tanzania. Unlike the Bisa and the Bemba, the Namwanga are patrilineal and are pastoralists. The language they speak, ci-Namwanga, is related to ci-Mambwe, the language of another ethnic group inhabiting north-eastern Zambia (Roberts 1973:72, Watson 1958:137). A remarkable fact is that the Namwanga consider a certain Bisa chief as their most important ancestor. This Bisa chief, as the Namwanga relate, was a good blacksmith and cultivator of the land. He brought these skills to the Namwanga, at this point nomadic people and "uncivilised", and civilised them (Siwale 1973:363). An explanation of this story lies in the following remark by Brelsford:

'...the Luban influx (people from the Luba-Lunda empire, like the Bemba and Bisa) brought chieftaincy and "tribes" (i.e. political chieftaincy) and they brought these little groups under their political control. Some of these groups (like the Namwanga MH) may have resisted this amalgamation ...'(Brelsford 1965:78)

The Namwanga may have been incorporated by the Bisa at an earlier stage, without loosing their own identity.

The story continues that this Bisa chief had three children: Muchinga, Mwembwa and Waitwika. The first ran away after being accused of theft. He became the chief of the Iwa people (ku-iwa=to steal). The Iwa indeed inhabit north-eastern Zambia. The second son moved to Tanzania. The last child, a girl, became the most senior chief of the Namwanga people. Her name will return in relation to Mwenzo mission (Brelsford 1965:82).

The Namwanga keep cattle, but also grow crops (Meebelo 1971:4) The Iwa people, who are closely related to the Namwanga people, are cattle keeping people as well. Their chief is chief Kafwimbi, who lives close to the Chinsali District borders.

Isoka District consists of many ethnic groups of limited numbers. They are either related to people in Tanzania or to people in Malawi (Tumbuka). The
groups are the Lungu, Wandy, Nyika, Lambya, Wenga, Fungwe, Yombe and Kananga. The Tambo are in one way or other related to the Bisa people and although they have a separate identity they still preserve Bisa totem names and for many successions they consulted Mwenimalaki, a Bisa of Chinsali, before they appointed a new one. (Breolsford 1965:89)

The same is true for Chinsali District. There are many more ethnic groups, also of small numbers. These are the Nyika, the Sukuma, and so on.

As in many other places in southern Africa pre-colonial states were a product of the migration and settlement of socially and culturally diverse group into a single region. Before the bena Ng’andu arrived in northeastern Zambia, approximately in the 18th century, there were already people living in the area, the so-called “proto-Bemba” or Bemba. The bena Ng’andu supposedly took the names and language of these indigenous people and since ruled the region.

‘At first they were not with many (bena Ng’andu); and their language which was Luba, was not known by the Bemba and other tribes among whom they settled. As the time went on the Luba were absorbed by the very small Bemba tribe and the language of the latter with a mixture of the Luba words is the language spoken by this tribe.’ (Mushindo 1977:xv)

The whole population in this region (including the bena Ng’andu) are now called the Bemba. A definition of the Bemba is person who speaks Bemba and is loyal to the Chitimukulu (the paramount chief). Historians like Mushindo and Roberts do not draw a distinction between "proto-Bemba" and Bemba. They maintain that this distinction is not of importance any more. The “proto-Bemba” consider themselves Bemba and are successfully integrated by the bena Ng’andu (Mushindo 1977:32, Roberts 1973:19-20). More recent literature show that the so-called proto-Bemba still have a different status and are not in each and every case loyal to the Chitimukulu (Ipenburg 1992, Hinfelaar 1989, Oger 1991).

These so-called "proto-Bemba" live on the Bulombwa plain, near the river Chambeshi. In Chinsali District there are people who claim to be the original Bemba. They are matrilineal people and call themselves bashimatongwa, the owners of the land. Some proto-Bemba regard the bena Ng’andu as intruders and not the rightful owners of the land.
Map 2: Tribal divisions in the Northern Province of Zambia
(source: Meebelo 1971:41)
2.3 The expansion of the bena Ng'andu into north-eastern Zambia

The most impressive and most substantial expansion took place from the 1860s until the 1880s when Chitimukulu Chitapankwa reigned as Bemba Paramount Chief. The bena Ng'andu had always depended on their neighbours for food and livestock. They did not cultivate much themselves and merely lived on the tribute of the conquered people (Roberts 1973:126). Expansion therefore was a means of living. In this period the expansion took place on a far larger scale than experienced before. The bena Ng’andu were stronger and more powerful than ever before. One reason of their strength was because of their involvement in the ivory- and slave trade with the “Arabs”. They not only gained access to new products, but for the first time guns were introduced to this area. Another reason why the bena Ng’andu became so powerful in this period was the policy of Chitapankwa of concentrating power into a smaller group of people, in this case one family, the miti-branch of the bena Ng’andu clan. Never before did the Bemba empire experience such unity.

North-eastern Zambia was thus conquered under the reign of Chitimukulu Chitapankwa. Isoka District was largely saved from bena Ng’andu’s conquest in that they were never put under bena Ng’andu control. The people of the area however, suffered a lot from the raids of the bena Ng’andu into the area. The influx of refugees from other conquered areas was great.

Almost the whole of Chinsali District was put under bena Ng’andu control. The bena Ng’andu were not completely new in this District. From the beginning the bena Ng’andu had buried their senior chiefs in a place called Shimwalule. The local priest, Shimwalule was a “original inhabitant”, but was always supervised by Nkweto, a bena Ng’andu chief (though not from the same family as Chitapankwa). An area called Ichingo was also ruled by an old family branch of the bena Ng’andu. This family was soon to be replaced by the next of kin of Chitapankwa.

Chinsali District was of importance to the bena Ng’andu because it was situated on the trade route from the east to the west. Moreover, the area was filled with elephants whose ivory was a major economic force.

2.4 Consequences of the bena Ng’andu expansion for north-eastern Zambia

The expansion of the bena Ng’andu in the 1870s and 1880s had a destructive impact on north-eastern Zambia. The local tribes lost many people and suffered great material losses. Many of the people were forced to give up their land and had to move elsewhere. Other people were sold into slavery. The Bisa, who inhabited Chinsali District, were forced to leave their homes and moved into the inhospitable Muchinga Escarpment and into the Luangwa valley. They found new communities until it was safe for them to return to their land in the 1890s like in the case of the Bisa chiefs Chibesakunda and Chinkumba (Roberts 1973:289n). The Bisa chief Kabanda was the only chief allowed by the bena Ng’andu to exercise political authority.
over his area. This was a reward for the contribution of Kabanda in the bena Ng’andu victory over the invading Ngoni (Oger 1991:35, Roberts 1973:134). Kabanda, however, was supervised by two bena Ng’andu chiefs.

In general the Bisa suffered enormously under the expansion. They lost their link to the long-distance trade and therefore lost a source of income (Roberts 1973:192-193). The loss of life was great and recovery took some time.8

"Namwangaland" in the northern part of Chinsali District came in the hands of the bena Ng’andu and was called Chilinda ("protection"). The Namwanga people themselves were either killed, sold into slavery or found their way into relatively safe havens like Isoka District. The Namwanga were severely punished by the bena Ng’andu for their co-operation with the Ngoni, the arch enemy of the bena Ng’andu.

Probably the bena Ng’andu regretted their bad treatment of the Namwanga in this period. The Namwanga are considered to be bashimatongwa, original inhabitants, whose ancestors are still in control in the land occupied by the bena Ng’andu. Every time a disaster occurs it is attributed to the brutal treatment of the Namwanga. The bena Ng’andu now and again have to call in Namwanga priests to appease their ancestors.9

Not all groups were treated as badly as the Namwanga. Brelsford mentions one group, who, because of their special skills, were saved to be employed by the bena Ng’andu.10

The expansion of the bena Ng’andu, which caused an enormous upheaval throughout north-eastern Zambia, took place only a decade before the arrival of the missionaries. In this decade, however, some important changes took place which influenced the way the bena Ng’andu received the new people. First of all Chitimukulu Chitapankwa, the powerful Bemba Paramount Chief died. His successor had many more enemies and some bena Ng’andu chiefs refused to obey him (Roberts 1973:228). Secondly, the trade caused another breach in the Bemba empire. The power moved from the centre to the periphery where individual bena Ng’andu chiefs like Mwamba and Makasa made large profits from the long-distance trade with the "Arabs" and could increase their powers (Roberts 1973:212-213). In the 1890s two other senior chiefs died, the unpopular Chitimukulu and chief Nkula, from Chinsali. A period of succession fights followed. When shortly after these events senior chief Mwamba died, the Bemba empire was on the verge of collapse:

'...an always lengthy process of reorganisation was still further prolonged, and the protracted internal crisis coincided with the greatest external threat that the Bemba ever faced.'(Roberts 1973:254)

Ironically, this external power proved to be the saviour of the Bemba empire as will become clear in the next chapter. The empire, although changed drastically, did not collapse and the bena Ng’andu Bemba are still one of the most powerful people in the country.
2.5 Conclusion

With the conquest of the bena Ng'andu, or Bemba as they are now called, the following picture emerges. First of all there was a group of people who lost their land, who were sold into slavery or who became refugees. These are the Namwanga, some of the Bisa, and several other small ethnic groups. Even when the Bemba empire weakened they had no chance to recover their land. Their memory of the expansion is likely to be the most vivid. Then there is a group of Bisa, who in the end recovered some of their land and returned to it. The so-called proto-Bemba were incorporated into the empire, although not entirely successfully. Some of them still make a strong claim to be the owners of the land. These people, the "vanquished" and the "incorporated", the Namwanga, Bisa and proto-Bemba were the first people to be converted by the Christian missionaries, who arrived during this upheaval.

