

**THE MISSING LINK: INDIGENOUS AGENTS IN
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IRINGA DIOCESE
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF
TANZANIA (ELCT) 1899-1999**

By

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the content of this thesis unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is my original work. It has not been submitted to any other university for a similar or any other degree.

Richard Mathew Lubawa

Signed Richard M Lubawa

Date 20 March 2003

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, the history of Christianity has been written from a white, missionary perspective and in many ways it has portrayed them as the heroes of Africa. Such information has neglected the hard work of their African counterparts, many of who interpreted and organized evangelistic meetings among the indigenous people. Its history has primarily reflected the opinions and interests of Western missionaries. The white missionaries' information relied almost exclusively on written sources. *The missing link: Indigenous agents in the development of the Iringa diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (1899-1999)*, tries to recover the silenced voices of the Christian people particularly the men and women who played a crucial role in the development of the church in the Iringa diocese.

The study has attempted to give an historic account of the recovering of the African perspective and counterbalance a presentation dominated by a missionary perspective and bringing to a fore all the actors by drawing attention to the role and importance of the African agents in the development of the church.

In this study, oral history methodology has been used in analyzing and interpreting the history of the Iringa diocese from an African perspective, while at the same time bringing into focus the indigenous actors: teachers, evangelists, women

and youth. There would have been a serious gap in Christian knowledge if such information were not available.

The study has established that from the inception of the planting of the Lutheran church in the Iringa diocese in 1899 both the missionaries, Tanzanian clergy, and agents worked with determination for the church to take roots. From that time, the church gradually expanded by way of increase in the number of stations and converts. What cannot be ignored is the fact the indigenous agents were instrumental in the planting and consolidation of the gains of the Lutheran church in the Iringa diocese in Tanzania.

The determination, with which the "fathers" saw to injecting Christianity in Tanzania, has been continued by the generations after them. From the foregoing, the point that Africans have always heard the gospel principally from other Africans in Africa should not be belabored.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania is one of the fastest growing churches. This growth has been the result of the work of African missionaries in evangelisation and the conveying of the new faith to others. However, missionary historiography has tended to give more credit to European expatriates who spent most of their time in mission stations. Little has been written on the role played by indigenous missionary workers, the lay Christians, teachers, evangelists and pastors in Tanzania, particularly in the Iringa diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania. These people were the backbone of the mission work.

1.1 The purpose of the study

The objective of the thesis is to examine and write about the contribution of the African leadership to the propagation of the gospel and the development of the Iringa diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania from 1899 to 1999. The thesis represents an attempt to address the reality that the spread of Christianity in Africa has been the product of indigenous Christians. It shows that the African was not passive to European missionaries, but was active in mission. The African was a missionary himself. It also uncovers the intimate struggles and trials of African missionaries operating under colonialism: they were essential to the success of mission, yet subordinate to the Berlin and Swedish missionaries. Let us now look at the context of the study.

A number of Lutheran churches in Tanzania have recently celebrated a hundred years since the arrival of the first missionaries in the area.¹ An appraisal of the propagation of the word in Africa without mentioning the zeal of the African is to miss the hallmark. The success of the missionaries in their work is a result of Africans who yearned to participate in the task of building the church and become active agents in spreading it to their own people.² Lists of such groups include: (i) Noble patrons-men of local prominence, who on their own initiative invited missionaries; (ii) Interpreters and wardens, who influenced expansion; (iii) Lay Christians (converts), including businessmen and women, acting in groups or individually, who made use of their social influence to help the missions; (iv) Catechists, evangelists, church elders and school teachers, who bore the burden of running new parishes; (v) Congregations, which pioneered expansion during evangelistic crusades in neighboring areas and paid for the upkeep of pastors; (vi) Local communities, which built and maintained church and school infrastructures; (vii) and Charismatic prophetic figures, who sped up the pace of Christianity.³

Surprisingly, African Christians within and outside Africa have been exposed almost exclusively to literature about the controlling hand of missionaries without being given information about the Africans themselves, who are the leading and most powerful source of the church.⁴ Such written information during colonial times was not

¹ The Konde diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania celebrated in 1991; the Maneromango parish of the Eastern and Coastal diocese celebrated in 1995; the Southern diocese in 1998, and the South Central diocese in 2000.

² See Richard Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries* (New Haven: 1990).

³ O. K. Kalu, (ed.), *The History of Christianity in West Africa* (New York: Longman, 1980), p. 6.

⁴ James Bertin Webster, *The African Churches among the Yoruba 1888-1992* (1964), p. xii.

meant for African people but to give information to the people in Europe and America about their work in Africa.

Gerdien van Gilhuis, who studied African leadership and initiative in the history of a Zambian Mission Church, raises the point that writers of Christian history on the African continent were part of the missionary effort from Europe, who came to 'plant the church' in Africa. She further argues that they fail to mention the growth of the church, which was achieved as a result of the contribution of African leadership. This style of writing church history is based on a Eurocentric view of world history, which neglects the African contribution.⁵ The missionaries found it very difficult to write that the planting of the church was mainly the work of indigenous agents themselves.⁶ A. J. Temu and I. N. Kimambo observed that:

Early missionaries probably had less impact on the societies they met than the African Christians whom they invariably brought with them and on whom they greatly depended... Such men (Africans) became the first teachers and their skill, as indeed the whole process of education, fascinated adventurous young people.⁷

Bishop Bengt Sundkler in 1984 made the following remarks, as recorded by Wilson Niwagila in his book *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church: A Case-Study of the African Initiative and the Participation of the Foreign Missions in the Mission History of the North Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania 1890-1965*, in which he supported the idea of the important role played by indigenous agents in the missionary task in Africa and further showed

⁵ Gerdien Verstraelen-Gilhuis, *From Dutch Mission to Reformed Church in Zambia* (Weaver Franeker, Netherlands 1982), pp. 13-15.

⁶ J. K. Ade Ajayi and E. A. Ayandele, "Writing African Church History" in *The Church Crossing Frontiers* (eds.), P. Beyerhaus and Carl Hallencreutz (Uppsala: 1961), pp. 90-108.

⁷ I .N. Kimambo and A. J. Temu, *A History of Tanzania* (Dar es Salaam: East African Publishing House, 1969), p. 128.

his dissatisfaction with the way African church history has been treated by Western writers, without excluding himself:

The spread of Christianity in Africa has been done by Africans themselves...The Africans guided the Missionaries in teaching them the language, the customs and traditions of the people and their way of thinking. There is no European missionary who can claim to have worked without the guidance of these noble men and women.⁸

Mission studies has produced information about mission activities in Africa, which Joseph G. Donders criticizes as follows:

Certain aspects of missionary activity in Africa never have been described accurately in mission studies. The widely accepted idea that Africa was converted by missionaries is one of those ideas that obscures what really happened. Africa was converted and is being converted by Africans who were and who are under the influence of the Holy Spirit. They received Jesus themselves and they were in their love and enthusiasm very willing to give him to others.⁹

The above remarks help to support my hypothesis: that indigenous agents were the backbone of the spreading of the gospel to other Africans. The white missionaries could not have achieved much without the Africans. Let me give a few examples from East Africa.¹⁰

The growth of the church in the coastal area of Kenya at Rabai shows that the refugees, known as *Watoro* those who ran away from the cruelty of Arab slave traders and those who escaped famine in their home areas had formed a community known as *Kitoro* Christianity.

⁸ Bengt Sundkler in Wilson Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to the Self-Governing Church: A Case Study of the African Initiative and Participation of the Foreign Mission History of the North-Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania 1890-1965* (Hamburg: Verlag an der Lottbek, 1991), p. 15.

⁹ James G. Donders, *Non-Bourgeois Theology* (New York: n. p. 1985), p. 18.

¹⁰ This applies also in West Africa (Ghana, Sierra Leone and Nigeria) and Central Africa. In Sierra Leone there is a good number of indigenous missionaries who fostered the growth of the church. See Gilbert W. Olson, *Church Growth in Sierra Leone* (Grand Rapids: 1969), pp. 67ff.

The community was under the leadership of David Koi, who committed himself to teaching the refugees the Word of God. David Koi was finally murdered because of his faith in Jesus Christ.¹¹

The church in Uganda, both Protestant and Catholic, grew because of the young African martyrs whose blood paved the way for the gospel to penetrate into every corner of Uganda. In the 1890s, the martyrdom of these Africans, when Uganda was under King Mwanga is indicative of how committed these devoted African Christians were to building the church of God on the African soil.¹² Writing on the great expansion of Christianity in Uganda in the period between 1894 to 1904, Roland Oliver comments:

In all these vast developments, the foreign missionary expansion, both Catholic and Anglican, had followed and not preceded the expansion of the faith through indigenous channels. In most of the new districts the missionaries came to consolidate bands of neophytes already gathered by unordained, very often unbaptized African enthusiasts, who had been in contact with Christian teachings at the older centres.¹³

However, the truth remains that as long as the center is there to show the way, the periphery remains as emulator, however creative it may be. It is fair to judge the emulator on the merit of the emulating. Roland goes further and remarks:

Of the African evangelists, the most rightly celebrated was the saintly Apolo Kivebulaya ... Tomasi Semfuma, who worked in Koki, and afterwards alone in Bunyoro, and the Firipo and Andereya who converted the King and the Prime Minister of Ankole, appear but briefly in Tucker's pages; and

¹¹ W. B. Anderson, *The Church in East Africa 1840-1974* (Dodoma: CTP), pp. 33f.

¹² Louise M. Pirouet, *Black Evangelists: The Spread of Christianity in Uganda, 1891-1914* (London: 1978), p. 15.

¹³ Roland, Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 182-3.

they must be typical of many more who have received less than their fair share of fame.¹⁴

Similarly, the history of the church in Tanzania grew because of the involvement of the local people. If one wants to study Christianity among the Smbaa people in North Eastern Tanzania, one will have to start with Mr. Kighobo and not the two German Lutheran missionaries. Kighobo was a Smbaa prophet whose prophecy had prepared the souls of the Smbaa to receive a new message from God. The message was to be brought by strange people whose stomachs were white. The message itself would be read from a *butterfly* (this is taken to mean the Bible) which was to be in the hands of these strangers. Africans believe that Kighobo's prophecy prepared the Smbaa to accept Christianity.¹⁵ Therefore, in this case, credit cannot be given entirely to the two German missionaries but also must be given to the Smbaa prophet, Kighobo. Each needs to be given a fair share of fame: Kighobo prophesied and the missionaries implemented.

The history of the church in Zambia shows that a group of Africans started congregations, which later grew and became a church. David Julizya Kaunda was the founder of a Christian community which later came to be known as the "Livingstonia Mission". He also established a network of schools in the area.¹⁶ Meanwhile, X, an evangelist who was known as "an evangelist on leave" from Kongwe Mission, evangelized people from the Eastern Province of present day Zambia. King Mpenzi opened the opportunity for Christianity among his people.¹⁷

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 193.

¹⁵ T.H. I Guga, *Research into the History of the Usambaa-Digo Church* (Makerere, 1965). See also Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church*, p.16.

¹⁶ John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 129.

¹⁷ Gilhuis, *From Dutch Mission to Reformed Church in Zambia*, p. 41.

Jack Thompson recently published a deeply moving account of the stories of the first four Xhosa evangelists, who sacrificed their health, families, and lives to plant the Presbyterian Church among the Ngoni in Malawi. These were the best-educated men in their time and place: their level of literacy surpassed that of many of the Scottish artisan missionaries with whom they worked. The Xhosa missionaries, being multilingual and confident that the gospel was meant for the African people, acted as cultural bridges between African and European world-views.¹⁸ Surprisingly, until now, their contributions to the planting of Christianity in Malawi have been obscured by the Eurocentric, colonialist focus of old-fashioned mission history. However, Thompson has left no stone unturned in his passion to rescue the African missionaries from historical obscurity, and to move indigenous people's initiative in mission from the margin to the center of the history. Thompson's work has brought to light that indigenisation is not a late finding of the post-colonial age, but was a factor in the earliest days of the founding of the mission churches.¹⁹ The study also uncovers the close struggles and trials of African missionaries working under colonialism ("they were essential to the success of the mission, yet subordinate to the Scottish missionaries"²⁰) and has recaptured the dignity of neglected voices long silenced.

In order to get a clear picture of the missionary work in Tanzania and in Africa as a whole, it is necessary to get a balanced picture of the roots of the church. It is an undeniable fact that without the assistance of indigenous agents, the white missionaries would have hardly achieved anything.²¹ Due to this dominating influence, the

¹⁸ T Jack Thompson, *Touching the Heart: Xhosa Missionaries to Malawi 1876-1888* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2000), p. xiv.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Philippe Denis, (ed.), *The Making of an Indigenous Clergy in Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1995), p. 9.

missionaries have always stood forth at the center of the picture; the faces of the indigenous agents have been obscured and remain unnoticed. It is therefore, important to bring into light the key players in the establishment and growth of the church in Africa which have been neglected, if not left out completely.²²

1.2 Motivations for the study

This study has been undertaken for various reasons. I have been interested in undertaking this study because of three reasons. Firstly, I am one of the indigenous clergy in the ELCT-Iringa Diocese. I see the necessity and possibility of writing a history of indigenous agents and their contribution to mission work in the Iringa Diocese of the ELCT. Such a history has a meaning for the actual tasks and challenges facing the church today in Tanzania. Secondly, despite the fact that the Christian Church has been planted for over 100 years in the Iringa Diocese, very little has been written substantially on the history and the significant role of indigenous agents, as if the work of planting the church exclusively relied on the missionaries from Europe. Being brought up in a Christian family, my father, who was one of the village *walimu* (teachers) in the church, spent days walking long distances from one village to another teaching and evangelizing. Surprisingly, when you read books²³ on Christianity in Tanzania, little has been written about the important role played by indigenous agents compared to the European or American missionaries, and if anything has been written they are mentioned in passing. This is the case in the history of the Iringa diocese. Therefore, there is a great need to voice out the hidden history and bring to the fore all the actors in the

²² Gilhuis, Verstraelen, *From Dutch Mission to Reformed Church in Zambia*. p. 70.

²³ Sahlberg, Carl-Erik, *From Krapf to Rugambwa: A Church History of Tanzania* (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1986), W. A. Anderson, *The History of Christianity in East Africa 1840-1974* (Dodoma: Central Tanganyika Press, 1974), Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (London: Oxford Press 1952).

mission work process. Thirdly, writers of the history of Christianity in Africa, the majority of them being Europeans, have portrayed in a number of ways that the mission work in Africa was done by the missionaries from Europe and America. One wonders why the indigenous agents, who have been, from my understanding, the backbone of the entire missionary work among their people, have been neglected.

In 1999 I attended the Iringa diocese centenary celebrations which took place at Pommern, one of the first Berlin Mission stations. All the speeches that were delivered explained how the Germans brought the Gospel to Uhehe, but nobody mentioned the role played by the African fathers who were ready to leave their families behind and preach and teach in foreign surroundings. A choir from the Iringa Lutheran congregation sang a song that praised the first four indigenous pastors who after receiving the gospel never slept but walked long distances sharing the Good News with their brothers and sisters. I felt that the indigenous agents were not given their due dignity in such a celebration and that it was necessary to uncover their stories.

1.3 Objective of the thesis

The objective of the thesis is to uncover the missing voices of the indigenous agents in the development of the Iringa diocese from 1899 to 1999. The thesis addresses the reality that the success of Christianity in Tanzania, especially in the Iringa diocese has been the outcome of the indigenous Christians.

In this thesis, I define the word "indigenous", as any person who was born, grown or originated on the African soil.²⁴ Any African person whose birth took place on the African soil is regarded as indigenous. The word "agent" refers to various groups of people such as lay Christians, evangelists, teachers, pastors and interpreters. The discussion on the role played by indigenous agents will primarily be based on oral history, archival material and other secondary sources. These will be discussed in detail in the section dealing with sources. The use of oral sources is perhaps the only way to get the full story of African Christian history and, in this case, the contribution of Africans to the mission works in the Iringa diocese. Let us now look at the statement of the problem.

1.4 Statement of the problem

In Christian circles in the Western world, knowledge about African missionaries is often not equal to their role and input. This disparity arises largely out of the fact that, whereas much written material exists on the work of missionaries, information on the hard work of their African Christian counterparts is very inadequate. J. W. Hofmeyr observes: "It is true that the great missionaries from the West have been recorded in the history of the church as great pioneers, but needless to say, many of those who interpreted and organised evangelistic meetings among the indigenous people, were themselves indigenous".²⁵

²⁴ Confer Philippe Denis, "Introduction", in Philippe Denis (ed.), *The Making of an Indigenous Clergy in Southern Africa: Proceedings of the International Conference held at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 25-27 October 1994* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 1995), p. 9.

²⁵ Hofmeyr, J. W., "Challenges of Writing Evangelical Church History in Africa in a Global Age: A Zambian Perspective", Paper Presented at the Conference on Studying Australian Christianity, at Robert Menzies College, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, 21st -23rd July 1997. p.2

One of the greatest needs of Christianity in Africa today is related to its history. The writing of African Christian biographies will play a central role in this project.²⁶ Fortunately, there are key Christians, throughout Africa, both past and present, from whom posterity would benefit greatly if the records of their lives, activities in the church, struggles, frustrations and undertakings were adequately assembled for transmission and propagation. There would be a serious gap in Christian knowledge if such information were not available for us. Ignorance about them as individual Christians means that significant knowledge on the Church in Africa and its contribution to history is left out. By interacting with the lives and activities of such people, we would benefit greatly. The examples of their lives can readily serve as useful models for us in our own Christian pilgrimage. The persistent lessons, which they present, can provide "a lasting challenge and an inspiration to all that come across their biographies".²⁷

The problem now is that the time has come for the Church in Africa to address the issue of the lack or inadequacy of African Christian biographies. Christian biographies have played a substantive role in Christian history, by enriching the store of information relating to the nature and activities of key Christian leaders and their contributions to the growth of the church. This is because the lives of such personalities are inextricably linked with the life and work of the church.

However, this problem of documentation and exchange of ideas and experiences is partly due to the fact that key African Christians have not written or have written very little about themselves. Besides, the few publications in existence do not necessarily portray the self-

²⁶ Watson A.O. Omulokoli, "Researching and Writing Christian Biography in Africa: A Challenge to Evangelical Studies in Global Context", in *Journal of African Christian Thought* Vol. 3 No. 1 June 2000 (Akropong-Akuapem: Akrofi-Christaller Memorial Centre, 2000), p. 41.

reflection of African Christians on their own lives and efforts. More often, the information about these Christians is written and interpreted from a distant perspective by outsiders. As a result, the material lacks "the ring of authenticity which would have endeared it to would-be readers".²⁸ Unfortunately, more and more of those with the vital information and knowledge die without leaving it behind in any form. In this regard, J. W. Hofmeyr has appropriately pointed out that, "Some of our great leaders in the history of the church in Africa, have also gone without notice because they have not left much in the form of documentation and diaries".²⁹

What is true in Africa in general, is particularly acute in the case of Tanzania. Taking into consideration the rich heritage of Christianity in Tanzania, it is lamentable that the role of indigenous leaders is not discernible from the existing written material and if there is any, as in the case of the Iringa diocese, is not treated adequately. The history of the Iringa diocese, which has been largely documented by foreigners, has placed the African recipient of the gospel at the margin, while the white missionaries put themselves at the center. The history of the role of the indigenous agents to the mission work has been understated.

Literature on Christian mission in Tanzania, especially in the Lutheran church, has been biased toward the activity of Western-oriented mission. White missionaries, Western mission policies and the relationship of mission to European imperialism have dominated the discussion of African missions. Its history has primarily reflected the opinions and interests of Western missionaries. This missionary history was "written by missionaries and their protégés who have swallowed the missionary ideology hook, line and sinker. Missionary history is

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid. , p. 42.

²⁹ Hofmeyr, "Challenges", p. 2

propagandist and unanalytical.”³⁰ It was written to boost the morale of the early missionaries. It focuses on how the gospel was brought to Tanzania, the challenges and joys experienced by the missionaries. Great emphasis was placed on the role of the white missionaries and the indigenous agents were ignored. By over-emphasising the role of the missionaries, it helped to enhance the ethnocentrism of missionary achievements.

My intention in this thesis is to write the missionary history from a new perspective so that different voices can be heard. It is an attempt to give voice to the missing heroes in the picture of the mission work in the Iringa diocese.

1.4.1 Literature review

Scholars have paid little or no attention to African initiatives in mission work. What is true of Africa in general, is particularly acute in the case of Tanzania, especially in the Iringa diocese of the Lutheran church.

In his book *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*,³¹ Roland Oliver made an evaluation of the success of the modern missionary enterprise in East Africa. The book highlights the success of the missionary societies and individuals in introducing Christianity to the interior of East Africa. They also succeeded in working with the colonial administration to appropriate state funds for schooling and other social services among East African peoples. They did not, however, help to bring forth self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating local churches in this region. Oliver cautions that Protestant missionary societies were not, in the 1940s and 1950s, investing adequately in the training of African

³⁰ See Ogbu U. Kalu, “Church presence in Africa: A Historical Analysis of the Evangelisation Process,” in and Appiah-Kubi & T. Torres., (eds.), *African Theology en route* (New York: Orbis Books, 1983), p. 14ff.

leaders, both at ecclesiastical and at secular level. He does not give any attention to indigenous agents.

Marcia Wright's *German Missions in Tanganyika 1891-1941: Lutherans and Moravians in the Southern Highlands*³² is the only book which has dealt with the history of the church in the Southern Highlands relatively closely. Wright discusses the mission work in the region before the Second World War. The author deals with the interaction of Africans and Europeans, followed by the growing integration of missionary and colonial institutions. Relying primarily upon documentary sources, the book does not give a full picture of indigenous agents and their role in mission work. The missionaries have been given more prominence than the Africans. The author, however, briefly mentions the first eight pastors to be ordained and the problems which Yohana Nyagawa had in relation with the authorities. The book does not discuss their contribution to the mission work. Furthermore, the book focuses on the Nyakyusa and Bena tribes, while the Hehe people came into the picture after Yohana Nyagawa was transferred to the Uhehe area at Pommern.

Apart from this, there is a detailed case study by Wilson Niwagila in his book *From the Catacomb to a Self-governing Church: A Case Study of the African Initiative and the Participation of the Foreign Missions in the Mission History of the North-Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania 1890-1965*³³, which deals with the history of the Lutheran church on the western side of Lake Victoria in the Kagera region of Tanzania. The book argues that the Lutheran church

³¹ Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (London: Longman 1952).

³² Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika 1891-1941: Lutherans and Moravians in the Southern Highlands* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

³³ Wilson Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-governing Church: A Case Study of the African Initiative and Participation of the Foreign Missions in the Mission History*

was established through the initiatives of African groups. It makes it clear that, in spite of problems and European disintegration methods, foreign missions were invited to assist and participate in the process of sharing Christ with others. However, this work deals with a very different geographical area and does not in any way touch on the Hehe in the Iringa diocese.

*Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania, Ukanda wa Kusini, Karne ya Kwanza ya Injili 1891-1991 (The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Southern Zone The First Century of the Gospel 1891-1991*³⁴), eds, Mdegela, O., Kilimhana, S. and Kasumba, O., highlights the events of the mission work in the southern zone. The book attempts to portray the history of the Berlin and Swedish missionaries. It briefly mentions the first indigenous pastors, without any particular emphasis on their role in the mission work.

Recently, a book by Joseph W. Parsalaw, *A History of the Lutheran Church Diocese in Arusha Region, From 1904 to 1958*,³⁵ records in a detailed way the history of the mission to the Ilarusa, living mainly on the slopes of Mount Meru, and to the Masai. Although the book's main focus is on the European missionaries, Parsalaw mentions the unforgettable Christian convert, Lazaros Laizer, and his importance in mission work. He further shows that the expansion of the mission to South and North Masailand was made possible through the sacrifice of the Arusha, Meru and Chagga evangelists.

of the North-Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania 1890-1965 (Hamburg: Verlag an der Lottbek, 1991).

³⁴ O. Mdegela, S. Kilimhana and O. Kasumba (eds.), *Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania, Ukanda wa Kusini, Karne ya kwanza ya Injili 1891-1991* (Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 1991).

³⁵ Joseph W. Parsalaw, *A History of the Lutheran Church Diocese in Arusha Region, From 1904 to 1958*, Makumira Publication 12. (Usa River: The Research Institute of the Makumira University College, 1999).

Apart from Niwagila's case study in the North-Western diocese, no thesis in Tanzania has yet tackled the question of the contribution of indigenous agents to mission work. There are other works that briefly mention the presence of indigenous agents in Uhehe. My contention is that these works do not offer an adequate picture of the contribution of indigenous people to the mission work.

The authors have dealt in depth with the histories of their congregations and local churches. The history of the role played by indigenous agents is neglected or briefly mentioned, the focus being on the work of the missionaries. The authors have relied heavily on the archival sources already used in the books where the western perspectives are reflected and orchestrated to imitate and match the opinions and stereotypes of the Europeans. It is not surprising to discover that missionary archives abound with a lot of information on schools, statistics of missionaries, catechumens and the like. This information, as valuable as it may be, only tells part of the more complex history of Christianity in Africa.

1.5 Sources

The study and writing of African Church history is based on an array of sources. It is resolutely held that among these sources, oral data is very important. In fact, it is now a well-known fact that oral sources have an essential role to play in understanding the history of Christianity in Africa. The argument is that the key players, who serve as participants in the life and activities of the church, also form a rich reservoir of information on its history. There are old men and women

who can be seen as a very useful source of the oral history of Christianity in Africa.

In academic discourse the nature of the methodology is largely determined by the nature and aim of the research. The study embarked upon in this research aims to uncover the contribution of indigenous agents to missionary work, with particular reference to the Lutheran church in the Iringa diocese. The basis of this research is oral history and archival material. Secondary sources have been used where necessary in the methodology.