CHAPTER THREE

3. ORIGINS OF MWENZO AND LUBWA MISSION IN NORTHEASTERN ZAMBIA 1890-1910

3.1 Introduction

While the "Bemba" were in the process of conquering north-eastern Zambia, missionaries and evangelists of different denominations entered the area. One of the mission churches was the Livingstonia Mission of the Free Church of Scotland. In 1894 the mission had established itself in the northern part of Malawi where it had founded the famous Overtoun Institution. This institute provided education for a large area in Malawi and would eventually include north-eastern Zambia as well. From the mission stations in the north the Scottish church expanded into north-eastern Zambia. Stevenson, a Scottish industrialist, gave the Scottish mission money in order to construct a road between Lake Tanganyika and Lake Malawi, then an area of intensive trade. Along this road the first Scottish mission in Zambia, Mwenzo, was established. Ten years later, around 1905, and further south, Lubwa mission was founded. Both missions, but most of all the latter, were to play an important role in Zambian history.

Who were these missionaries and evangelists first to "occupy" this area, and to which group of people did they appeal to? To understand the encounter between missionaries and converts, Ranger has argued that the social background of both should be understood (Ranger 1975:86). The first chapter showed the background of the potential converts, this chapter focuses on the background of the missionaries and the local evangelists of Livingstonia mission.
3.2 Livingstonia Mission

The Scottish mission was, generally speaking, an industrial mission which linked mission endeavour with the "advancement of people" in commercial activities. 'Mission Christianity was .... intimately related to capitalist expansion and European colonial domination' (Bond 1987:55). Indeed, the northern part of Nyasaland, the area of Livingstonia mission, proved to be the area where most labour migrants came from.\(^{11}\) The emphasis of the Scottish mission was on modernisation. Education, therefore, played an important role. The education Livingstonia provided was directed towards teaching "natives" technical skills in order to become clerks, entrepreneurs, shop owners, teachers, and so on. In this way mission education contributed to the colonial economy.

'VeThe Scottish missionary tradition in Nyasaland did not repudiate the British industrial or urban tradition but rather sought to equip Africans as craftsmen and technicians who would operate effectively in the modern economic world.' (Ranger 1975: 88)

To provide the people with education served another goal than just preparing people to enter the "modern" world. Since the Bible was the source of all their knowledge, the reading of the Bible was of central importance:

'It is necessary for the satisfactory growth of the Christian that he should be able to read and to understand the Word of God. The village school, by enabling the people to read the Scriptures for themselves and intelligently decide on the question of Christianity, has been one of the most powerful agencies at the command of the Missions...The ultimate aim of mission education (was): to bring about righteousness, usefulness, helpfulness, loyalty, in the individual and in the mass.'\(^{12}\)

It is not surprising therefore that Rev. MacMinn, the missionary of Lubwa together with the local evangelist Mushindo translated the Bible into the vernacular. The consequences of this policy of "free" access to the Bible, however, created problems for the missionaries: the Bible became the source of criticism of all evils, including colonialism (chapter four, five and six).

The fact that education provided the people with an entrance to the colonial economy, played a role in their choice for this particular mission.\(^{13}\)

In the first stage of the process of conversion, however, more than any other factor, individual evangelists and missionaries played a decisive role. They were the first to give an impression of the mission as a whole. In this case enough literature is available on actions of the white Scottish missionaries. They wrote autobiographies, they are mentioned in the diaries and periodicals and academics have found them an interesting piece of history. (Fraser 1915, Laws 1934, McCracken: 1977) The reason I focus on the African evangelist is not merely because they have not yet been examined properly, but rather that in reality they **did** play a major role in expanding Livingstonia
mission. Often they were in the forefront of the mission as will become clear in the case of Lubwa.

The reason Livingstone sent "native" evangelists or teachers to north-eastern Zambia, was the necessity, in their eyes, of forestalling the expansion of the Roman Catholic mission in this area.

'The part of the district worked from Mwenzo is the Chambezi or Wemba (Bemba) part: the Loangwa (Luangwa) or Wisa (Bisa) part being worked from Ekwendeni, Loudon and the Institution (Malawi). The district is about the same distance from Mwenzo, Karongo, Institution, Ekwendeni and Loudon . . . .half circle: Chinsali district is centre . . . .if we withdrew: Roman Catholic Mission.\textsuperscript{14}

If one reason for using native evangelists was the lack of (white) manpower, another explanation can be found in the policy of Livingstone Mission. Rev. Dr. Laws always insisted on African leadership in order to found a 'self-governing, self-supporting African Church as independent as the Free Church which supports the mission' (Cook 1975:99).

In case of Mwenzo station one Johan (or Yohane) Afmwenge is mentioned; 'an old teacher who for long periods was in charge of Mwenzo station\textsuperscript{15} John, a Tonga, came from Malawi and was educated at Overtoun. Not everyone agreed with this policy of giving the Africans this kind of responsibility. A letter of Rev. A. Dewar reads as follows:

'He (Yohane) was being tempted very much to dispose of Mission and private goods. It will be a relief to us when a European is settled here. The African is not, and will not be fit for many years to be left in charge of a place without a constant supervision.'\textsuperscript{16}

In case of the Lubwa mission in Chinsali District the contribution of teachers and evangelists of Overtoun is even more impressive. The mission originated when:

'In 1903 Henderson sent 53 senior students of the Institute of Khondowe as volunteers to the Marambo country...In August 1904 a group of 24 students in teacher-training and one evangelist moved in their school holiday further west of Khondowe into Bemba- and Bisaland.' (Ipenburg 1992: 33)

The evangelists of Livingstone founded Lubwa and, in fact, it would take until 1914 that a white missionary replaced the native evangelist in Lubwa in north-east Zambia.

The status of these teachers and evangelists, in the eyes of the local people, was not very high. They did not originate from conquering or ruling clans or tribes like the Ngoni and the Bemba. The first people who joined the mission and were educated at Overtoun were the subjected people like the Tonga (MacPherson 1975:28). For instance two of the evangelists going out to north-
eastern Zambia were ex-slaves (Ipenburg 1992:34). They were evangelising the area they originally came from. In encountering the local people this element of "status" is of importance.

3.3 Mwenzo station

'We left for Mwenzo on the afternoon of November 23rd (1900), very short of "boys", and with a few necessaries as possible...Traffic has greatly increased on the Stevenson Road... It is very pitiable to see these half-starved "tenga-tenga" boys stumbling along under a scorching sun...On the morning of Nov. 29...we certainly got even more than a 'highland welcome'...It was overcrowded at the service on Sabbath, near the mission station is Mwenzo village-four rows of tidy, clean, neatly-built huts, with a broad street between...four miles away a shop of African Lakes Company.17

The keyword of the encounter between the missionaries and the converts, as becomes clear in this quotation, was commercial activities; the trade along the Stevenson Road (which the Scottish mission constructed) and the shop of the African Lakes Company (near the mission). The mission itself seemed to mediate a British way of living; the style of building 18, clothing, and so on.

The mission, a few years after its foundation, consisted of a hospital, girls' boarding-houses and several schools, as far as hundred miles away. All this is attributed to the first European missionaries, Rev. Dr. Chisholm and Rev. A. Dewar. They were, however, not alone in establishing Mwenzo station. In 1895 Dewar was assisted by John Banda and two other unnamed church members (Ipenburg 1992: 30) And after the foundation the mission had to employ other people. For instance with the establishment of schools, many (unnamed) local people were educated to provide all the outschools with teachers.

'In schoolwork, the teachers special school ended with July. On the first day of September about 200 teachers and monitors left Mwenzo in charge of different travelling inspectors to occupy the village schools for another session.'19

The brightest of the Standard Four teacher-students were sent to Overtoun Institution of the Livingstonia mission in Malawi (Cook 1975:122). After their teaching training course they would return and make a contribution to their own mission station. They were the so-called mission-educated elite. Two of them, B. Sikombe and D.N. Sichone, were actually taken to Scotland by Rev. A. Dewar, where they contributed towards the translation of biblical works in ci-Namwanga.20 Soon enough the more highly educated people were selected to be Church Elders and were leaders in the different organisations. They will return regularly in this thesis.

Who were the first converts of Mwenzo mission station?
The first people who joined the Scottish Church were the so-called "vanquished", described in the second chapter. They were refugees from the
bena Ng’andu. This social background becomes clear in reading the social histories of the first converts who were eventually sent to Livingstonia. The father of Ernest Sikakwe for instance came from Kafwimbi’s village, but moved to the north when the “Bemba” were raiding the area. They moved to Fife, the administrative centre in the area of British rule. Y. Silwizya’s mother fled the “Bemba” when she lived in chief Makasa’s area, a bena Ng’andu chief. The same accounts for J. and S. Silavwe, and A. and F. Sikalangwe. Mwenzo was a safe haven for refugee people like the Namwanga, Nyika, Mambwe, and so on.

The mission educated men were all young people. No mention is made of older people joining the mission. The (refugee) fathers or mothers would send their children to the mission schools, but would not go themselves. The royal people (chiefs) or people of high status (headmen or elders) did not join the church at all.