Oral history as a methodology is important in this study. Oral history is defined by some as " a collection of oral testimonies which play the role of an ancillary technique of historical study."³⁶ The creation of historical data is the main emphasis. Oral history is based on reminiscences, hearsay or witnesses' accounts which occurred during the lifetime of the people who are being interviewed. It is essentially a study of people in a particular locality, in this case the Iringa diocese, and how these people contributed to the planting of Christianity. In doing so, the silenced voices will get a chance to be in the picture.

In this study, oral history has been used extensively as a methodological tool. Thus, the originality of this study lies in the importance given to the witnesses of those of who have played and continue to play a role in this research: the indigenous agents in the Iringa diocese. Apart from the white missionaries, these indigenous agents did not write and could not write about their contribution to the spreading of the gospel in the Iringa diocese. Therefore, it was necessary for me to interview a selected number of indigenous clergy

³⁶ Phillipe Denis, "Oral History in a Wounded Country", in J. Draper, ed., Proceedings of the Pietermaritzburg colloquium on orality and colonialism, August 2001, p. 1. forthcoming.

who took part in the mission work of the church. In this regard, oral sources are more accurate because they prioritise accounts of eyewitnesses or participants in events as being of historical value.

The oral history interviewing technique is an exercise which:

...is a systematic collection, arrangement, preservation and publication of recorded verbatim accounts and opinions of people who were witnesses or participants in events likely to interest future scholars. It is basically an information collecting technique, the results of which may be found in a loosely coherent collection of tapes and type written transcripts or in use as source material for a film documentary or other published work.³⁷

For that matter, oral history comprises accounts of first-hand experiences, retrospectively narrated to the interviewer for historical purposes and preserved on tapes. In addition, the main aim of oral sources is to reveal what tends to be hidden, and is expressed by word of mouth. Message transmission is by oral history and oral tradition.³⁸ Oral history refers to the recollection of accounts and situations of an individual, narrating the story to the interviewer. Normally, the historian selects interviewees depending on the information needed and then interviews them on past and present events.³⁹ Thompson elaborates further and says: "All the exact words are used as they were spoken; and added to them are social clues, the nuances of uncertainty, humour, or pretence, as well as the texture of dialect."⁴⁰

³⁷ Moss, W. M., *Oral History Programme Manual* (n. p. Pager Publications, USA, 1974), p. 7.

³⁸ Philippe Denis, "Oral history in a wounded country", p. 1.

³⁹ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History Aims: Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History* (London & New York: James Currey, 1985), p. 3.

⁴⁰ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 108.

J. Bird defines oral history as "the tape recordings of people's memories or recollections of the past".⁴¹

Through oral sources one can tap this rich Christian heritage that is stored in the mind and is ready to be recalled, although it does not exist in a discernible record form. With many of these people dying at an alarming rate, this treasure of Church history is being irretrievably lost before it has been tapped. It is important that sources of oral history be tapped as was underscored in a workshop on the writing of African Church history in Zimbabwe in 1992.⁴² This exercise is not only of crucial importance, but also needs to be tackled with a sense of urgency. As Hofmeyr notes: "The custodians of tradition in Africa have gone into their graves with information which cannot be retrieved for our research in putting down church history in Africa."⁴³

Besides a substantial use of oral sources in this study, I have also consulted written sources to complement them. In order to have a relevant, accurate, all-embracing history of the Christian communities in Africa, there is a need to rewrite it. Written sources tend to go into details that reflect the history of institutions, such as the arrival of missionaries, the establishment of church structures, the building of churches, schools, hospitals and the history of particular denominations. Details about the social, economic, political and cultural elements of the people tend to be forgotten. Moreover, written sources give an outsider's point of view rather than an insider's perspective.

⁴¹ J. Bird, *Oral History Collections: Their Importance in the Local Library* (London: Polytech of North London, School of Librarianship and Information Studies, 1983), p. 13.

⁴² African Church History Workshop, Harare, Zimbabwe, 7-12 September 1992.

⁴³ Hofmeyr, J. W., "Challenges for Writing Evangelical Church History in Africa in a Global Age: A Zambian Perspective", Paper presented at the Conference on Studying Australian Christianity at Robert Menzies College, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, 21-23 July 1997, p. 2.

In this research, I chose informants who got involved in the missionary work as *walimu* (teachers), spouses or children of *walimu*, pastors ordained in the 1940s or their spouses or children, lay Christians, and present and retired officials of the respective dioceses of the former Southern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. In this study the oral interviews were recorded on tapes and then transcribed. This will enrich our knowledge of the indigenous church leadership in the area.

However, some of the findings based on conversations, interviews and discussions from the fieldwork were properly recorded in a notebook. Some of the names of possible informants were picked up from my readings of the documents and literature but I was given other names by the church leaders. I interviewed 40 people: 15 women and 25 men, (refer appendix 4). Some of the interviewees had to be visited twice or thrice in order to get more information from them. I learned that after the first and second interview, the interviewees became more open and remembered more information. One woman, who was one of the oldest informants, was only able to speak for one hour during the morning.

I was quite aware of the challenge of studying Lutheran indigenous ministers, as I myself belong to the same group I am studying. This required extra critical attention, but with empathy for the explanations of the interviewees. But, on the other hand, being an insider, this gave me access to a considerable wealth of information which otherwise would have been virtually out of reach.

1.6 Theoretical framework

In this thesis I will use theoretical frameworks from Jean and John Comaroff, James Scott and James Blaut. The purpose of these theories is to highlight the interaction taking place between the indigenous agents and the missionaries. Theories are of particular importance as a means of digging up the silenced voice of the dominated.

However, these theories help to explain the process of the emergence, transaction and translation of the relationship between indigenous people and their missionary counterparts in Tanzania and other parts of Africa. This interaction is illustrated by Jonathan Draper in his article "Hegemony, Ideology and Social Construction: Special Focus on the work of John and Jean Comaroff". He writes, "this confrontation of culture was not a one-way street, but a two-way traffic, albeit an unequal one since economic and military power was obviously uneven".⁴⁴

In their investigation, culture plays an important role because in culture there are products that determine our daily interactions, such as power, ideology and consciousness. The Comaroffs suggest that there is a triangular relationship between culture, ideology and hegemony. They see hegemony and ideology as the two faces of power.⁴⁵ Through ideology and hegemony a relationship between culture and power can be understood.

The Comaroffs examine critically the evangelisation of the Tswana people, where a group of British missionaries thought they would

⁴⁴ Jonathan Draper, "Hegemony, Ideology and Social Construction: Special Focus on the work of John and Jean Comaroff" in *Bulletin for Contextual Theology in Southern Africa and Africa*, Vol. 4 No, 3, December 1998, p. 3.

⁴⁵ Gerald West, "Discerning the Contours of Domination and Resistance in Liberation Hermeneutics: do the poor and marginalized speak?" in *Bulletin for Contextual Theology in Southern Africa and Africa*, Vol. 4, no. 3, December 1998, p. 23.

make history for an African community, and assist them on the road to civilization. This encounter was “an integral part of the cultural and social revolution that accompanied the rise of industrial capitalism, an expression of the expansive universalism that marked the dawn of modernity”.⁴⁶

Besides the Comaroffs, I will also use James Scott, whose work, as the title of his book suggests, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* is about domination which defines as a tool used by the dominant and resistance as a weapon of the weak.⁴⁷ Scott maintains that throughout history, life is acting. People are designated with different roles and act accordingly. For Scott, the dominated know the meaning of their domination and they consciously, as well as prudently choose to act in hidden transcript. The hidden transcript is therefore for the subordinate group, a conscious, calculated and crafty “art of resistance”-“a wide variety of low profile forms of resistance that dare not speak in their own name.” The public transcript is “the self-portrait of dominant elites as they would have themselves seen.”⁴⁸ Scott will help us to see how the missionaries interacted with the indigenous agents in the mission work.

I will also use James Blaut, especially his concept of Diffusionism, as explained in his book, *The Colonizer’s Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History*.⁴⁹ The colonizers have always, according to Blaut, taken for granted that the West is

⁴⁶ Comaroffs, p. 11.

⁴⁷ Tinyiko Sam Maluleke, “A Historical Quest for a Black Presence that Walks” in *Orality, Memory & the Past: Listening to Voices of Black Clergy under Colonialism and Apartheid* (ed.), Philippe Denis, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2000), p.242.

⁴⁸ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 18.

⁴⁹ James Blaut, *The Colonizer’s Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1995).

permanently superior to other communities in the world. However, Blaut's goal in his book is to undermine those beliefs:

The belief is both historical and geographical. Europeans are seen as the makers of history. Europe eternally advances, progresses, modernises. The rest of the world advances more sluggishly, or stagnates: it is "traditional society". Therefore, the world has a permanent geographical center and a permanent periphery: an Inside and an Outside. Inside leads, Outside lags. Inside innovates, Outside imitates.⁵⁰

The theories above will be useful to decipher the interaction which occurred between the indigenous agents and their missionary counterparts. Theories are necessary to evaluate and critique the relationship between the two parties in question.

1.7 A synopsis of the contents

In chapter one, the researcher laid the groundwork for the other chapters. The background of the study in relation to other countries in East, Central and South Africa was briefly discussed. The hypothesis stated that the history of the Lutheran church in the Iringa diocese has been a history of the role of the white missionaries; the contribution of indigenous agents has been ignored. There is a need to document a more representative history of the Lutheran church in the Iringa diocese. Western literature on the history of Christianity in the Lutheran church mainly relied on archival sources for their information. The researcher saw this to be a problem because in most cases the material in archives, if any, bears the voice of the dominant, while the voice of the key players is silenced. In order to fill this gap, an oral history methodology was examined as a possible solution to overcome this barrier. Discussions on the advantages and disadvantages were highlighted, but still it was found to be a useful methodology. Lastly,

some important conceptual tools were briefly discussed since they will help decipher some of the interactions between the missionaries and the indigenous agents.

Chapter two highlights the historical background of the Iringa diocese. It discusses the German colonial rule and the African resistance to colonial rule. It further discusses the country when it was under British colonial rule and the movement that led to the political freedom of Tanganyika.

Chapter three deals with the mission societies that came and established mission stations in the Iringa area. It discusses how the white missionaries used the indigenous agents in their work and how mission work was greatly dependent on the local teachers. It further discusses the impact of the two World Wars on the mission in the area.

Chapter four discusses how the indigenous agents came to emerge in the Iringa diocese. It critically looks at the various periods of development, beginning from the time of the Berlin Mission Society to the period of the rise of the Iringa diocese, and how the missionaries interacted with the indigenous clergy.

Chapter five deals with the initial discussions on the establishment of the Iringa diocese and the claim to apostolic succession. It critically looks at the election procedures of the leaders of the Iringa diocese and on the development of leadership. It also discusses the historical background on the ordination of women in the Lutheran church in Tanzania. The chapter also discusses the Christian women organization

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 1.

and the youth group and their important role in the mission work in the church.

Chapter six deals with four case studies of the indigenous clergy in the Iringa diocese. The chapter looks at their life stories and the contribution which they have made to the Christian church. It critically looks at the interaction of some of these pastors with the missionaries.

Chapter seven deals with the way the Lutheran church in the Iringa diocese has tried to Africanise Christianity through music, worship and the translation of the Bible.

Chapter eight sums up the discussion and brings it to a close by drawing on a summary of the findings.

We will now look at the historical background of the Iringa diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania.

Chapter Two

The historical background of the Iringa diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCT) 1899-1961

2. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a historical background of Iringa and Tanganyika in general. Tanzanians have never lacked the ability to meet a challenge. The ruthless exploitation of the country by the German East Africa Company provoked a resistance, which captured the support of much of the coastal area people, and ultimately the German government put down the resistance. The resistance by various groups was equally fierce and lasted until 1898. The Maji Maji rebellion, response of Africans to the brutal conditions under which they were forced to work, lasted from 1905 to 1907, shook the German people and their government, and provided the beginnings of a tradition upon which national unity would one day be built in Tanganyika. The Germans stayed on until they were supplanted by the British mostly in 1916, but Tanzanians had demonstrated to the world and to themselves that they were neither afraid, nor unable, to rise to whatever challenge fate put in their way.

After the Second World War, a new challenge faced the Tanzanian people when under the British-administered United Nations trusteeship; they became one of the first African nations to approach independence. They chose to move towards independence by forming a popular base organization in villages and towns throughout the country that would place legal and political pressure on the British. This chapter has been divided into four sections: the German Colonial rule (1884-1918), African resistance (Maji Maji 1905-1907), British

colonial rule (1919-1961), and the process towards political independence in Tanganyika (1925-1961).