The mission therefore served a group of people of relatively low status, who by education, seen by the missionaries as a ‘positive means of advancement’ (Guthrie 1978: 93), could reach a new social status in society.

3.4 Lubwa Mission

Lubwa mission was established by an African evangelist, David Kaunda. Having reached the area at the beginning of the century, he was received by an enthusiastic audience:

‘I and Samson were teaching and preaching in Chibeza (Chibesakunda) village: the chief of the Biza village and many other people came around our preaching of Jesus crucified. They were also happy to hear that God loves them as well as ourselves.’(Ipenburg 1992: 39)

David Kaunda was not on his own, as most literature suggests. Other evangelists from Livingstonia, like the ex-slave Hezekiya Nkonjera, had helped him in the foundation of Lubwa mission. In the literature Kaunda plays the most important role in establishing the mission, like the white missionaries, Dewar and Chisholm, in establishing Mwenzo mission (Macpherson 1974:35). The cause can be found in the fact that David Kaunda is the father of the first president of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda (1964-1991). The stories about David Kaunda are written in retrospective, in the time his son was president, and are therefore not completely trustworthy. David Kaunda consistently has been described as a character causing problems for the colonial authorities, implying his son has inherited his nationalistic ideas and good character of his father.

‘(the commissioner) .. called Kaunda and ordered him to stop the drumbeating. Kaunda refused... In fury, the Commissioner decided to punish Kaunda severely and bring him into public contempt.. Quietly Kaunda took his "punishment", his only request being the Bible.’(Macpherson 1975:35)
In any case, the fact remains that Lubwa had a African leader, who, with the help of many others, established many schools and churches throughout Chinsali District. Until 1914 when the mission was officially recognised he had managed to provide education for 2,517 people and had employed 100 village teachers. These were the seeds for the relatively highly developed education system in Chinsali District, which in turn contributed to the fact that Lubwa was the birthplace of many political and religious leaders.

As in the case of Mwenzo station education proved to be an important factor in the attraction of the mission, as Kaunda himself realised:

'Many are coming searching school ...Many are crossing the Chambeshi River in search of a school.' (Macpherson 1974: 36)

The encounter between the black evangelists and converts at Lubwa, and to some extent at Mwenzo, stood in sharp contrast with the encounter with the Roman Catholics missionaries, the White Fathers. The White Fathers first of all arrived with a great following. All their luggage was carried by local people. They wore white cloths, similarly to the Arab slave traders, with whom they also shared the language, namely Kiswahili.

"The man who looked like an Arab" was a White Father, whose uniform was a "gandoura" (white cassock or robe), a "Burnous (cape)
and a "chechia" (fez). (Oger 1993: 33)

Their policy of conversion was based on the works of their founder Cardinal Lavigerie:

'.it is of the utmost importance to gain the goodwill of the chiefs. Missionaries should attach considerable importance to this, convinced that the winning of a single chief will do more progress of the missions than the individual conversion of hundreds of ordinary Africans.'

The evangelists, on the other hand, were mostly local people, educated people from Livingstonia in Malawi. They did not arrive with a large following. They spoke the local language or a language similar to it. The fact that Kaunda was talking about the Bisa people (who had just came back from their hiding place) implies that their following were among subjected or threatened peoples. Since the evangelists themselves did not have a high social status in their own society, some of them being ex-slaves, they must attracted a different group of people.

If the Roman Catholics found their following more among those loyal to the bena Ng'andu or bena Ng'andu themselves, the Protestants attracted the refugees (in Mwenzo) and the "dissidents" in Lubwa. A proof of this can be found in the name list of the first adherent of the Lubwa mission. Hinfelaar (1989:48) recognises that these names are the totem of their clans. Clan names can be used to emphasis one's own identity. As in the (similar) case of the Cewa in eastern Zambia:
The unassimilated people resisted Ngoni social influence by ignoring them or refusing them. They continued to stress their clan and lineage as a means of establishing their identity and maintaining inter-personal relationships.' (Rau 1974: 196)

In the case of Lubwa the identity expressed is anti-conqueror, the "proto-Bemba", Namwanga or Bisa identity.

The education offered at Lubwa were skills people could use in the new colonial society. With this kind of education they could reach a new social status. Unlike the Catholic mission, the Scottish church gave people access to higher education. Moreover, the best were sent to the prestigious Overtoun institution in Livingstonia.
Map 3: Mwenzo, Lubwa and Livingstonia Mission in Central Africa
(source: Hastings 1975:176)
3.5 Conclusion

In the expansion of Livingstone mission into north-eastern Zambia, local evangelists and teachers, educated at Overtoun, played a major role. Both the schools at Lubwa and Mwenzo were practically ran by local people. Because of the emphasis on education and practical skills Scottish mission students achieved a high status within the colonial society.

In case of Mwenzo mission, the people attracted to the mission were the so-called "vanquished" or subjected people. For them education was a way up the social ladder. After their education they were either employed by the mission or started working in the urban centres of southern Africa. Lubwa mission, until 1914 ran by a local evangelist, attracted the so-called "incorporated" people, who in the mission saw possibilities to express their own identity and achieve a new status.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. MWENZO WELFARE ASSOCIATION 1912-1926

4.1 Introduction

Welfare Associations or Native Associations in Nyasaland (Malawi) and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) were formed during the colonial period. In the 1930s and 1940s Welfare Associations were a common sight, but the first Welfare Association in Northern Rhodesia was founded at Mwenzo mission station in 1912. The purpose or status of these associations is often discussed. They are interpreted as "embryonic political organisations" (Gray 1990:100), "non-political" by former member Pakasa Makasa (1985:31), and described as "indigenous nationalism" by Rotberg. A more satisfactory description is provided by Cook:

'An important stage in African political development ..was the formation of Native or Welfare Associations. They marked the emergence of a new social group in African society-educated men from the Christian missions: teachers, evangelists, office clerks, and storekeepers-with ideas of their own.'(Cook 1975:98)

All the Welfare Associations in Zambia were connected, one way or the other, with the Livingstone Mission of the Scottish Church. In case of the Mwenzo Welfare Association this connection is very clear. All its members were educated in Mwenzo or Lubwa and Overtoun. When these people, from the 1910s on, entered the labour market in the towns of Zambia, they established other Associations. In the (urban) Welfare Associations of Livingstone, Ndola, and so on, one can therefore find a high proportion of ex-Livingstonia pupils (Cook 1975:111).
Because of the significance of Mwenzo Welfare Organisation in the general history of Welfare Associations in Zambia, it is important to know what exactly was discussed during these meeting. Another question which immediately arises is what was the background of the participants, especially in the light of the local stratification? And how was their relationship with the established authorities?

4.2 Origins of Mwenzo Welfare Association

Donald Siwale, an inhabitant of Mwenzo and educated at Overtoun Institution in Malawi, was the founder of the Mwenzo Welfare Organisation. Together with people like David Kaunda of Lubwa mission, Hezekiya Nkonjera Kawosa and Peter Sinkala, he organised the first formal meetings. Siwale encountered this kind of organisation when he attended Livingstonia’s Overtoun. In North Malawi the North Nyasa Native Association had come into existence. The organisation was founded by Levi Mumba, a Livingstonia pupil just like Siwale, to act as ‘representative of the native public opinion’ (Cook 1975: 98). Siwale must have been impressed. Shortly after the foundation of this organisation Siwale wrote a letter to Mumba discussing the idea of a Association along similar lines in Mwenzo and asking for a copy of the constitution. This constitution was used for Mwenzo and reads as follows:

‘The members thereof are to be persons of good knowledge and character. It is an open question for educated chiefs and Europeans to attend or join it as full members thereof if they choose to do so. The aim of this association is neither directed directly or indirectly to subvert the authority of the government or any lawful establishment, nor to induce the government to do so. It is rather one of helpful means of developing the country in the hands of the two necessary connecting links - the government and the governed. It aims at making the people understand the necessity and value of order and the importance of becoming law-abiding citizens - also the necessity and value of the industrious labour and in short the value of civilisation as against ignorance, laziness, disloyalty and anarchy.’ (Hall 1965:113)

The authorities were informed about this idea of a Welfare Association. The missionary of Mwenzo, Rev. Dr. Chisholm, agreed with the idea of organising themselves, but warned them that they could end up having problems with the authorities. Within Livingstonia mission it was a tradition that people would form organisations to discuss certain issues. It was Rev. Dr. R. Laws himself, the leader of Livingstonia in Malawi, who had asked the government to give these Welfare or Native associations formal recognition (Cook 1975:100).

The local authorities of Tanganyika, Isoka, Mporokoso and Abercorn Districts were then called. They did not disagree either.
...method will have to be adopted to enable the natives to realise their ambitions socially, politically and materially. 26

The authorities, it seems, were interested in what this group had to say, and copies of the notes taken in these meetings were sent to them. The initial positive response changed as soon as they posed a threat to the colonial authorities, 27 like in the twenties and thirties:

'The prominent role of ex-mission teachers in the Movement confirmed the earlier Wartime Administrator fears of mission-educated elites as subversive to colonial order.' (Yorke 1983:384)

To what extent can they be called "dangerous maniacs"? Were these people really a threat to the authorities? To find out we need more information about Mwenzo Welfare Organisation and to see what issues they discussed over that time.

4.3 Topics of Mwenzo Welfare Association

First, we should make clear that the Mwenzo Welfare Association meetings did not continued during the First World War. The first phase, therefore, is from 1912 until the war. The second phase is from 1923 to 1926. Authors like Rotberg (1965) speak only about the second phase and do not mention the first phase at all. One of the reasons is the fact that the work of Rotberg is solely based on archives which reveals no such material on the first phase at all. Other authors who do recognise the first phase (like Guthrie: 1978), make use of oral sources.

Donald Siwale, the leader of the Welfare Association, says that the topics discussed concerned:

'the problems affecting all Africans, to bring to the attention of the authorities certain injustices, and to suggest ways of improving life in the district.' (Guthrie 1978:104)

This, of course, is a very general statement. With a few examples I hope to make their aims and interests more clear.

The topic discussed at the first meeting of the organisation in 1912 is the complaint that Europeans tended to call Africans "boys" irrespective of their age or status (Guthrie 1975:104). As I mentioned before about the first meetings of Mwenzo Welfare Association, there is not much information available. Siwale recalls certain remarks they made with the knowledge of Dr. Chisholm and Native Commissioner J. West-Sheane and his assistant Robert "Bobo" Young,

'what we want is fair play and equality because we read in the Bible that every human being is the same' (Siwale 1973:366)
For 1912 this remark seems quite extreme, and it is more likely that he said this in a more politicised environment later on. But it is certainly true that the Bible provided such movements with justification. As Rotberg remarks:

'The most articulate of early missions contrasts Biblical teachings of equality with the performance of Europeans settled in their midst.' 28

About the second phase of the meeting, after the First World War more is known. Here I quote extensively from a letter from S.W. Simukonde, an ex-Watenzo teacher situated in the Congo, addressed to the "Native Disputation Watenzo". He has some questions which he would like answered. The authorities showed great interest in this letter they actually translated it from chiNamwanga into English:

'1. Why should not a man when he goes away to work (and) play with women and girls, if his wife left behind, whom he married when she was looked down on and has clothed and beautified, marries another man.
2. If a man goes to some country and finds the people of that country well dressed and copies them, is it right or wrong to do this?
3. Is the rich man thankful if the rich man gives a present to him? Or is the rich man's wife pleased to keep poor people?
4. Why are the white men sleeping with native women? Also if a native man wants to sleep with a white woman, why do the white men get him into trouble?
5. What is the goodness of either civilised or uncivilised people if they go away for work or for good and forget their homes and families?
6. Why if an old man has an old garment and buys a new one does he not care for the old one? (Presumably referring to men taking new wives and forsaking old ones).29

It is clear that the rules of the church addressing polygamy caused problems with the members of the Association. It was an issue which did not concern the Congolese only. Most church members, especially the ones educated at Livingstone, ran into problem with this policy. Because of the relatively high education they had received they were in a position to earn money. Within their society it was normal, as a sign of wealth, to marry more than one woman. Most of them actually did so and left the church. Donald Siwale is a good example himself, but there are many others.30

Other issues raised in this letter, a concern shared with all the "protest" movements (see next two chapters), are the social problems caused by labour migration. The men were separated from their families for a long time. At another meeting this was formulated as follows:

'Men go far away to a far country leaving their wives and children, do not send them letters, spend many years away and do not come back home.'31
The government policy was namely based on 'the assumption that Africans were only temporary residents in the urban areas.' (Johnson 1977:8) Therefore they were not allowed to take family with them.

Racism is another topic. The fact that white men can sleep with their African women, but African men not with white women, is but one of illustration of problems arising from the colonial situation. Their awareness of the race issue could be linked-with the growing influence of ideas from the United States, where the "Negro" movement was expanding. (Rotberg 1965:56, Shepperson and Price 1958:105)

Two other topics attention was paid to, arising from the fact that so many members were either teachers, schoolinspectors or businessmen, were education and industry.

'On the occasion of the visit of His Excellency the Governor the members of the Isoka Native Native Association mentioned this matter of education and particularly emphasized that they wished for schools in which useful industries would be taught, such as carpentry and agriculture.'

Their demand followed as a matter of fact the policy of Livingstonia Mission. Industrial education was to be provided in order to make the people and thus the church self-supporting and independent. As far as the people were concerned this goal was not reached. The wages of the teachers were low compared to the wages they could get in the urban centres (and definitely compared to the wages the white missionaries received). Their expectation to rise the social ladder through the mission came to a standstill. They realised they could never achieve the same status and position as the white missionaries. The fact that it took native evangelists so much longer to be ordained, showed the inequality of the system.

A remarkable fact is that the name of the Mwenzo Association in the 1920s was changed into the Isoka Native Association. This is significant, because it shows that people did not necessarily want to be associated with the mission any more. With many polygamous marriages, trade on their own terms, and the disappointing wages and opportunities at Mwenzo caused them to look elsewhere.

The issues raised at these meetings of Mwenzo Welfare Association and Isoka Native Association, tells us that they were concerned, primarily, with their own problems. No mention is made of any demands for more schools to educate all the other people, or that tax should be abolished in order to keep husbands at home, etc. It looks more like a meeting of 'elite people in that there is little sign of any solidarity with people outside the organisation. In short, it was not a revolutionary movement, and it seems that it had basically accepted the fact that it should operate within the colonial context.
4.4 Membership of the Mwenzo Welfare Association

It is already established that the people who joined Mwenzo station were the so-called "vanquished" people, the refugees, ex-slaves, and so on (see chapter three). In the period of the establishment and expansion of Mwenzo a new kind of differentiation took place. There was a new group, of young men, who took the opportunity to educate themselves in order to achieve a new status within a new (colonial) society. They claimed to be the new representatives of the African people. This, of course had certain consequences for the social and political relationships within the district.

The new elite first of all threatened the position of the chiefs. Within the context of Indirect Rule, this also meant a threat to the British rulers. For them it was necessary, after a point, to keep a call to these new movements:

'I recommend welfare associations be told definitely once and for all that they are not permitted to carry on their activities in the villages, that Native Authorities (chiefs and headmen) under District officers are much more capable.'

This mission-educated elite, who initially was employed by the mission as teachers or school-inspectors, slowly started to find their own place in society. When reading their short biographies in Guthrie's thesis (1978: appendix) most of them appear to have found a well paid job elsewhere. The Mwenzo "old boys network" was vast and extended from Livingstone in the south to Elisabethville in the Congo (Zaire). Of the 63 persons who had attended Overtoun Institution in Malawi, 32 eventually became clerks or shopkeepers. The rest became teachers, labourers, farm foremen, businessmen, etc. Most of them decided after their retirement to return to Isoka District where they now could afford running commercial farms. The differentiation from the other "vanquished" was obvious.

The young men, having reached a new social status, stressed their own identity. They excluded non-educated people from membership of the Welfare Association by refusing uneducated people membership (see constitution) and by using English as the official language. English, as Guthrie suggests gave these people a definite identity and unity; it definitively excluded the others (Guthrie 1978:97) Another element of exclusion was the fact that the Association was a Christian organisation, or more specifically, an organisation based at a mission station. People who did not share the "ideology" of this mission could not have regarded this organisation as a mouthpiece of their discontent. It is very likely that the uneducated people saw these educated people as collaborators of the colonial powers. In the end, these Mwenzo people were relatively well-off, whereas the local people were suffering from the consequences of colonialism. For these people the mission had other negative implications, like their role in labour and war recruitment (see next chapter). Moreover Mwenzo had to exclude people, since the mission could not provide education for all people in the area.
4.5 Conclusion

The members of Mwenzo Welfare Organisation discussed "evils" like the problems arising from the fact that their Church forbade polygamy, the social consequences of labour migration and the inequality experienced in urban centres. It is likely that the Bible provided them with the right justification of their complaints.

Although they claimed to be the new representatives of the people in the area, whereas a matter of fact, they were more concerned with their own problems. The members of the Welfare Association were elitist. They were all educated at the prestigious Overstone Institute and were earning relatively high incomes. They excluded themselves from the others by speaking English and by only allowing educated people to the organisation.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. THE WATCHTOWER MOVEMENT, 1917-1923

5.1 Introduction

The First World War did not only take place in Europe. In German colonies in Africa the British and Germans were fighting each other as well. In this war Africans were used as soldiers and carriers and as a consequence suffered a great deal. North-eastern Zambia, bordering German East Africa, did not stay untouched either. Fighting took place in this territory and many people from this area were recruited to fight on the British side. The war had a large impact on the welfare of the local people. All the problems caused by this war, famine, death and disease prepared them for the idea of a new movement, the Watchtower movement.

The success of the Watchtower movement is often explained in the light of the First World War. Cook (1975), Ipenburg (1991), Yorke (1983), Meebelo (1971) and many others attach much importance to this factor. Cross provides additional reasons, like the slow rate of African education and the proletariation caused by labour migration (Cross 1973:188). Fields attaches much importance to the interdenominational struggle in the area which in its turn served as an example for the local people:

'When we have different missions scrambling and falling over each other to open schools within sight of each other ... A Bantu church with Bantu leaders on their own lines would be more agreeable to the Bantu people than either Congregationalism, Methodism, Anglicanism, or any other ism. The Watchtower movement may point this way.'

36

Meebelo argues that the First World War acted a catalyst for African grievances under colonialism; the Watchtower movement was the (logical) outcome
(Meebelo 1971:134). Only Fields (1985) and Meebelo (1971), seem to have taken an interest in the context and background of the area. Without knowing this background one will meet great difficulties explaining the geographical spread of the movement. Cross (1973), for instance, wonders why the Bemba did not join the Watchtower movement, and that the movement was confined to Namwanga, Mambwe, and so on. Explanations like the following cannot be taken seriously.