2.1 German colonial rule (1884-1918)

In the reports of Dr. David Livingstone, it is shown that Rebmann, Speke, Burton, Stanley and Grant at the beginning of their journeys in Africa stirred the interest of the Europeans in getting colonies in the heart of Africa.⁵¹ The Berlin Conference of European countries and America, which took place from 15 November 1884 to February 1885, discussed the fate of the African countries that were not under European influence.⁵² Following these discussions by the Anglo-German Agreement of 1886, the sultan of Zanzibar vaguely substantiated claims to dominion on the mainland which was limited to a 10-mile-wide coastal strip. Britain and Germany divided the hinterland between them as spheres of influence, the region to the south (Tanganyika) becoming known as German East Africa. Great Britain colonised Kenya while Uganda became a protectorate. The resulting division not only separated tribes, but limited their freedom of movement. In addition to limits on movement, new rules were imposed on the people, which affected the political structure and formal government of Tanganyika. The principles of how to divide and rule Africa were laid during the Berlin Conference.⁵³

Rapid industrial growth was taking place in Europe at this time and Europe needed raw materials for its expanding industries. These materials and cheap labour could be found in Africa. Germany was selected as "neutral ground" for such a conference. Already in

⁵¹ Comp. G. P. Groves, *The Planting of Christianity in Africa*, Vol. III (1955), p. 3-4.

⁵² Wilson Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church. A Case Study of the African Initiative and Participation of the Foreign Mission History of the North-Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania 1890-1965*, 2nd ed. (Hamburg:Verlag an der Lottbek, 1991), p. 57.

Germany, even before the conference, there was a German Society for Colonization, which was formed in March 1884 by Carl Peters and thirty other members.⁵⁴ Carl Peters led a group of three men from the society on a journey in September 1884. They used false names and travelled as third class passengers calling themselves mechanics.⁵⁵ The reason for adopting this disguise was that by this time the British were in contact with the Sultan of Zanzibar. If they had been recognized as Germans, they would have been denied entry. Travelling through Zanzibar, Carl Peters and his men entered the mainland of Tanganyika, making treaties with chiefs on behalf of the German Society for Colonization. Upon his return to Germany, Peter gave a report of his journey to merchants and politicians, which aroused the interest of Germany in securing colonies.⁵⁶ Several initiatives were undertaken by the Hamburg Senate to convince Bismark to take an interest in the scheme even though, according to Moffet, Bismark was against colonization for "colonies had nuisance value, which might make them useful pawns on the international chessboard".⁵⁷ For most of his life Bismark had argued that colonies would bring more trouble to Germany than advantage, and refused to have anything to do with them. However, Bismark changed his mind and in February 1885, he issued a charter of protection declaring that all the territories where

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Roland Oliver, and Greaves Mathew, *History of East Africa* Vol. 1 (London: n.p. 1963), p. 368.

⁵⁵ P. J. Moffet, ed. *Handbook of Tanganyika* (Dar es Salaam: n.p. 1958), p. 50.

⁵⁶ In order to promote the colonization policy, Carl Peters came up with the following manifesto: The German Nation finds itself without a voice in the partition of the world which has been proceeding since the 15th century. Every other civilized nation of Europe possessed in other parts of the world territories on which they are able to impose their language and culture. The German immigrant after he has crossed the frontiers of the Empire becomes a stranger in a foreign land. The German Empire has been rendered great and strong by the unity obtained by the outpouring of German blood. The great stream of German emigration has been lost for many years in foreign countries. The remedy for this deplorable state of affairs, a society has been found in Berlin which will resolutely and energetically undertake the execution of colonial projects and will support the efforts of associations having the same aims." From G. L. Steere, *The Judgement of German East Africa* (London: n.p. 1939), p. 249.

Carl Peters had made treaties with local chiefs were under German government protection and became its colonies.⁵⁸ The Sultan of Zanzibar protested against this letter, arguing the territories were under his rule. As a result of the Sultan's protestations, German warships, with the assistance of the British navy, entered the harbour and forced the Sultan to surrender. Protest came from the Arabs and some African tribal chiefs.⁵⁹

Recognising the administrative inability of the German East Africa Company, which had thereto ruled the country, the German government declared a protectorate over its sphere of influence in 1891 and over the coastal strip, where the company had bought out the Sultan's rights. Germany was anxious to exploit the resources of its new dependency, but lack of communications at first restricted development to the coastal area. The introduction of sisal from Mexico in 1892 by the German agronomist Richard Hindorff marked the beginning of the territory's most valuable industry, which was encouraged by the development of a railway running northeastwards from Tanga to Moshi, which it reached in 1912.

German colonization in East Africa during the period 1884-1914 can be divided into three phases, each of which had an impact on the political, sociological and economic life of the people in Tanganyika. The German presence in Tanganyika lasted for thirty years and within this period a political administrative system at the regional and at the central level, was introduced. Forced labour and taxation were

⁵⁷ Moffet, p. 51.

⁵⁸ John Flint quotes Townsend, " Rise and Fall" p. 133 who argues, Carl Peters got his way by threatening to sell the treaties to King Leopold if the Schutzbrief were not granted". Taken from Oliver and Grease, p. 369.

⁵⁹ Bushiri, an Arab trader, and his friends revolted against the Germans, Chief Mkwawa of the Hehe tribe in Iringa fought against the German rule..." *A History of Tanzania* (Nairobi: 1969), pp. 85 – 122, (eds.) , I. N. Kimambo and A. J. Temu (Gwasa, "German Intervention and African Resistance in Tanzania").

introduced and plans for changing African ethnic groups into a working class society were made.⁶⁰ During this period, 1884 to 1906, Germany was actively involved in securing territories and making its power felt in East Africa. Military expansion was taking place in order to have a full grip on the African colonies. This was, also, a period of competition among European powers.⁶¹ This was the time when the Germans introduced significant political and social changes. These changes included the establishment of regional and central administrative units, the introduction of an oppressive system of taxation, and, perhaps most importantly, a system for exploiting African labour. In effect, what the Germans did was to introduce a system in which the Africans provided the labour force. These political and social changes had a profound impact on the local Tanzanian social-political future.

Before the German colonial invasion in Tanganyika and in Iringa, the Hehe, who are indigenous people of Iringa, had built up a formidable political system, which was a chiefdom under chief Mkwawa. It was from such chiefdoms that resistance to colonial domination; subjugation and exploitation from the late 19th to the 20th century took place.

The German colonial history in the Iringa District began with a fiasco for the Germans when Mkwawa wiped out the Zelewski Expedition in 1891 at Lugalo village.⁶² The Germans, who exerted strong pressure in the interior, planned to rule the Hehe by setting other tribes against them. For some of the tribes, the victory of the Hehe against the

⁶⁰ Detlef Bad, *Deutsch Ostafrika 1900-1914* (Munich, 1970), p. 214 explains the mentality of the settlers about the Africans: "The settlers ranked the Africans as anthropologically inferior and had no real prospects for the future. They remained degraded, suitable only for simple physical work on the plantations managed by the whites who were the proper leaders."

⁶¹ Ibid. pp. 214-15.

⁶² Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika 1891-1941: Lutherans and Moravians in the Southern Highlands* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 69.

German expeditionary forces was a source of inspiration, while for others it was a disappointment.

As a result of this success, the Hehe damaged German prestige and threatened their authority. The question of what to do about the Hehe became an issue for the Germans and affected policy considerations in the central and southern regions. Two punitive expeditions in 1894 and 1896 preceded the administrative occupation of the area by a party of Roman Catholics, Swahilis, *askaris* (soldiers), Tom von Prince, a German administrator, and his wife Magdalene.⁶³ Mkwawa was still at large when Iringa was founded as district headquarters. Many of the Hehe *vanzagila* or councilors seemed to have accepted German authority. The first German Governor, Julius von Soden (nicknamed Mr. Paper), had maintained an emphasis on building communications and minimising violence in the area. He had, furthermore, instructed Tom von Prince to contain Mkwawa by strengthening German influence in the surrounding areas. Von Prince planned to rule the Hehe domains by allying with three rival paramount chiefs: Merere in the west, Kiwanga in the south, and Mpangire.⁶⁴ This arrangement became more stable in Von Prince's mind when two German missionaries of the Berlin Mission visited Iringa from Njombe to lay claim to Uhehe as the Berlin Mission's area of influence. However, the new Governor, who took over in March 1893 from von Soden, preferred a different approach to challenge Mkwawa. Colonel Freiherr von Schele preferred a policy of conquest.⁶⁵

Immediately following von Schele's policy, in 1893 German officials started making alliances with the purpose of encircling Mkwawa with rival tribes. These tribes included all those he had fought previously.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid. See also Redmayne, 'Mkwawa', pp. 434ff.

⁶⁵ John Iliffe, *The History of Tanganyika* (1960), p. 111.

According to Iliffe, the first to ally with the Germans was Kiwanga, the *mutwa* of the Bena, who had succeeded his father, Mtengela, in the Kilombero valley.⁶⁶ Mtengela, who had been defeated by the Hehe on the plateau, as a result of that had moved into the valley. Kiwanga met the Germans in Kilwa in 1890⁶⁷ and they realised that they could use him to destroy Mkwawa. By May 1893, German troops were stationed at Mkwawa's capital for the assault on Iringa.⁶⁸ Furthermore, in December of the same year, Governor von Schele skirted Uhehe and moved with his troops into Ungoni in a move to seal off any support from Mkwawa before a final assault was launched on Kalenga on 30 October 1894. Captain Prince established a new military station at Iringa in August 1896 and, in a series of operations during 1897 and 1898, broke the power of the Hehe. Sudanese troops then helped the Germans to guard Iringa. Mkwawa was hunted for four years; he conducted a guerilla war for four years before he finally committed suicide to avoid the humiliation of being captured by the Germans. Mkwawa's skull was sent to Bremen, Germany, where it was biologically examined and placed in a museum until it was sent back in 1954 following a demand by the Hehe that it be returned.⁶⁹

While the presence of the Germans had been felt in the coastal belt for quite some time, the missionaries in the Southern Highlands played a major role in the colonization of Southern Tanganyika. The German colonial administration saw the importance of involving missionaries in colonization and worked closely with them to achieve their goals. The first German Governor in East Africa supported this collaboration and even encouraged missionaries to go to Ubena, Ukinga and Upangwa for the purpose of establishing German influence there. Von Soden

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

applying his experience in Cameroon, where he had been the governor, argued that resistance was minimal in areas of church influence. In return for their support, the missionaries were promised a free hand in their mission work in both Uhehe and Ubena. Von Prince even hinted to the Berlin missionaries that the Catholics wanted Muhanga in the east and that the rule of first come first served would be applied. If they wanted Muhanga, they had better hurry.⁷⁰ Christopher Bunk, a German missionary, was assigned by the German government to disarm the councilors who were still loyal to Mkwawa and he escorted Zumba-Yumba, a brother of Mkwawa, to Iringa, where he also received the weapons of other leaders who had surrendered.⁷¹ Marcia Wright is correct in saying that if the commercial approach to the territory required peace as a condition, so did the limited funds voted for by the home government for its administration.⁷² Because of this, the missionaries, especially the German Protestant missionaries, played an active role in German colonial policy.⁷³

The German administrators used *akidas*⁷⁴ in areas where the tribal government leaders did not support them. This was the case in Iringa. In Uhehe proper, for example, Mtaki, one of the Bena tribal leaders, was appointed as *akida* while Faluhenga, another Bena leader, was sent to Udzungwa after the defeat of Mkwawa and the execution of Mpangile. At Mbeyela's station, known as Utengule, a tax post had been built. An Arab *akida*, Sana bin Said, assisted by Mbasa Sadik, together with six *askaris* and one policeman, were posted.⁷⁵ For the

⁷⁰ Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika*, p. 71.

⁷¹ Seth Nyagava, *A History of the Bena to 1914* (Songea: Peramiho Press, 1999), p. 118.

⁷² Wright, "Chief Merere and the Germans", *Tanzania Notes and Records*, no. 69 (1969), p. 44.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Akidas* were paid officials employed by the German government to supervise administrative territories and to collect taxes.

⁷⁵ Per Hassing, "German Missionaries and the MajiMaji Rising", *African Historical Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1970), p. 376.

people in Iringa, as well as for others in Tanganyika, the presence of the *akidas* threatened the survival of traditional authority because they had the authority to intervene in local politics. Their intervention in local matters and their challenge to the traditional leaders provoked local resistance. The collection of taxes accompanied by such rough tactics as hut burning, seizing and raping of women, confiscating of cattle and political disregard for local leaders created animosity between the people and the *akidas*.⁷⁶ Another humiliating procedure the *akidas* used was to hold the *mutwa* hostage until his people paid the tax. Groschel lamented that:

The three divine services on August 1, 1901 were poorly attended, because of a very sad event. It was the time of tax collection in Chief Mbeyela's district. No European official was present, only *askaris*. Not only injustice was done, but cruelties committed. The worst part was that several women were held captives in the *askari* camp being subject to all the *askari* indignities. The *askari* captain also held the two sons of Mbeyela captives to let them come to the station. This is the reason for the poorly attended services.⁷⁷

Mbeyela once remarked: "What kind of people are these; they are taking everything from our people even seize and rape our wives!"⁷⁸ What caused dismay among the people was not so much the paying of taxes, but the way they were collected and to whom they were paid. According to the people in Iringa, paying taxes was a form of homage

⁷⁶ Nyagava, *A History of the Bena*, p. 118.