'their (Bemba) hierarchical and highly centralised system of authority had incalculated a sense of obedience and authority which preserved a powerful conservation in the face of change' (Cross 1973:214)

The author does not provide the reader with evidence. An answer to this question (although I do not claim to give a full answer myself) will lie in the context of the area.

5.2 Origins of the Watchtower movement

The Watchtower movement originated in the United States of America, founded in the 1870s by C.T. Russell. In 1935 they opened their first official branch in Northern Rhodesia, under the name of the Jehovah’s Witnesses of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. However, there was already a Watchtower movement in existence before this date. The leaders of the Jehovah’s Witnesses society never completely managed to bring all the Watchtower followers under their umbrella. Until today there are still so-called independent Watchtower people in Zambia, who never joined the international organisation (Ipenburg 1992:184).

The Watchtower movement, in the first and second decade of this century, spread from South Africa to the more northern regions like Nyasaland (Malawi) and Southern-Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). The spread was possible though the numerous labour migrants entering the labour markets of South Africa and South-Rhodesia. These migrants were instructed by preachers and took their ideas back to their home countries.

The same applies for the introduction of the Watchtower movement in north-eastern Zambia; a group of labour migrants, under guidance of Hanock Sindano, introduced the movement to the people. Sindano was a widely experienced person who had seen many places in southern and eastern Africa. Together with other labour migrants, like Leviticus Kanjele and Shadrach Sinkala, he started preaching in his home area, Tanganyika District. Sindano, like his companion Kanjele, it must be noted, was an ex-pupil of Mwenzo mission station.

Central to their belief was the idea of an imminent end of the world, heralded by the coming of Armageddon. Only a selected few, the "chosen", would be saved. The Bible, and especially the Book of Revelation, took a central place in this prediction:
'And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye shall not be troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilence and earthquakes, in divers places, all these are the beginning of sorrows.'

Like the Watchtower movement in the United States, the people in northeastern Zambia refused to recognise authorities and refrained from participating in politics. This was motivated by their belief that all institutions are dominated by Satan. Consequently, the Watchtower followers in Zambia did not obey their chiefs any longer and refused to pay any tax. Since the end of the world was in sight they stopped their daily activities, such as cultivating the land, and so on (Cook 1975:110).

The prediction of the end of the world can not be understood simply an emotional outcry of irrational people, as the government officials and missionaries at that time would have liked to believe it. At the time northeastern Zambia did resemble the image the apocalyptic Bible provided. Northeastern Zambia had been in turmoil for some decades; nations were fighting nations. The First World War had caused disease, death and famine. The Mambwe, for instance, who used to live in the border areas, were forced to move into Bembaland, to the same people who had raided them some decades before. On top of this, the Mambwe lost most all their cattle, their main source of income (Fields 1985:134). Because of the war, the prices of goods rose, and the tax was increased. The situation, as some missionaries realised, was serious enough:

'..I do fear that sooner or later some subversive elements will have the intelligence to realize that we cannot put the whole district (referring to Isoka) in prison for tax default, and that a policy of passive resistance will have us completely beaten..' 41

5.3 The following of the Watchtower movement

Cross suggests that the following of the Watchtower movement consisted of people who, first of all, were involved in labour migration, secondly, who were the victims of the Bemba raids at the end of the 19th century and thirdly, those people who had suffered greatly from the slave trade (Cross 1973:196). Most academics agree on the former points (Meebelo 1971:137, Fields 1985:134-145, Ipenburg 1992:62).

Cross is correct in arguing that the leaders of the movement were involved in labour migration. People like Kanjele, Sindano, and so on, had all been to southern Africa. Many of these leaders were so-called "drop-outs" of Mwenzo and Lubwa, or had chosen to earn their money elsewhere. Cross describes the followers of the movement as "proletariat". This is debatable. Even if the leaders of the movement were labour migrants, they still relied on the rural areas for their support and income. In this stage of colonialism migration was temporary, and therefore the land more important (Vail 1989:9). The followers seemed to have been peasants rather than labour migrants,
especially the Namwanga and Mambwe, whose source of income was cattle (although during the First World War this did lead to problems). They were the last to enter the labour market. It was the educated people and the Bemba, who didn’t have many sources of income, who had to join the labour market first. I would agree with Cross that the group concerned were economically marginalised people, the cause of this being the bema Ng’andu, the British Rulers and the outbreak of the First World War.

Many people broke away from the mission and joined the Watchtower movement. They were extremely disappointed with the role the Scottish mission played during the war.42 They supplied the British army with carriers and provided them with food. This is especially true of Mwenzo station, which happened to be in the middle of the area where the actual fighting took place.

All the Watchtower adherents have the dismissal of main-stream churches in common, in fact of all established institutions, like one Watchtower follower remarked,

‘In all the main essentials there is no real difference between the mission teacher, the boma capito, and the store-boys..., together these three represent the native aristocracy.’(Cross 1973:213)

Most people during this period clashed with their chiefs. First of all because of the pre-colonial history, when many were sold into slavery by their own chiefs. Secondly, by people who were subjected but had always aspired to become “independent”. And thirdly, because of the dubious role of the chiefs, especially during the war, in helping the colonial power to recruit labour.

Meebelo, Fields and Cross mention the fact that the "Bemba" never joined the movement.43 In fact the most important bema Ng’andu leaders, Chitimukulu and Mwamba, have called the followers of the Watchtower movement "mannerless slaves" (Meebelo 1971:137). All the authors propose different reasons why this should have been the case. A possible explanation is that they had not suffered much from the First World War, since it took place outside their territory. Remarkably though is that the lines of division between Watchtower adherents and non-adherents follow the pre-colonial lines of animosity. Since these subjected or raided people remained in an economical and social marginalised position, also during the colonial period, their attitude towards the bema Ng’andu and the colonial authorities is understandable.

For the bema Ng’andu chiefs, like all chiefs, the Watchtower movement posed an enormous threat to their authority. The British Rulers, who included the chiefs in their overall administration, protected them and empowered them to counter the movement.44

The chiefs, the colonial rulers and the missionaries thus took action to undermine this movement. The leaders of the Watchtower movement and some of the followers were detained. The rest was put under strict control of
the chiefs. The people who had been oppressed or marginalised for such a long time, were again the victims of their authorities. The missionaries and the British authorities, whom they initially welcomed as their protectors, turned out to be their enemies. Sindano understood the (pre-colonial) sentiment of his followers by providing the following image:

'...his characterisation of his own prophetic role as that of the man who came in the night to the barricaded Mambwe village to warn them to take to the forest as a Bemba war party was approaching..' (Cross 1973:209)

An event which referred to the colonial times as well. The event of hiding, or wanting to hide, occurred over and over again with the arrival of tax-collectors (Meebelo 1971:94-95).

5.4 Ideas of the Watchtower movement

'There they are, they who overburden us with loads, and beat us like slaves, but a day will come when they will be the slaves..God is the only one to be respected and obeyed, nobody else on earth has any right to it; no more the Europeans than the native chiefs. The English have no right whatsoever in the country, they are committing injustice against the natives in pretending to have rights.' (Sindano quoted in Fields 1985:135-136)

As discussed before, most Watchtower followers, including the mission-educated, were disappointed with the mission. They didn't believe the mission was genuine in any sense and moreover was full of contradictions:

'The words he learnt at Mission School were brought by the white man. He was taught stop fighting, committing adultery and drinking beer and thought such teaching good...we learnt to teach others...we taught the children and beat them to make them learn. Now Watchtower teaching tells us war is bad, adultery is bad, beating children bad.'

The Watchtowers also reckoned that the missionaries had withhold parts of the Bible. Now they could read the Bible for themselves they could read in Revelations, that the end of the world was approaching:

'The recognised missions of the country deceived us by withholding part of the truth! Now we know the truth.' (Cross 1973:206)

The end of the world was predicted for December 1918.

The Bible played a central role in the ideas of the Watchtower movement. Since most of its leaders were "educated" people (their education consisted of more or less two years), they could read and interpret the Bible for themselves. The teaching of the Bible for them was in great contrast with the
teaching of the missionaries. Moreover, one of the complaints against mission education was the fact that not much attention was paid to the Bible:

"...Europeans did not know God same as we, but some other people came to their country and taught them, and God helped them and gave wise (sic) and all things, the Europeans did not know about our country (Africa) but God made them know and sent with them with goods and many things we see to come and give us free, and teach about God, and when they got into this country, they hide everything, and teach us little about God, they teach us how to write, but they did not tell us what God sent him here for, and they would not give us little for the work we had done to them." 46

Another reason for disappointment with the established Church was the fact that people had to wait a long time before they were actually permitted as a full member of the community, baptism was rare. In the course of the First World War the situation became even more extreme. Because of the general "immorality" caused by the war, everyone who had presented themselves for baptism, were refused (Fields 1985:137). In the context of north-eastern Zambia, it has been argued that baptism meant more than a ritual for acceptance within the church community. In the Watchtower movement baptism was used to protect the people from witchcraft (Fields 1985:139). The Watchtower movement worked with the idea of immediate conversion, without 'training, examination or trial period' as was the case in both Catholic and Protestant churches (Ipenburg 1992:63). Because the end of the world was approaching baptism was a necessity. There was no chance being rescued, without being baptised. This was the reason why:

"The whole movement to the end of December 1918 (the predicted end of the world) was an imitation of John the Baptist. A time arrived when "every river became Jordan" and there was a "massive rush" to be baptized." (Fields 1985:145)

Manipulation with baptism was inevitable. People who refused to be baptised were considered to be witches, wasatani, people from the devil. (Fields 1985:140)

The Watchtower movement did have elements in common with the Free Church of Scotland. The puritan preaching, the restriction on drinking beer for instance, was continued in the movement. 47 One of the main objections of the Watchtower movement to the Livingstonia mission, especially its leaders, was its failure to fulfil the promise of higher education and better positions for Africans. The Watchtower movement could fulfil this ambition of leadership (Meebelo 1971:144).

5.5 Conclusion

The Watchtower movement erupted during the First World War and appealed to the people who had suffered mostly in the previous decades, namely the vanquished and the "subjected". The "evils" they confronted
were the tribal authorities, for their co-operation with the colonial authorities, the colonial authorities and most of all the missionaries, who had hidden the truth by not telling them the end of the World was approaching. The source of authority was the Bible. Other evils they dealt with were witchcraft and disease. Again the Bible provided enough examples to handle these evils.

The following of the Watchtower movement were the so-called "vanquished", who, after recovering from the consequences of the bena Ng'andu expansion, were confronted with other evils, like colonial rule, labour- and war recruitment. Again, they found themselves in a marginalised position. But this time there seemed to have been no way out other than waiting for the end of the world.

CHAPTER SIX

6. THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 1925-1935

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is not confined to north-eastern Zambia, since the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME Church) was, initially, an urban-based church. The history of north-eastern Zambia, however, can not be separated with these urban centres. Because of intensive labour migration, especially of educated people from Livingstonia missions, like Lubwa and Mwenzo, many north-eastern people could be found in the urban areas. The mission churches were only based in the rural areas, and didn't provide any services in the urban centres.

The AME Church was one of the first churches, after the Union Church, which provided services in the urban centres. It was the first official church in Zambia which had a total African leadership. Although this church can not be called a independent church in the strict sense, the church was often perceived as such. The headquarters of the AME Church, however, are in the United States of America.

6.2 Origins and spread of the AME Church

'God will surely visit us in the course of time and when he opens the way our sons shall carry the word to Africa, the home of our ancestors, and therefore the Church which we now organise shall bear that historical name' (attributed to Richard Allen, the founder of AME Church (MacDonald 1980:75)

The AME Church was founded in Philadelphia in 1787. It had seceded from the white Methodist church as a so-called "black" church. It spread all over the world; the Caribbean Islands, South America, England and South Africa as a 'vehicle for American Negro cultural influence .... (which) heightened
race consciousness.' (Ranger 1975:120) The first contact of the AME Church with Africa was through the resettlement program of The American Colonization Society to Sierra Leone, 1821.48 The second place in Africa the AME Church reached, was South Africa, where they incorporated the first South African "Ethiopian" church into their organisation. A reason for some people to call AME Church an "Ethiopian church". Some object to this classification:

'It is not a new church, created in Africa...It has no particular association with a single ethnic group or a single cultural context in Africa. Also it has no particularly "new" doctrines or beliefs. In these respects it resembles mission churches.(Johnson 1977:xv)

The authorities in South Africa were suspicious of this African-led movement, although the church had a reputation as a "law-abiding" movement in The United States of America. But in an advise to the Rhodesian government, the CID of Cape Town gave the following warning:

'The church does not support the movement known as "Africa for the Africans", whose correct title is the "Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities league", but a large number of its adherents, also some of its ministers, work very actively for this movement...it would be advisable to refuse them access to Rhodesia.'49

The first step into Zambia took place in a very early stage of colonialism. W. Mokalapa, a Suto pastor, had joined the Paris Missionary Society, under leadership of Rev. F. Coillard, in a trip to Barotseland in what is now called western Zambia. Mokalapa clashed with the evangelists and joined the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He became the first Presiding Elder for Barotseland. In one way or an other, the church was not very successful in its mission and pushed back in 1906.50

The AME Church repeated its mission into Zambia in the 1920s. Hastings, who has described the life of one of AME Church's leading member in Zambia, John Lester Membe, ex-Mwenzo, ex-Lubwa and ex-Livingstonia, makes us believe that this Membe was responsible for the expansion of the AME Church into Zambia.

'If an explanation be sought for this fact—for the dozens of little AME Churches to be found today all over the country—...no better answer to be given than to consider the life and work of John Lester Membe.'51

In fact, the AME church grew out of the only "African" church at the Copperbelt: the Union Church. This church was erected by a man from Nyasaland, Zebediya Chiuma, and consisted of members of different congregations. According to Johnson, it was Rev. Hanock Phiri, also from Nyasaland, who introduced the AME Church into Zambia. Phiri, who was an ex-Livingstonia pupil, met his old schoolmate A. Muwamba, 'who was dissatisfied that there was no ordained person in the Union Church.'
(Johnson 1977:10) After this meeting the Union Church affiliated itself with the AME Church. John Lester Membe was involved in this arrangement.

In the meanwhile, in 1920, the AME Church was recognised as an official church by the Cape Town government. In 1931 the government of Northern Rhodesia recognised the AME Church as an official body, though not without the necessary caution. They had asked the South African and Southern Rhodesian beforehand for information on this particular church and when the church finally was established detectives of the government (CID) kept an eye on it. The leaders of the AME Church had to assure the government that they were not involved in politics.

The AME Church spread rapidly through the Copperbelt and places like Livingstone and Broken Hill. It was John Lester Membe who was responsible for the expansion of this church to the northern regions of Zambia, the Luapula and Northern Provinces. Especially in Abercorn District, bordering Isoka District, he was rather successful in attracting a following.

6.3 The following of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

The following of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, all authors would agree, consisted of urbanised, educated people, such as civil servants, traders, mine workers, teachers, and so on (Johnson 1977:12) But, as Hastings makes clear, this did not necessarily imply that the AME Church membership was confined to the towns:

'Inevitably these early members had their homes as much in the country as in the town; consequently, if the mission churches had spread from country to town, the AME Church equally spread from town to country.' (Hastings 1975:184)

Most members, and at least all leaders, were mission-educated people. Membe, Muwamba and Phiri were all educated at Livingstonia's Overtoun Institution. Moffat Thomson, the Native Secretary of Native Affairs, remarked that all the people from Ndola starting up AME Church originally came from the Church of Scotland.

It is likely that the AME Church started with people who already knew each other beforehand. In the list of AME Church preachers, which Membe provides in his book about the history of the AME church, most preachers are Namwanga and Mambwe, who previously studied at Mwenzo mission. It was a small world, as Membe witnessed several times and in several places:

'When I visited Lumbumbashi (Elizabethville) I met Mr. Nkhata the chief clerk in the British Consul's Office who recognized me to have seen me at Livingstonia Mission and at Mwenzo'.

Mr. Nkhata was an AME Church member and actually introduced Membe to this church. The first convert of Membe in Livingstone was Pengemali
Chanda, a man he knew from Chinsali.\textsuperscript{58} On the Copperbelt the first gathering of AME Church members were all people from the north.

Status was an important element in Membe’s choices. Membe’s family self, were a group of people "adrift from their main body".\textsuperscript{59} When the colonial powers entered the area,

‘it was natural that young men from such a group should be on the look for new loyalties’ (Hastings 1975:178).

Membe’s father worked for the British South African Company and was able to educate his son at Mwenzo, Lubwa and Livingstonia mission. Like the members of the Mwenzo Welfare Association, Membe did not have a high social status in pre-colonial times. Education, one of the promises of the AME Church, was a way to achieve a new status. Not coincidentally, most members of the AME church had been involved with Welfare Associations (Johnson 1977:33).

The attraction of the African Methodist Episcopal Church lies in the fact that this church was the first, officially recognised, church with a complete African leadership. It gave this particular group of people, who at the same time had quite orthodox views about Christianity, a sense that they could achieve more than they would ever be able to at a main-stream mission church. Especially the people who aimed at leadership positions were attracted by this movement; they could be ordained and more promoted more easily.

Johnson, speaking about AME church some decades later, argues that being a minister in Zambia meant (and probably still means) prestige, status, and a source of income (Johnson 1977:57-58). They also had the chance to study at higher institutes abroad, like the Wilberforce Institute in South Africa or even at theological institutions in the United States.

Again, we find all these elements of attraction back in the life-story of John Lester Membe. The reason for him to leave Livingstonia mission was his wish to become a minister:

‘But to be a minister in the Christian church in our country particularly to the side of the country I was, one has to have turned over many years in this world’ (Hastings 1975:181)

After working in the urban centres of Northern Rhodesia he joined the AME Church. He was able to take exams at the Theological School of Wilberforce Institute and in 1933 he became a minister. In 1935 he was ordained as an Elder and became the Presiding Elder. A career which would not have been possible in the Scottish mission church. The way he speaks about another AME leader is indicative of his wish to belong to a group of people with a special status:

‘Finally, Mr. Muwamba joined the AME Church before the end of 1931. Mr. Muwamba was a highly educated man of his time...he became a Church Secretary...he brought many other educated men.’\textsuperscript{60}
The attraction of the AME Church for the followers, next to the fact it was the only church which provided services in the towns, was the fact that the AME Church is an African church. The people, therefore, could feel more at "home", 'they were running their own show and were happy!'61 Also, the AME Church promised to provide social services like education. Although not entirely successful in fulfilling this promise because of lack of funding, people like Membe managed to provide three villages in Abercorn with (primary) schools.62  

Furthermore, there is always the attraction of the preaching of the church; to what extent did AME Church incorporate African "tradition", if that was what people actually wanted?