⁷⁷ Report from the Berlin Missionary Society to the Government in Dar es Salaam, February 17 1904 Tanzania National Archives IIX, a 3a, BI. 73-74. This is a quote from a report to Berlin from Groschel at Yakobi. Cf. King Leopold II of Belgium in the independent state of Congo where injustices of the officials to Africans triggered rebellion. They imprisoned women when the people refused to transport supplies and to sell goods below market prices....girls were abducted at the mission stations and treated them in despicable ways. Women who were taken as prisoners some were forced to work in the fields and to work as prostitutes. The government also encouraged inter-tribal slave traffic. The heavy fine levied upon villages tardy in their supplies of foodstuffs compelled the natives to sell their fellows and children to other tribes to meet the fine. See Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1999), pp. 115-139.

⁷⁸ J.M. Makweta, MajiMaji Research Project at Tanzania National Archive 4/68/1/1.

that meant recognition and acknowledgement of one's rule. Force was used to change their loyalty to a new master in the field, subordinating them.⁷⁹

Thus, the defeat of Hehe by the Germans brought a change in leadership, although not necessarily a change in the basic political structure. The Germans introduced a court system that was supervised by Europeans. In other parts of Tanzania, the Germans went on making allies, using one tribe against its neighbours, as it was with the Sangu and Bena against the Hehe, or supporting one group within a society against another. This was possible because the inland peoples were not united. This resulted in a number of local arrangements between the European invaders and the groups within each region, as happened in Uhehe. Thus, an argument can be made that the form of administration employed by the Germans was a combination of both direct and indirect rule. Due to lack of personnel and the force required to change the indigenous political system, the Germans relied on the local system to maintain peace and order, and to collect taxes where no *akidas* had been employed.

In retrospect, while the surrounding tribes appear to have been pleased with the defeat of Mkwawa by the Germans, the local rulers became more and more aware that the Germans were a worse enemy than Mkwawa. The nature of orders, which came to all of them either directly from the Germans themselves or through their agents the *akidas*, was different. They could no longer ignore German authority, even though the commands came from a distance. The German authorities stationed their military forces at mission stations as well as at established military posts.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, although the German

⁷⁹ Nyagava, *A History of the Bena*, p. 124.

⁸⁰ Nyagava, *A History of the Bena*, p. 127.

officials had banned both raiding and warfare, taxation was a symbol of subjection which local leadership found that it weakened their control over their subjects. After that realisation, some of the leaders in Iringa, Ubena and Upangwa began to question German authority until when the Maji Maji Resistance broke out. The German colonial rule perpetuated ethnic divisions favouring the Bena who in turn helped the Germans to fight against the Hehe who had been their rivals. The Germans used the Bena local chiefs to rule the Hehe. In the same manner, the German missionaries decided to work with the Bena on the same lines by opening schools without taking much interest in the Uhehe area. Later on they used the Bena Christians to take leadership positions as they opened mission work in Uhehe.

2. 2 The African Resistance

A common shared awareness of the colonial subjection of traditional leadership determined the sort of response of the tribes in Iringa (the Bena, Ngoni and Sangu) towards the German invaders. For the Bena, especially those who were under Chief Mbeyela and his two sons, demonstrated their response by participating in the Maji Maji Rebellion, from September 1905 to 1907, with their leaders being captured and executed in May and July 1908.⁸¹

The Maji Maji Rebellion was one of the most significant in East Africa of the early resistance mass movements in which the people of Iringa, the Bena, took part. The rebellion was an attempt by the local leaders to resist colonial rule by force. The resistance took place when the Germans were incorporating traditional economies into the colonial economy.

⁸¹ Nyagava, p.128.

After the death of Mkwawa in 1898, the Germans were able to control all Tanganyika's provinces through the establishment of German colonial administration. The colony was divided into districts and by 1914 there were twenty-two of them. All of them, except Iringa and Mahenge, had reverted from military to civil administration. Iringa and Mahenge remained under military control until 1914. The district officers commanded small police units, judged cases and administered punishments. They supervised the collection of taxes through appointed subordinate officials named *akidas* or indigenous rulers wherever such rulers proved reliable. Since so few Germans had prior experience with African resistance against their masters, the Germans suppressed the slightest discontent with great brutality. Since the *akidas* were paid according to the amount they collected, harsh methods were employed to collect taxes. In 1897, when the people refused to pay these taxes, their revolt was swiftly put down with the help of a German punitive expedition.⁸² The continued attempts by the Germans to control a large colony with few personnel and funds led them to emphasise economic development in the colonies to make them self-supporting. Therefore, they established plantations of tropical crops where many Africans were employed as labourers and also assisted European settlers to farm in the northern parts of Tanganyika. With the assistance of the *maakida*, labour was recruited by impressments and through the less direct but no less effective means of the hut tax. Africans could work off the tax or pay it by earning the necessary money. Land confiscation and this form of servitude led to considerable unrest and contributed to a serious uprising.⁸³

⁸² G.C.K. Gwasa and J. Iliffe (eds.), *Records of the MajiMaji Rising*, (Nairobi 1968).

⁸³ Ibid.

When Governor Adolf von Gotzen decided that cotton should be introduced in the south of the colony, Africans were forced to grow it. The cotton scheme introduced in all coastal areas brought great hardship to the people because the land was unsuitable for cotton and crops were poor. The work was poorly organised and workers were brutally controlled. The people were required to work under miserable living conditions and for meager wages. The African workers who were forced to work under extremely severe conditions were not satisfied. Their grievances resulted in a revolt in 1905. This was the start of the Maji Maji Rebellion, which spread first throughout the cotton area around the middle and lower Rufiji River, then spread to Uluguru, Mahenge, the Lukuledi and Kilombero Valleys in Morogoro. The rebellion soon spread as far west as the Southern Highlands, reaching Ruvuma region, Pangwa and Bena in Iringa region by September.⁸⁴

The Maji Maji Rebellion was led by a diviner called Kinjikitile, who claimed to be possessed by the spirit of Kolelo. Kolelo was a religious cult dominant in the region. Kinjikitile claimed that Africans were one and that his medicine-the *maji* (water)-was stronger than European weapons. Kinjikitile claimed that Africans had not been successful in former revolts against the Germans because they were not united. He preached that if they were to win, unity was essential in the struggle against imperialism. This unity would come about through the power of the *maji* medicine.⁸⁵ Their belief in the power of the *maji* made the fighters face bullets without fear, as they attacked Germans and their supporters at district headquarters and mission stations. They soon learned that the *maji* medicine was ineffective.

⁸⁴ Nyagava, 129.

⁸⁵ Iliffe, *A History of Tanganyika*, p. 181.

While the rebellion started in the cotton area in July of 1905, it was not until September 1905 that the people in Iringa, encouraged by the Chabruma and Matumbi emissaries, challenged the supremacy of the Germans. The Maji Maji resistance in Iringa, especially in the Ubena area, was against the repressive system of growing cotton, which was a systematic exploitation of African labour in the cotton plantations. Other grievances played a role that resulted in resistance. Besides the cotton plantation system, there were a variety of other factors that caused the rebellion. These factors included German maladministration lack of contact with their subjects, ignorance of the feelings of local people resulting from this lack⁸⁶ and the hostility which was aroused by other economic measures, particularly the hut tax. *Akidas'* intervention in local politics, undermining local leadership, was also a factor. In addition, requirements that forbade the Bena from hunting, limited their access to water, forests and wildlife and the behaviour of *akidas* and *askaris* were among their other grievances.⁸⁷ In all, both missionary reports and those from indigenous people stressed the taxes and the harshness and indignities which accompanied their collection as major factors. In 1901, Groschel, a missionary, reported:

In July Mbeyela's people encountered problems from tax collectors of the Government. One citizen explained that when he attended the Sunday service, the soldiers took away his two wives. Earlier on, the soldiers had taken away more cattle than what was required for the paying of tax... Immediately I took my donkey and followed the soldiers. They hid. Fortunately, the women came from their hiding places. I told our people (*indigenous converts*) not to fight against the soldiers and their people. Later on the soldiers spoke bad words against me before their Leader from Songea.⁸⁸ (*italics mine*)

⁸⁶ Per Hassing, "German Missionaries and the Maji Maji Rising", *African Historical Studies*, Vol. 3 No. 2 (1970), p. 380.

⁸⁷ W.O. Herderson, "German East Africa 1884 -1918", in Harlow and Chilver, p. 138.

⁸⁸ Dayosisi ya Kusini, *Miaka 40 ya Kwanza, Misioni ya Berlin Kusini mwa Tanzania hasa katika Ubena 1891-1938*, Njombe: ELCT Southern diocese, p. 7. (Southern diocese, *40 Years of Berlin Mission work in Tanzania especially in Ubena 1891-1938*, Njombe: ELCT Southern diocese).

In 1901, Klamroth, a missionary, wrote a report to the Government headquarters in Dar es Salaam:

We were not happy how the soldiers mistreated people in our area. Mbeyela informed us that ten women were taken by force and were raped. We saw some of them for instance a young girl who was raped and four men raped an old woman in succession. Some men were jailed for some days in order to force them pay the tax...⁸⁹

The indignities and harshness perpetrated by the *akidas* and *askaris* in Iringa may be the reason why Mbeyela and his two sons, Ngosingosi and Mpangile, were among the most determined fighters during the resistance and refused to surrender until their capture and execution in May and July 1908. On the other hand, Hassing has argued, that,

the real roots of the uprising were understood by the Berlin missionaries to be the African grievances rooted in deep-seated dissatisfaction with the overpowering European culture that had interfered, sometimes brutally, with African traditional life.⁹⁰

German missionaries, while proclaiming the word of God during these first years of their mission work, not only had a disruptive effect on existing religious customs but also on the social structure. This challenge to the traditional leadership, thus, created a division between the converts to Christianity, mainly comprised of youth, and the elders who adhered to the traditional beliefs. The situation was aggravated by the dual role of religious leader and government representative that the missionaries often assumed.⁹¹ Missionaries were like "chiefs" over their African converts. This was the case in Ilembula where the missionary Martin Priebusch had set up a civil administration with headmen he appointed. At Mufindi and later on at

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 8.

⁹⁰ Hassing, *African Historical Studies*, Vol. 3 No. 2 (1970), p. 308.

Uhanyana, Christopher Bunk also assumed a quasi-official role in the German colonial administration. Missionary Paul Groschel exercised the same powers and even offered shelter in his station to the *akida* and *askaris*. Although Chief Mbeyela had initially given a warm welcome to Groschel, as a result of the indignities committed by the *akida* and *askaris*, he pledged to eliminate the white men and refused to acknowledge Groschel's authority. It was learned that some *askaris* had been ambushed and any tax they had collected had been reclaimed. Realising that his influence over his people was weakening because of the teachings of missionaries, Mbeyela gradually became aware of the impact missionaries were having on his authority. Eventually, as he became more and more dissatisfied with the missionary's interference, the situation at the mission station became tense and he decided to attack the mission station.⁹²

On 4 September 1905, news of the outbreak of the rebellion in Songea reached Yakobi. The news that Mbeyela had joined the rebellion and that the Yakobi station was his target was reported to the missionary by one of the converts. Missionary Groschel, in response to this news, called the *akida* and *askaris* from the tax post and converts from their homes to come to the Yakobi station for protection. The group was comprised of the *akida* San bin Said, three *askaris* named Sadik, Musa, and Sadi, one policeman named Ismael, dependants and converts. Mbeyela called his sons, Ngosingosi and Mpangile, from southern Ubena for consultation. The leader of the southern Bena had already received appeals from Mbeyela to join the rebellion, both from Chabruma of the Ngoni and from a Matumbi emissary, who urged the Bena from Iringa to unite and fight with them against the Germans.⁹³ On the other hand, Paul Groschel made appeals for help to the

⁹¹ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 4 January, 2000 in Iringa

⁹² Nyagava, *A History of the Bena*, p. 133.