6.4 Ideas and practices of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

'Most valuable in AME Church:
1. AME Church is good towards all denominations. Its "Motto" is: "God our Father, Christ our Redeemer, and Man, our Brother" God alone rules the world, not witches or evil spirits..
2. No Christian can hate his fellow men or segregate them or exercise colour bar against them or to despise them, or try to stop their progress, or to keep from enjoying all the fruits of salvation in Christ.
3. By spiritual birth in a special sense the children of God, and in that spiritual relation all new should live in peace and love.
4. The AME Church believes that, as children of God, all people should develop their highest possibilities, in mind, and soul and body. Therefore, every Christian has a duty to aid every Christian.63

There are no revolutionary elements to be found in the doctrines of the AME Church, as becomes clear in reading these points. In liturgy, music and sermons in the AME Church one cannot find "exciting" elements as one could find in the Watchtower movement. Lehmann and Taylor who visited the AME Church in the 1950s, the heyday of African and Zambian nationalism remarked:

'A among all the churches with an entirely African membership which we met in Nchanga Mine African Township, the AME Church was the nearest to orthodoxy in our narrowly defined sense.'64

Although the AME did not adopt African beliefs, it did not restrict its members from following their own ideas. For instance, they would never organise anti-witchcraft rallies as the Watchtower or Mwana Lesa movement would do. It was something to be addressed outside the church. They did mix African element with Western Christianity on occasions of "rites of passage", like death and marriage (Johnson 1977:113)

Membe himself experienced the following:

'There was great excitement about having a church which belonged to the Africans. They brought cattle and other goods. The people gave
gifts and made sacrifices. It was the people's first time to see an African minister. He was like Jesus.

This gives a complete different picture than Johnson (1977) provides us. Although he believes that '...Africans in control were more sensitive to the attitudes and needs of the communicant.' (Johnson 1977:123), there are no dramatic African features to be found in the AME Church. He contrasts the movement therefore sharply with Watchtower. The story of Membe seems different. Was it because of the early stage the AME Church found itself in? Or, is there a difference between the services in the rural and urban areas? It is indeed very unlikely that people, in this stage of colonialism, could hold orthodox Western Christian viewpoints, without referring to their own background. It is possible, though, that trying to approach these 'standards' added to their social status.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church never seemed to have clashed with the Scottish Mission Church, in a sense their "mother church". On the contrary, Rev. Dr. Laws of Livingstonia mission, admired AME Church in,

'. . .that the African was adept at imitating and quite capable of observing a European's method of work and copying them.' (Macdonald 1970:84)

Membe does not seem to have bad memories of Livingstonia either:

'There was nothing wrong that made me leave the teaching work in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. I just left teaching because I did not enjoy my rights in the teaching service.' (Hastings 1975:181)

When Membe actually joined the AME church in Livingstone, he had to ask for a certificate of removal from the Church of Scotland:

'Dr. Chisholm of Mwenzo mission sent me a very nice certificate of recommendation which was also sent to the Superintendent of the AME Church in Bulawayo, who filed the certificate.' (Hastings 1975:182)

Membe had more problems with other denominations. Especially with the London Missionary Society (LMS) in northern Zambia. They complained to the administration in a desperate effort to prevent Membe expanding his mission. The interdenominational struggle thus found continuance in African-led churches. The leaders of the AME Church, probably rightly, explained this kind of aggression as jealousy:

'I can see that they were jealous of me travelling in the same coach with them. So we cannot expect the white people to teach us, so we must be strong together and teach ourselves.'
6.5 Conclusion

The African Methodist Episcopal Church, an American based church movement, found its way into the urban areas of Zambia in the 1920s. People like Hanock Phiri, Muwamba and Membe, and many others, contributed to the spread of the church into the country. Most of the adherents of the church, and practically all the church leaders seem to have had a Livingstonia background, many of them coming originally from Lubwa or Mwenzo mission. The adherents were educated people who frequently travelled to the towns. The "evils" they were confronting were the inequality experienced at places like missions and urban centres. The impossibility to follow higher education and the inability to achieve a position of responsibility.

The church seemed quite orthodox, but was mixed with African elements. Though there might have been great differences from one congregation to the other, from one preacher to the other. Due to a lack of funds, however, they could never be the church they really wanted it to be; a place where everyone could receive education, from primary level up to university level and where ambitions could be fulfilled.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7. CONCLUSION

After the expansion of the bena Ng'andu into north-eastern Zambia in the decades between 1870 and 1890, one is able to distinguish three different groups of people. The first group are called the "vanquished". These people suffered severely under the expansion and the raids of the bena Ng'andu. They lost most of their land and were often sold into slavery. The second group are the "incorporated". After the expansion of the bena Ng'andu into north-eastern Zambia they were allowed to stay on their land, but were subjected to their new rulers. The incorporation was not entirely successful, many of them found alternatives ways to express their original identity. The last group is the bena Ng'andu rulers.

The missionaries and evangelist who entered the area in the 1890s, offered the refugees and subjected people of the bena Ng'andu expansion an alternative. The Scottish mission provided the people with higher education, unlike the other missions, which within the colonial economy contributed to an increase of status and opportunities.

In the evangelisation of north-eastern Zambia local evangelists were used. Mwenzo, ran by a white missionary, lent heavily on the contribution of the local people. Lubwa mission was entirely run by black evangelists and teachers. It took a decade before a white missionary was sent to this particular station.
The first "protest" movement in northern Zambia was organised at Mwenzo mission station. The mission-educated people at Mwenzo had started the Mwenzo Welfare Association following the example of their colleagues in Livingstonia. The evils they were combating were inequality, the social consequences of labour migration and the forbidding of polygamy by mission church. The Association was exclusive and can not be considered the voice of the people. The lack of information provided, especially on the early phase of Mwenzo Welfare Association, makes it difficult to draw conclusions.

The second movement, the Watchtower movement, was completely different in character. There were, however, connections between the Scottish mission church and the Watchtower leaders. The evils they were confronting were twofold; they were highly suspicious of tribal authorities, who in this period of time co-operated with the colonial regime, the colonial rulers and the missionaries. The other evils surrounding them was witchcraft, poverty and disease. This was seen as a consequence of the bena Ng'andu expansion, the arrival of Colonial Rule and the First World War. Their source of authority was the Bible. The adherents to the Watchtower movement can be described as marginalised people, the "vanquished". They did not take the chance, or were not given the opportunity, to advance themselves through mission education.

The last movement I paid attention to was the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The AME Church has an all black leadership and was the first black church as such to be officially recognised. Its leaders and adherents were generally highly educated people, most of them ex-Livingstonia pupils. They first had taken the opportunity by educating themselves at Livingstonia, and were now eager to join the AME Church. This church offered them more than Livingstonia did; a chance of getting ordained, getting a place in the hierarchy of the church, and following higher education abroad. They tried to encounter, though not entirely successfully, the evils of inequality and the shortcomings of the educational system.

These protest movements, although very different in character, show the eagerness of the people, who previously had a low social status, to achieve a higher one. In addition they also have the eagerness to fight the evil surrounding them, by taking up all means possible. There was only a small minority who actually adapted themselves to the colonial situation and did achieve a higher social status. They faced however another evil, the fact they could never reach the same position as the white men.

Christianity was used by all groups but in different ways according to social status and the period of time.

To really prove the influence of the pre-colonial situation on the response of people to Christianity, more research is needed. There is a gap of information, because of the traditional focus of academics on "big men" and "big events" in history. Interviewing people, using oral traditions, looking at photographs, as Ipenburg suggests, producing lists of names and short biographies could
contribute to a history which pays more attention to the influence of the local people on the development of Christianity in Africa.