Kidugala and Lupembe stations. Groschel built a strong fence around his house. On the day of attack, September 19, 1905, Mbeyela's son, Mpangile, led the forces to attack Yakobi. Mpangile's followers had spears and a few guns bought from Arab traders. After one hour, Mpangile and his followers were defeated and driven off.⁹⁴ According to Nyagava, Groschel noted that although his converts had told him that thirty of Mpangile's followers lay dead on the battleground, Groschel only saw eight bodies.⁹⁵ Their colleagues had carried the other dead bodies and many wounded away. Daudi Mung'ong'o, one of the Bena who fought on the missionary's side, reported that forty of Mpangile's followers died.⁹⁶ The attack at Yakobi proved a failure. Groschel had won the battle because of his superior weapons. On Groschels' side were three soldiers and two cooks, Yona Mvangwa and Lutengamaso, missionary Hahn, plus Johannes, a teacher, and Groschel's wife, who had acquired an African name Mwangasama. Groschel reports that there were between 1500 and 2000 enemy troops against only ten people armed with guns in their mission house.⁹⁷

Despite the defeat, Mpangile was determined to fight on. Christian Schumann, the missionary at Lupembe, who had reinforced his station with 300 men, advised Groschel to flee from Yakobi and come to Lupembe. Thus, when Mpangile, this time joined by his brother Ngosingosi, came to attack Yakobi for the second time, no Europeans were there. They burned down all the mission houses and attacked the few converts who had returned to Yakobi after staying away for months. The rebellion spread to many other mission stations and continued until the end of 1905, when Mpangile was captured and

⁹³ Oelke, pp. 157-159

⁹⁴ Groschel "Bericht des Missioner Groschel, 5 September 1905," *Berliner Missionsbericht*, p. 89.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid. , 135.

executed. Later on, after the missionaries had fled, the Government sent reinforcements, led by Hauptmann Nigmann (*Bwana Jambo*) who was in Mahenge on a similar operation, to Ubena.⁹⁸

The Germans, beginning in October 1905 had begun to suppress the rebellion, employing a scorched-earth policy, destroying and burning crops. "Submission was compelled by patrol warfare in which military engagements were secondary to seizure of food and destruction of crops".⁹⁹ It was the belief of military commanders, as well as Governor Gotzen, that "only hunger and want can bring about a final submission... Gotzen had, subsequently, decided to create a famine throughout the area".¹⁰⁰ There was, as a result, untold suffering in the region, which eventually forced the people to reveal where the leaders of the rebellion were hiding. According to Graham, "the Government's relentless pursuit of the *majimaji* rebels seemed to convince the rest of the people... that mild adaptations would serve them better than open rebellion".¹⁰¹

By 1907, following the death of Mkwawa and Mbeyela which put an end to the rebellion, German power had triumphed in Iringa, Uhehe and Ubena. Nevertheless, although they suffered defeat, the Hehe and Bena had mounted a significant challenge to the Germans' authority.

In the final analysis, the Maji Maji crisis demonstrates some important points about the nature of European penetration in and around Iringa. First, the cruelty and ruthlessness of the German power had triumphed in Uhehe and Ubena and acquired respect due to the presence of troops. Second, although the mission stations were closely associated

⁹⁷ Groschel, *Berlin Missionsberichte*, (1905), p. 90

⁹⁸ Nyagava, p. 136.

⁹⁹ Iliffe, p. 193.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

with the colonial government, some of the local chiefs enjoyed a good relationship with the missionaries and even invited them to open mission stations in their villages. Third, indigenous Christians felt that they were a community that needed to care for one another and looked to the mission station for protection. They reported the movements of non-Christians to the missionaries and, in so doing, weakened the resistance. Fourth, Maji Maji was the seed of a movement that lay dormant between the World Wars when Tanganyika was a British mandated territory.

After the Maji Maji resistance, Tanganyika found itself involved in the First World War which had started in Europe in 1914. An event that took place far away from Africa set up a series of ripples that reached as far as Tanganyika and Iringa in Uhehe. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo and the outbreak of the First World War, which followed it, were indeed to have a significant effect, both in Uhehe and on the growth of the church in the area.

The Africans became victims and had to suffer from a war they had no interest in. As Niwagila says: "Africans were forced to fight and defend their colonial masters pointing guns against their own brothers and sisters".¹⁰² Governor Heinrich Schnee had hoped to preserve neutrality for he regarded the colony as indefensible, he also feared African rebellion, and wished to spare his subjects the horrors of war. But in doing so he was opposed by an older, military tradition of colonialism represented by Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck. It was Germany's strategy to attract as many enemy troops as possible away from its important centers. Lettow-Vorbeck's brilliant campaign was the climax of Africa's

¹⁰¹ Ibid. , p. 32.

¹⁰² Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church*, p. 146.

exploitation: using it as a mere battle-field.¹⁰³ According to Adam Brown, the First World War engaged more than a million Africans, who had to participate in the war in different capacities.¹⁰⁴

As the war broke in 1914 the "Schutzgebiet" had a troop of 2,500 African soldiers with only 260 German officers, as well as 2,000 African police.¹⁰⁵ Africans continued to become victims as the war continued because more Africans were recruited, bringing the total to 11,000 African soldiers with 300 Germans.¹⁰⁶ The war revealed the real face of the colonizer. History had always taken for granted that the West had a special quality of race, culture and environment, and that this gave them a permanent superiority over other communities in the world.¹⁰⁷

During the period of the war, from August 1914 to November 1918, many Africans lost their lives in East Africa. Some argued that the war would have not lasted long if von Lettow-Vorbeck, the German General, had not insisted on fighting.¹⁰⁸ Such a claim cannot be accepted easily, for it is true that during this time the struggle for power, national identity, monopoly, and capitalism was very strong among the colonizing nations, especially Germany and Britain. These nations controlled East Africa.¹⁰⁹ As long as the war continued in Europe, every country had high hopes of winning. No country ever thought to lay down arms.

¹⁰³ John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 241.

¹⁰⁴ Adam Brown, *The Missionary Outlook in the Light of the War* (New York: 1920), pp. 127-137.

¹⁰⁵ Quoted by Niwagila, from Heinrich Schnee, *Deutsch Ostafrika* (Leipzig: 1919), p. 27f.

¹⁰⁶ Niwagila quotes Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, *Meine Erinnerungen aus Ostafrika* (Leipzig: 1920), p. 17.

¹⁰⁷ James Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1995), p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ W. E. Ward and L. W. White, *East Africa: A Country of Change 1870-1970* (New York: 1971), p. 79.

¹⁰⁹ D. W. Nabudere, *Imperialism in East Africa*, Vol. 1 (London: 1981), p. 5-36.

During the years following 1914, the pattern of growth of the church was determined not only by the initiative work of indigenous agents but also by the pressures and restrictions imposed by the impact of war on East Africa. This will be discussed later.

The Mission Board of Europe which was in charge of all mission societies had great concern for the position of missionaries. Karl Axenfeld, the Mission Inspector in the Berlin Mission in East Africa, made an appeal to the Secretary of State for the German Colonial Office in Germany, Dr. Solf, requesting that the mission stations and missionaries in East Africa should not be disrupted by the war.¹¹⁰ Although Dr. Solf promised to deliver the appeal to the colonial government in Deutsch Ostafrika, it proved futile due to a communication breakdown.¹¹¹ The appeal was a reminder to both the Germans and the British in East Africa to live up to their agreement of article 6 of the Berlin Conference, which granted freedom to the missions to build churches without interference of any country.¹¹²

Contrary to this agreement, "the Germans arrested British missionaries and maltreated their converts" while the British "deported German missionaries and suspected their converts".¹¹³ However, the Germans did not mistreat the missionaries after discovering that most

¹¹⁰ Karl Axenfeld, *Germany's Battle for the Freedom of Christian Missions* (Berlin: 1919), p. 13f.

¹¹¹ Governor Schnee shows in his book that the British cut off the communication system as soon as war was declared. See Schnee, *Deutsch Ostafrika im Weltkrieg*, (Leipzig 1919).

¹¹² The article says: "To protect and to further without distinction of nationality or creed all religious, and scientific and charitable undertakings designed to instruct the natives and make clear to them the advantages and values of civilization. Liberty of conscience and religious tolerance were expressly guaranteed to the natives as well as to all nationals and foreigners. The free and public exercise of all religions, the right to build houses of worship, no matter to what creed they may be devoted, were to be subject to no hindrance, no restrictions". Niwagila, p. 148.

of them worked hard to prevent Africans from taking advantage of the war and revolting against the Germans for the second time.

The military campaign that started in East Africa involved both European and African personnel and severely disrupted the economic development of Tanganyika. It was in East Africa where most of the fighting took place and Tanganyika being the battle ground.

There were also, important political, social and economic outcomes for the people in Tanganyika. In the first place, the war completely distressed the economy of Tanganyika. European farms and plantations were abandoned and neglected. African cultivation suffered equally badly and there was famine and disease among those who survived. Large numbers of troops and porters on both sides were killed or wounded, and certainly the majority were Africans. Those who survived had seen the Europeans against each other and had learnt that the Europeans were not unbeatable. The immediate political outcome was that Germany had to give up all her overseas colonies, which were handed over to the newly created League of Nations.¹¹⁴

The war brought a different ambiance on the side of the Africans, an emotional relief. The establishment of mandated administration and the founding of indirect rule through chiefs developed a new sense of African consciousness.¹¹⁵

2.3 British Colonial Rule (1919-1961)

Germany's loss in the First World War ended her colonial interlude in eastern Africa. Britain occupied German East Africa during the war that

¹¹³ I. N. Kimambo and A. J. Temu, *A History of Tanzania*, (Dar es Salaam: East African Publishing House, 1969), p. 132f.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

ended in 1918, and renamed it Tanganyika in 1922 when the League of Nations consigned Tanganyika to the British empire.¹¹⁶ Tanganyika was not a colony in the formal sense but an internationally mandated territory to be administered in the interests of peace, order and good government and of the material and moral wellbeing of its inhabitants.¹¹⁷

The coming of British rule was greeted with mixed feelings. The chiefs and the majority of the Hehe, who did not like the Germans, were pleased to see the Germans leave. Not knowing the character and attitude of the new master, however, left them unsure about the future. The immediate victims of the change were those who had worked for the Germans in the war, in offices and in the plantations.

The first five years of British rule in Tanganyika was used for reconstruction, not only after the destruction caused by the First World War but also because of an influenza epidemic that had hit the territory. In addition, the territory was subjected to a monstrously debilitating famine. The lingering economic effects of the Maji Maji uprising in the southern and eastern regions also needed to be addressed.

The British policy in Tanganyika still resembled, if in somewhat less brutal fashion, the early German policy, which had viewed the country as a resource serving European needs. Development was not aimed at benefiting the African population directly; Africans received very little education and were generally excluded from middle-level or high-level positions in government and business. Tanganyika's economy was

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 151.

¹¹⁶ Rodger Yeager, *Tanzania: An African Experiment*, (Boulder: Western Press, 1982), p. 11.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

organized to meet Britain's post-war needs, which were best served by integrating the economies of Tanganyika, Kenya and Uganda.¹¹⁸

The British never altered their view of Tanganyika as a source of raw materials and trade for the British economy, but the significance of that approach became increasingly apparent as Britain tried desperately to rebuild its war-battered economy. This seems to have led to a more active British role in Tanganyika's affairs after 1945. The underlying philosophy of British policy remained the same: growth was concentrated in the agricultural products and raw materials export sector; an unequal system of education and income was maintained on the basis of race. An informal but effective colour bar prevented Africans from rising in the public service. The economic sector was blocked by an Asian entrepreneurial elite, which was encouraged by the colonial authorities partly to provide a socio-economic buffer between them and the African community. The local political level was still dominated by conservative native authorities that reacted unsympathetically to demands for change.¹¹⁹ The British assumed that the chiefs enjoyed power and influence in local areas and that they could be successful vehicles for helping to put into practice British policy. What the British did not realize was that any power the chiefs enjoyed stemmed from the belief of the people that their interests were being represented. Inevitably, the relationship of the chiefs with the British won the people's confidence in the chiefs and brought the people to see the chiefs as nothing more than employees of the British.

¹¹⁸ C. George Kahama, *The Challenge for Tanzania's Economy* (London: James Currey, 1986), p. 1.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Like the Germans, the British introduced indirect rule¹²⁰ in three ways: they recognised the local chiefs (*mutwa*), so that colonial laws could easily be transmitted through them; they established Native Courts that dealt with customary law issues; and they established Native Treasuries, which assisted in collecting taxes from the people. This strategy enabled the British to unite the chiefs in the country. Governor Byatt believed that there was no alternative to this practice:

It is beyond the bounds of possibility that a single European officer can properly administer his district or sub-district except with the assistance of the tribal chiefs as intermediaries, and it is therefore the policy of this Government to support and strengthen the authority of chiefs among their people rather than to acquiesce in its decay. In any case, it is a policy which no doubt would be forced upon us at some future stage of social evolution, when the people begin to demand some voice in the regulation of their own affairs; and the early chaos which resulted in some districts where tribal authority was entirely destroyed by the Germans is ample demonstration of the unwisdom of adopting their conception of the government of native people.¹²¹

In Tanganyika, the lack of a dominant ethnic group and the relatively widespread use of a single language facilitated the transformation of local anger and frustration with British policy into an integrated national movement. Unfortunately, one British policy enjoyed a success that not even the unified strength of mind of the people to become independent could overcome: the creation in the Tanganyikan

¹²⁰ Lord Lugard F. D. author of a book entitled, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1923, used tribal rule in the implementation of British policy in Nigeria. Aspects of the indirect rule system has been a continual policy of British colonial rule since it was first used with the Catholic Scottish highland tribes by Protestant Britain in the 17th century. In South Africa indirect rule goes back to Theophil Shepstone who was called by the English government to take charge of the native department, an office of no ordinary importance and responsibility, when 1000 Africans had to be managed, their disputes settled and judgements awarded. He did fulfill these duties with great ability during the mid 19th century. See also Jeff Guy, An accommodation of patriarchs: Theophilus Shepstone and the foundations of the system of Native Administration in Natal, in *Colloquium Masculinities in Southern Africa*, University of Natal, Durban 2-4 July 1997 Vol. 1.

¹²¹ Tanzania National Archives, *Native Administration Policy 1929 –1926*, File No.777.

economy of a deep, structural dependence on external relations, especially with Uganda and Kenya.