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1. Gray's ideas about "evil" come from the fifth chapter of his book Black Christians and White Missionaries (1990), titled 'Christianity and the Concepts of Evil in Sub-Saharan Africa.'
2 Interview Chief Chibesakunda August 1990 Lusaka. He told me that the arrival of the Bisa in north-eastern Zambia dates back to the 15th century. It is very doubtful whether they arrived that early. The fact remains that the Bisa believe they arrived earlier than the Bemba did.
3 F.M. Thomas, Historical Notes on the Bisa Tribe (Lusaka 1958), p.5. He conducted the interviews in the thirties as a colonial officer.
4 Thomas (1958:4) According to Roberts (Roberts 1973: 60) a more serious explanation is provided by the Bisa: 'Bemba often quote as chiefs names of claimants'.
5 Packard (1990:149). Packard, like Roberts and Mushindo, stresses the unifying forces, rather than the conflicting forces of a process of integration.
6 Shimwalulule, the royal burial keeper, for instance, claims to be "proto-Bemba" (Roberts 1973:88n). The fact that Roberts puts this "fact" in the footnote shows he does not recognise the importance of the fact that he is regarded as a proto-Bemba. In the next chapters more examples of "proto-Bemba" will be shown.
7 Oger (1991:29-30). According to a Bena Ng’andu myth the blind Katongo was the first chief of Ichinga. He was followed by Chewa, a member of the old Ngoshe-Mukote branch of the Bena Ng’andu. By the time the Bena Ng’andu entered Chinsali the Ngoshe-Mukote branch was left without much power. The chief was replaced by a Bena Ng’andu from the miti family.
8 Interview Bisa chief Chibesakunda, august 1990 in Lusaka. This chief was told to expand his tribe as to recover from the great loss of this period. He married around 25 women having over 100 children. It was a way to get the Bisa back on the map.
9 Hinfelaar (1989:10). In the same way they regretted their bad treatment of the Nyika.
10 Brelsford (1965:19). These people are called the Wandya. Because of their skills as cattle herders they were spared.
11 Cook (1975:123) argues that this was not the intention of the Scottish mission. Their ideal was to create Christian peasant farmers and craftsmen.
12 Rev. MacMinn quoted in Ipenburg (1992:50-51) Ipenburg adds that education provided them with direct access to the source of faith 'no intermediaries, priests or ministers, were needed.'
13 One should realise that the education provided by the mission was only lower primary school level.
14 NLS Livingstonia News, Vol. II, no. 1, February 1909, p. 19, Rev. Dr. A. Dewar (report from Mwenzo, april 1908)
15 NLS Livingstonia Mission, no. 91 Rev. Dr. A. Dewar to sub-committee 30-31 October 1899
16 NLS Livingstonia Mission, letter no. 91 Rev. Dr. A. Dewar to sub-committee (1899) The same person made the following verse about the native population in Livingstonia news, vol. II, no. 2 (1910:33) 'Yes! he was and in how many /districts still is/"An infant crying in the night"/"An infant crying for the light"/ "And with no language but a cry".
17 NLS The Missionary Record of the United Free Church of Scotland, no.6 (1901:270), Dr. Chisholm's first missionary letter.
18 'Housing has to do much with one's health, and one's moral standards', as the Scottish missionary Donald Fraser remarked (1915)
19 NLS Livingstonia News, vol. II, no.1, Mwenzo Nov., 1908
20 Guthrie (1978:74) They translated Genesis, hymn books and folklore stories.
21 Guthrie (1978:appendix). The same conclusion can be found in Meebelo (1971) and Ipenburg (1992)
22 Vasseur and Dor (1980:37) One must realise that this does not mean that the missionaries followed Lavigerie's rules consistently. Many adaptations had to be made through encountering unexpected events. In this case, however, there is proof that they did address the chiefs first.
23 Rotberg (1965) makes a distinction between "political" protest and "religious" protest. This distinction is artificial. The so-called religious movements had often more "political" impact than what he calls the "political" movement (for example the Watchtower movement). I would rather not separate the two.
24 They would meet people like David Kaunda at the annual teachers' refreshers course at Mwenzo.
25 Cook (1975:107) In 1902 a debating society was formed at Livingstonia. One of the topics discussed was the 'development of native trade and industries and the future of Africa'.
26 NAZ ZA 7\1\7\9 Annual Report for Tanganyika District 1923-1924, p.11, by J.F. Thomson, DC Abercorn 31 march, 1924. There is no documentation available on the first phase of the Association in the National Archives.
27 They would form more of a threat to the chiefs under Indirect Rule (1920s), as I will show later on. Also, after the First World War the Welfare Association became more critical.

28 Rotberg (1965:55). The same remark can be found in the famous book of Shepperson and Price, Independent African (1958:162). 'Above all, in the hands of the independent, the Bible became, as it so often became in movements of social tensions, a great source book for the criticism of established institutions and a mine of authoritative text. '

29 NAZ RC\381 Native Association Isoka and others, translation from Chinamwanga letter sent to Isoka Office, 1926

30 Ipenburg (1992:117) says polygamy was more common in Isoka district than in Chinsali district.

31 NAZ RC\38 Native Association Isoka and others. An account of a meeting of the Isoka sub-district branch of the native association (1925)

32 NAZ ZA 7\1\9\5\ Annual Report for Tanganyika District 1925-1926, p. 11

33 It took David Kaunda until 1930 before he was ordained. He died two years later.

34 Siwale, for instance, left the mission and worked as a clerk at the Boma.

35 Rotberg (1965:132) The Welfare Associations were confined to urban centres, where no traditional authorities were found

36 Fields (1985:133). Fields is quoting a missionary, a contemporary of the Watchtower movement.

37 They were deported from South-Rhodesia because of their Watchtower activities (Meebelo 1971:136)

38 Sindano is a Mambwe coming from Tanganyika district. After 1905 he travelled extensively through southern Africa as a migrant labourer (Cross 1973:195).

39 Russell first predicted the end of the world would take place in 1914, Sindano preached December 1918.

40 Matthew 24:6-8, quoted in Fields (1985:140)

41 Rev. Dr. Chisholm, quoted in Fields (1985:85)

42 Mwenzo mission, for instance, was made available as a war hospital. In Northern Rhodesia 3.500 troops and between 50.000 and 100.000 porters were recruited (including 6.000 women according to Meebelo). Most of them came from north-eastern Rhodesia. 40% of all available men in North-Eastern Rhodesia were one time or another employed in the war. Many Africans died. The official figure is 10%, Ipenburg reckons this is a low estimation (Ipenburg 1992:56-59). The missionaries played an active role in the recruitment.

43 Except for the (proto)Bemba priest and undertaker Shimwalule. He left the movement shortly after he heard the way the colonial authorities responded to it.

44 Fields (1985) This is the actual theme of Fields book. She shows how the politics of Indirect Rule and the "tradition" of custom, had brought the colonial authorities and the chiefs in an awkward position, and made movements like the Watchtower seem more threatening than they actually were.

45 Yorke (1983:382) This was recollected by a man from Terefy Village. He is an ex-Livingstonia pupil.

46 R. Simpelwe (CID) reporting on Sindano, quoted in Meebelo (1971:153)
47 Fields (1985:140) More than else, the Watchtower followers hated the Roman Catholics. They even had a special category for the Catholics who refused to undergo the Watchtower baptism, they were called the snakes.

48 Johnson (1977:3)

49 NAZ, ZA/1/9/1/1 African Methodist Episcopal Church 1925 Nov. 12-1931 Nov. 10, Copy of Report CID Bulawayo

50 Ranger has paid more attention to this particular episode of the AME Church in article titled 'The Ethiopian Episode in Barotseland 1900-1905', in Rhodes-Livingstone Journal number 29.

51 Hastings (1975: 175) This article is remarkably uncritical. Membe is presented as a kind of AMEC "superman", and little mention is made of other people's contribution to the church.

52 NAZ RC/774 Separatist Native Sects in Southern Africa. 'On the 12th of March the African Methodist Episcopal Church was recognised by the Cape Government as a "church" for the purpose of appointing a limited number of its Ministers as Marriage Officers. In 1920 Union Government recognised it as a Christian Denomination .. only one (of Native Sects) to receive this.' This actually meant, that the AME Church did not pose a threat to the South African government.

53 NAZ ZA 1/9/1/1 African Methodist Episcopal Church 1925-1931, no. 23 'The Rev Mtshwelo (from Bulawayo, South-Rhodesia) stated that his church did not allow its ministers to participate in politics.' .. this remark, however was followed by a Moffat Thomson, Secretary of Native Affairs; 'stated that he (Moffat) would find that a difficulty ..as Muwamba (ex-Livingstoneia !) and others are on the list of members actively participated in politics.' It never became a reason not to recognise the movement.

54 This followed after the Depression in which 16,500 Africans were sent home because there was no work for them. "Home" for most Labour migrants was Northern province and Luapula province (Johnson 1977:13)

55 NAZ ZA 1/9/1/1 African Methodist Episcopal Church 1925-1931, no. 23, p.1

56 John Lester Membe Papers, A Short History of the AME Church in Central Africa 1900-1962 (1969:82-97)

57 John Lester Membe papers, Family History, p. 8

58 John Lester Membe Papers, Family History, p. 9

59 Membe's family originally belonged to the bena Ng'andu who migrated from Luba into northern Zambia. Since they used to live on the Bulombwa plains, it is possible that they were actually so-called "proto-Bemba"(see chapter two).

60 John Lester Membe, A Short History of the AME Church in Central Africa 1900-1962 (1969:19)

61 Johnson (1977:60-61) The members of the church could also achieve a certain status as class leaders, chief stewards and underpastors. 'During the Sunday services, the most important leaders assist by reading the Scripture lesson, offering the prayers, reading the announcements and sometimes delivering the main sermon.'

62 In Chiyanga, 316 pupils, Chilwa 400 and Chipwa 117. According to Johnson the largest growth points for the Church (1932-1945) were in these places where the schools were most successful.

63 John Lester Membe papers, Membe in response of Hastings.
64 Taylor and Lehmann (1961: 216) For them this proves the remark of Sundkler; 'If African leadership is given a wider scope in political and civic affairs, then the energy which now flows into sectarian squabbles and secessionist struggles will be directed to constructive and worthwhile problems (p.226)

65 John Lester Membe quoted in Johnson (1977:140)

66 The government asked him questions following the accusations of the LMS. "Do you really tell the people and preach to them that white men are going away from Africa?" and "Do you preach to the people that they must stop to pay tax?" (Hastings 1975: 188) Obviously, the LMS accused the AME exactly of what the government feared most, ideas of the Watchtower movement.

67 NAZ ZA 1/9/1/1 African Methodist Episcopal Church 1925-1931. Report of Native Detective (CID) B. Nyirenda of a AME Church meeting in Ndola.