The basic lack of attention given to education for Africans before independence in Tanganyika was consistent with Britain's apparent strategy of reducing the possibility of a mass movement for independence and keeping the country in a highly dependent position: independence would hardly seem a realistic possibility without a sufficient number of educated leaders who could oversee the country's primary institutions. Just as it happened in the church, after independence, the impact of the British strategy became quite clear in the controversy that erupted within the country over the transfer of jobs from Europeans to Africans. The government's speed of Africanisation seemed too slow in the eyes of the unions and employees who saw themselves as the natural beneficiaries of the change.¹²²

Education had been established on fairly clear racial lines: separate schools were established for Africans, Asians and Europeans. Europeans and Asians enjoyed a system of six years of primary school and six years of secondary school. African children faced a more uneven system of four years of primary school, four years of middle school, two years of junior secondary school and two years of senior secondary school.¹²³ This fragmentation was undoubtedly formulated to create a number of points at which education could be considered complete, thus creating a greater number of opportunities for compelling children to leave school. Each point of transition from a lower to a higher form provided an opportunity for restricting the

¹²² Thomas Jesse Jones, *Education in East Africa* (New York: n. d.), 23-24.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

movement of African children through the system and for controlling the educational pyramid.

To magnify the problems that already existed, curricula were generally oriented towards developing clerical skills for the few Africans who would enter the modern sector to provide assistance to the non-Africans holding middle-level and upper-level positions. This education system not only created a structure that would bring about African dependency upon well-trained non-Africans, but also effectively created an elite system as was outlined in the 1924 annual report of the Education Department:

... an educational system which will provide for African needs and at the same time produce a virile and loyal citizen of the Empire... where character, health, industry, and a proper appreciation of the dignity of manual labour rank as of the first importance...the school... is the center of all Government propaganda work.¹²⁴

Based on the above objectives, the African education was planned to shape and produce Africans who could work for, support and accept the colonial administration. In the first place, the British colonial education policy was primarily intended for the children of chiefs, sub-chiefs and headmen.¹²⁵ The colonial government feared that if the African educated class became independent of the tribal authority, there would be a danger of political agitation against that authority and later against the central colonial government. It was important to prevent what had happened in India from taking place in Tanganyika. Also since the government had introduced colonial rule through tribal

¹²⁴ Marjorie Mbilinyi, "Peasant Education in Tanzania", in *The African Review: A Journal of African Politics, Development and International Affairs*, Vol. 6 No. 2 1976, p. 237.

¹²⁵ Minutes of the Tanganyika Administrative Conference of 1924, pp. 31-32, in Tanganyika National Archives, Dar es Salaam.

chiefs, it was appropriate to educate them so that they could effectively carry out the colonial instructions and orders.¹²⁶

Africans resented this system and criticized it. Actions taken by the British government, such as the setting of industrial wages, the close control of union activity and political organizations, the extraction of agricultural surplus through cooperatives, and the development of a racially divided education system, produced a reaction among the people of Tanganyika that fed the peaceful movement for independence. This consciousness not only affected the nation but, as we shall see later on, played a role in the missionary work. In light of the above, both the Germans and the British government perpetuated racial and ethnic divisions and the missionaries who established mission fields and worked on ethnic lines also adopted this strategy. These racial divisions brought about political awareness as we shall see in the following section.

2.4 The movement towards political independence in Tanganyika (1925-1961)

It is not the aim in this section to describe in detail how political parties were formed and how independence was finally attained in Tanzania. The focus of this section is on how the growth of African self-consciousness affected African Christians, leading towards a self-governing Church, even though it was under the leadership of missionaries. There were a number of factors that contributed to political awareness in Iringa and in Tanganyika as a whole. The slave trade carried out by the Arabs and some of the European countries had proved to the Africans that the humanhood (*utu*) of Africans had been abused because of the disunity among the Africans. As a result of

¹²⁶ Circular from the Chief Secretary to Administrative Officers, May 18, 1925 in

this weakness, they were easily attacked by Arabs and Europeans and taken as slaves and subservients. This historical fact of disunity degraded the African personality, for it was a form of human abuse. Political awareness, however, restored the dignity of the African person. Colonialism was precisely another form of slavery after real slavery had been put to an end. The era of colonialism not only deprived Africa of its wealth but also degraded Africans who were attached to tribal traditions and cultural beliefs.

A growing concern about social and economic inequality in Tanganyika was the basis of the African political parties in Tanganyika which fought against colonialism. The earliest roots of Tanganyika's independence can be traced to the Maji Maji rebellion. It was the first instance of political resistance that brought different tribes together.¹²⁷ During the decades following the rebellion, the nationalist movement gradually solidified. In 1925, following the transfer of colonial power from Germany to Great Britain, the Tanganyika African Association (TAA) was founded, initially as an organization of the African elite in urban areas. The TAA served as a channel for grassroots resentment against colonial policies. Gradually, the TAA spread into the rural areas and became a political force although most of its members were still from urban areas.

Cameron's initial colonial attitude toward African associations was expressed in an official statement by one of his successors:

These African Associations crop up regularly from time to time, generally under the auspices of semi-literate politically-minded mission-trained youths... It is important to see that they are handled properly, i.e., with a due amount of sympathy and

Tanganyika National Archives, Dar es Salaam.

¹²⁷ Julius Nyerere in C. Stahl, *Tanganyika Sail into the Wilderness* (Hague: Mouton & Company, 1961), pp. 6 – 7.

support for what is legitimate and prompted by reasonable motives and a due amount of firmness for what is not. They are inevitable and the best line is to deflect their energies and aspirations of their members into the paths of social welfare and away from politics and supererogation.¹²⁸

The above quote shows a heavy-handed paternalism and suggests that the colonial government was not worried about African interest groups. The associations were not of tribal groups, even though at first their composition was of the more educated members of single indigenous societies. The associations were formed to assist the social and material needs of increasingly marginalized men and women, who had common aspirations in the colonial economy and occupational structure but were frustrated by a lack of opportunity and by traditional social restrictions at home.¹²⁹

The TAA became politically active after World War II when its membership grew to include more rural Africans. It later formed the nucleus of an openly anti-colonial political party that would finally bring national independence to the mainland.

Tribal unions mainly developed among a few formally educated, the Chagga of Kilimanjaro, the Haya of Bukoba, and the Zaramo of the Coast, the Sukuma of Mwanza and the Sambia of North-eastern Tanganyika.¹³⁰ These unions later grew to oppose the British colonial administration. They were also critical of traditional tribal leaders, who came to power through heredity.¹³¹ Such unions never developed in Uhehe because there were very few educated people in the early 1920s. The hereditary system not only deprived capable people of their leadership opportunities, but also gave the chiefs the opportunity

¹²⁸ Roger Yeager, *Tanzania, an Experiment*, p. 14.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Henry Bienen, *Tanzania* (Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 24.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 35.

to exercise power in a corrupt fashion over their fellow Africans. In most cases the tribal chiefs allied themselves with the British administration, in order to maintain their power. This created a negative attitude toward tribal chiefs not only among the Hehe but also among other Tanganyikan tribes as well.¹³² One consequence of the chief's alliance was that as soon as the country attained its independence, the Government Act No. 13 of 1963 removed the status of chiefs, which had been supported by colonial powers.¹³³

During the 1950s, Julius Nyerere dominated Tanganyika politics. In this decade, a constitutional revolution brought the country from British control to the threshold of independence. Nyerere was the man behind all these early steps towards independence. Life for most Tanganyikans remained peaceful, but they struggled to grow sufficient food to appease hunger. The one genuine change that took place was a growing consciousness of African dignity, of responsibility for local and national affairs of the country and a dawning awareness that the white rulers should not be a permanent feature of Tanganyikan society. This profound change of outlook was almost entirely due to Nyerere. During the war, Nyerere had been educated at Makerere College in Uganda. His early political thinking was revealed when he founded a branch of the Tanganyika African Association, a discussion group which began to take an active part in politics after the Second World War. Nyerere, being a devout Catholic, taught in a Roman Catholic Mission school until in 1949 when he became the first African student from Tanganyika to attend a British University. After graduating, he again taught in a Catholic school, outside Dar es Salaam, where he espoused his political ideas. In Edinburgh, he got prepared intellectually and emotionally for the task of organising and

¹³² Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church*, p. 69.

¹³³ Niwagila, p. 70.

leading his people to self-reliance, with the ultimate goal of self-government. He soon was elected president of the TAA, but this organization, according to him, could not accomplish the desired revolution in national life. However, the TAA was the most important forerunner of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU). On July 7, 1954, he founded the Tanganyika African National Union, which had as its slogan '*uhuru na umoja*' or 'freedom and unity'. This was formed in order to create a mass party, which would fertilise the roots of the society of Tanganyika with his nationalist ideas. Tanganyika's move to independence should be understood in Uhehe to mean freedom from the yoke of colonial government and freedom from the yoke of tribal chiefs who spent a lot of time trying to define their powers in implementing colonial regulations according to the Hehe customs and traditions.

Nyerere was fundamentally a political man with Christian influences. He saw the poverty and misery of his people as evils, which were his responsibility to change. He believed Tanganyikans would never experience the feeling of national dynamism essential to change their social conditions until they had discarded colonial rule. He, thus, led his people to battle for the right of governing themselves. Only then would he and they gain the opportunity to attack the roots of poverty. Nyerere found that his main barrier was less imperial domination than paternalism. Tanganyika became a sovereign state on December 9, 1961 and Adam Sapi Mkwawa the chief of the Hehe became the first speaker. In 1964 formed a union with Zanzibar and changed its name to Tanzania. Its constitution detailed individual rights among other things. According to the Tanzanian constitution, every citizen has the right to freedom of expression, of movement, of religious belief, of association within the limits of the law, subject in all cases only to the maintenance of equal freedom for all other citizens. Furthermore, the

state has not adopted any creed. In Parliament, when taking the oath, every member holds a book which represents one's faith or belief. There is separation between church and state.

Another development as far as the independence of Tanzania is concerned was the move towards self-reliance.¹³⁴ In 1967, the Arusha Declaration was formulated and it became a guiding principle, by which the country was to be directed, without excluding the church. The Declaration defined what socialism meant in the context of Tanzania, it set out qualifications which had to be fulfilled by all in leadership positions in politics and public service, and it demanded a much more serious commitment to self-reliance in Tanzania's development.¹³⁵ It stressed that there is no true freedom and socialism without freedom and work. Therefore, one can say that political awareness and the policy of self-reliance, of building the nation, challenged and awakened the church in Tanzania to plan again and use its available resources in the most useful way in the mission work of the church.

¹³⁴ Roger Yeager, *Tanzania, An African Experiment* (Boulder: Westview Press), pp.59-61. , Julius K. Nyerere, "The Arusha Declaration" in Nyerere, *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism*(New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p.28. This version of the declaration incorporates several revisions that Nyerere made to clarify ambiguities in an earlier English version translated from the original Kiswahili.

¹³⁵ Rodger, p. 60.

2.5 Conclusion

The colonial structure of Tanzania before and after the Second World War was not strikingly different from that of any other nation with foreign-controlled governmental institutions. Development was not aimed at benefiting the African population directly; Africans received very little education and were generally excluded from middle-level or high-level positions in government, business and in the church. Germans and British governments perpetuated racial and ethnic divisions and the missionaries also adopted this strategy.

In retrospect, it is clear that the actions taken by Britain such as the setting of industrial wages, the close control of union activity and political organization, the extraction of agricultural surplus through co-operatives, and the development a racially divided education system produced a reaction among the people of Tanzania that fed the peaceful movement for independence. In their strive to achieve independence, the people were united in their desire to remove the colonial hegemony and install popular leadership in their place. As this was taking place in the government, the church was also experiencing the same. Now let us explore the beginnings of the mission societies and the development and role of indigenous agents in the Iringa diocese.

Chapter Three

The advent of the Lutheran mission societies and the establishment of mission stations in the Iringa diocese (1899-1999)

3. Introduction

If we are to understand and appreciate what has happened as a result of the inroads of Christianity in Iringa, it is important that we know something about its history. This means we have to examine by whom, when, and by what means the gospel was transmitted to the people. In the Iringa diocese, as in other places in Tanzania, Christians from the west brought Christianity. This was done towards the end of the 19th century and in most of the 20th century. Committed individuals, responded to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ, and were ready to obey and follow this obligation, which is also our obligation as Christians, to witness about Christ to others. The need and the will to obey and fulfill the command of our Lord remains until today a prerequisite, which makes missionary work an obligation to reach the unevangelised.

With the conclusion of the Berlin Conference of 1884/85, the German East Africa Company under Carl Peters realized the importance of involving missionaries in colonial politics and saw such a close working together as helpful and suitable. That is why district administrators encouraged missionaries to build churches in their districts. The German East Africa colonies had to serve the interests of the Germans that included economic and political interests, as well as various missionary societies as participants in this venture. Missionary

societies came forward to lend a helping hand. Among them was the Berlin Missionary Society.¹³⁶

This chapter deals with the Lutheran Mission Societies, who responded to the call and came to work in Iringa, Tanzania. These were missionary societies in Germany that took the opportunity at the right time and in the right place to do mission work in German East Africa. One of the societies was the Berlin Mission Society, which came to establish its work in Iringa in 1899. Later, it was joined by other missionary societies: the Swedish Evangelical Mission in 1938,¹³⁷ and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America later on in 1987.

3.1 Iringa under the Berlin Mission Society (1899-1919)

The Berlin Missionary Society (BMS) generally abbreviated as Berlin I, was an older society, and was founded by a few government officials and scholars in Germany in 1824. It was a non-denominational missionary society, with a longer period of experience in mission work and was better financed and with its "well established support in the Prussian Church of the Union".¹³⁸ Patriotism and pietism in many aspects were some of the features of Berlin I. Their value system accommodated the love of their state and the safeguarding of the social *status quo* with missionary enthusiasm.¹³⁹ The constitutional creedal foundation of the society of 1824 expressed the conviction that:

¹³⁶ Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika 1891-1941: Lutherans and Moravians in the Southern Highlands* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 6-10.

¹³⁷ O. K. Kasumba, "Vyama vya Missioni baada ya Vita Kuu ya Pili", in *Karne ya Kwanza ya Injili 1891-1991* ("Mission Societies after the Second World War" in *The First Century of the Gospel in the Southern Zone 1891-1991*) (Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 1991), p. 29-30.

¹³⁸ Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika*, p. 14.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

The brotherly cooperation of evangelical Christians of all denominations, who have proclaimed the word of truth according to the Scriptures without human additions and discord regarding insignificant differences of opinion has won to Christianity many from the pagan people.¹⁴⁰

This was a commitment which opened the way for participation in various other mission societies. The Berlin Mission Society had been involved in the formation of the Evangelical Mission Society, but because of the latter's abandonment of the symbolic books of the Lutheran Church, the Augsburg Confession¹⁴¹ and the Luther's small catechism, its nationalism, and its involvement in medical work instead of evangelism, the two had subsequently severed connections.¹⁴² In order to bring unity and solidarity among its missionaries, it was important for the society to develop a common base for its preparation and training of its missionaries and clergy. Thus, the Augsburg Confession was adopted as its fundamental statement of the faith. When the BMS had to send missionaries to South Africa in 1859, they used the adapted statement of faith and directed them that:

All your preaching has to be on the Holy Scriptures, and we commit you to the teaching of the Old and New Testament according to the confession of the Lutheran Church, namely the unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's catechism, that according to these you teach the Gospel soundly, clearly and fully and that you organize everything according to the only rule and guideline of faith and life.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ S. von Sicard, "The Berlin Mission Society in the Southern Highlands" in *African Theological Journal* (Arusha: Makumira Publications, 1991), p. 224.

¹⁴¹ The Augsburg Confession of 1530 is the first and oldest of a series of documents produced by the Reformation age and known as "Confessional Writings" or simply "Confessions". It was presented at the Diet of Augsburg and it initiated an entirely new genre of theological and ecclesiastical literature. It is a product of turbulent times during which it made not only ecclesiastical but also political history, it is the fundamental declaration of faith of the Lutheran Church. It sets forth the distinctive Lutheran doctrines in twenty-one articles especially the idea of justification by grace through faith.

¹⁴² Thomas Spear and Isaria N. Kimambo, (eds.), *East African Expressions of Christianity* (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota, 1999), p. 69.

These directives are of particular importance to Iringa since among those commissioned at the time was Pastor Alexander Merensky, who was chosen by the BMS to lead a group of missionaries to go and preach the Word of God to Tanzania. He was chosen because of his twenty-two years of mission fieldwork and under his leadership the Transvaal Mission in South Africa among the Bapedi people developed and expanded.¹⁴⁴ The group of missionaries who left from Durban to go to Tanzania included three pastors: Alexander Merensky, Franke and Carl Nauhaus, as well as assistant pastors Christian Schumann and Christoph Bunk, and four brothers, namely Franke, Rohring, Krause and Thomas Nauhaus. In addition, two African guides and interpreters accompanied them, namely Afrika and Nathanael.¹⁴⁵ Soon after Paul Groschel, Martin Priebusch and Wilhem Neuberger joined them between 1891 and 1900. As Wright observed, "in describing the Berlin Mission, the word paternalism must come to the fore. Patriotism and pietism had been merged in the motives of the aristocratic young men who formed the first Committee of the Berlin Mission".¹⁴⁶ This view can moreover be demonstrated and supported by their activities both in South Africa and later in the Southern Highlands. Wright goes on to say: "Their value system accommodated the glorification of the state and maintenance of the social *status quo* with a missionary zeal".¹⁴⁷ It is not, therefore, surprising that members of the Berlin Mission expedition to the Southern Highlands became involved in colonial politics. For example, when Mkwawa, the chief of the Hehe, damaged German prestige and threatened to harden resistance, the question of what to do about the Hehe influenced policy considerations elsewhere in the Southern Highlands. Von Soden, therefore, sought to establish

¹⁴³ Von Sicard, "The Berlin Mission Society in the Southern Highlands", p. 227.

¹⁴⁴ Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika*, p. 17.

¹⁴⁵ The author would have liked to get their second names but the informants would not reveal.

¹⁴⁶ Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika*, pp. 13-14.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* p. 14.

communications with German nationals in the area who were willing to help. This he found in the missionaries, the Berliners in particular. He sought political reports from missionaries behind Mkwawa's back and preferred to collaborate with them, urging pastors like Carl Nauhaus to make informal contacts with Mkwawa who was then still at large. In return for their services, he promised a free hand for their mission field in Uhehe.¹⁴⁸

3.2 The establishment of mission stations

According to oral sources¹⁴⁹, the advent of the Lutheran church in Iringa was a result of the initiative of a person called Mwamagelanga who was a worker on a tea plantation at Lupembe (Njombe) in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania. Since Christianity had already been established in Ubena since 1898¹⁵⁰, its influence had started to have some impact in the lives of the converts. Mwamagelanga took the initiative to ask the missionary who had opened a mission station at Lupembe in 1899 to consider opening a mission station at Idete, his home area, along the Udzungwa ranges in Iringa. The missionary considered his request and shared it with his colleagues. The missionaries responded positively and, after some time, they arranged for a mission journey to the area.¹⁵¹ Missionaries Christopher Bunk and Wilhelm Neuberg began their mission journey on 8 July 1899 from Ikombe. Passing through the already established mission stations of Bulongwa, Tandala, and Kidugala, they arrived in Mufindi on 28 July 1899. Wilhelm Neuberg remained in Mufindi while Christopher Bunk went up to Uhafiwa village where the Germans had left their military

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 68-69.

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Gaspar Magava 6 February 1999, Idete.

¹⁵⁰ Hans M. Kobler, *100 Years of the Gospel in the Southern Diocese* (Njombe: ELCT Southern diocese, 2000), p. 2.

¹⁵¹ Dira, *Miaka 100 ya Injili Uheheni (100 Years of the Gospel in Uhehe), 1899-1999*, (Dar es Salaam: Inter Press, 1999), p. 8

base.¹⁵² On 2 October 1899 Wilhelm Neuberg visited Itonya in the Muhanga village, accompanied by indigenous Christians of Ubena, where they had already established mission stations. He opened a mission station in October 1899 at Itonya–Muhanga along the Udzungwa mountain ranges. Among others, the two Africans who had accompanied Neuberg were Essau Nyanganani and Ruben.¹⁵³ The chief of the Muhanga, *Mtemi* Pangamasasi Msuva, welcomed the German missionary and gave him the necessary assistance in the process of establishing the first Lutheran mission station in the Iringa diocese.¹⁵⁴ In order to maintain good relations and for security reasons, *Mtemi* Msuva informed other neighbouring local chiefs of Idete, Idunda and Ipalamwa villages about the establishment of the mission station.¹⁵⁵ The rulers helped the missionary to mobilise people to participate in the construction of the mission station. During that time, there was a close relationship between the German colonial government and the German missionaries. It was not easy for indigenous people to differentiate between the two.

Neuberg chose Itonya as a site for the mission station due to its fertile soil, the proximity of water and the availability of building materials, especially timber, grass and stones. While the station was being established and buildings were being built, Neuberg and the Bena teachers began to preach to the people of Udzungwa. Oral sources report that Neuberg made tea with sugar and offered it to the people. Relating tea with the Gospel, Neuberg told them that the word of God was sweeter than the tea that they had been offered.¹⁵⁶ After having

¹⁵² Many German military bases were built in Uhehe area during the time when the Germans searched for Chief Mkwawa, who was not ready to be ruled by the Germans.

¹⁵³ The author could not get the second name from the informants.

¹⁵⁴ Diary of Msabaha Msuva at Muhanga Parish, 1904 –1994 at Muhanga church archive, Iringa.

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Gaspar Magava, 6 February 1999, Idete.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with Gaspar Magava, 6 February 1999, Idete.

the support of local chiefs, and serving the indigenous people with sweet tea, the missionaries began the work of evangelisation by inviting people to church. Furthermore, the employment that the missionaries offered to the local community when building the mission stations was an incentive to the people to become Christians, although most of the money earned was used to pay taxes. Sources report that the missionaries at their mission stations were trusted more than the government officials because they could help them when they got harrassed for failing to pay taxes. Mkwawa's brother, who was his chief advisor, made a positive comment about the missionaries and discredited the Arab soldiers and German soldiers. He said to Bunk:

Ninyi wamisionari mnaruhusiwa kwenda mahali pote, hamtasumbuliwa. Wafanya biashara wenu walikuja kutafuta pembe za tembo. Maaskari yenu walikuja kuchukua nchi yetu. Lakini ninyi hamtafuti chochote kwetu, mnatafuta sisi wenyewe ...

You missionaries are allowed to go everywhere: you will not be disturbed. Your traders (*Arabs and later Europeans*) came to look for ivory. Your soldiers came to take our country. But you do here not desire anything from us but you are looking for us.¹⁵⁷ (*translation mine*)

The above observation reveals that Mkwawa's brother was not happy with the traders, politicians and the colonizers. In contrast, he had high expectations of and respect for missionaries as messengers of God, interested in the spiritual welfare of the people. Most of the people who were attracted in the initial stages of Christianity in Udzungwa were thrilled to see a white person living in the remote areas of the country. In the case of Iringa, most Hehe people expected missionaries to live in areas that were close to the chief or the colonial officers. Contrary to their expectations, the Lutherans started their stations among the Hehe in rural areas. Muhanga was one of the first

mission stations where the local chiefs and their people responded positively as a report from Muhanga reads:

Wapagani wengi wanahudhuria ibada, watu 400 hadi 1000. Ili wajue kwamba ni siku ya ibada tunapandisha bendera nyeusi-nyeupe-nyekundu (ya kijerumani wakati huu) yenye msalaba katikati. Saa tatu tunapiga tarumbeta ibadiliyo kengele. Watu wanakaribia toka pande zote machifu wakitangulia. Wanasikiliza kwa makini tunapowasimu;ia historia takatifu za Biblia.¹⁵⁸

Many pagans attend the church service, between 400 to 1000 people. In order to enable them to know that it is a day for worship a black-yellow-red German flag with a cross in the middle is raised. At nine in the morning a trumpet is blown instead of ringing a bell. Local chiefs being in the front, people from all corners of the village gather. They listen attentively as we narrate to them the holy history of the Bible. (*translation mine*)

In light of the above, one can argue that Christianity rode in on the back of imperial conquest. The black-yellow-red German flag was an indication that the people were under the German colony and they had to listen to its voice. The missionaries used this opportunity provided by colonial administration to do more than just mission work in the area. Indeed, sometimes they aided and abetted the conquest and exploited the desire of African people for trade in European goods to their own advantage. They provided legitimation for colonial rule.

However, it is also possible to argue that the Hehe people connected the trumpet and the flag with Sunday as a worship day and a day of rest. Furthermore, the fact that people attended in big numbers and their whole attention was fixed on the missionaries, the focus must have been on the Bible. Gerald West in his paper, *Early Encounter with the Bible among the Ba Tlhaping: Historical and Hermeneutical Signs* argues that the people as they sat silently watching and listening

¹⁵⁷ Dayosisi ya Kusini, *Jubilii ya Miaka 100 ya Injili: Kumbukumbu*, (Southern diocese, *One Hundred years of the Gospel: Jubilee* (Njombe: ELCT, Southern diocese, 2000), p. 4.

would have seen remarkable things about the Bible: "They would have seen the Bible used as a closed object of power and as an opened object with particular things to say...."¹⁵⁹ Following the above view, the people in this case the Hehe would make their own connections and construct their own meanings. As West suggests in his paper, unexpected collocations may have emerged¹⁶⁰ especially on the power and authority of the Bible.

After having stayed for three years, Neuberg's wife got sick due to the cold. In 1902, Neuberg (Kyangalakiki) and his wife, Zingudya, left and went back to Upangwa.¹⁶¹ The arrival of another missionary was delayed by the MajiMaji rebellion in the southern part of the country. In order to keep alive the mission work activities started by Neuberg in the area, the Ikombe congregation from Konde Synod sent the Nyakyusa evangelists to Muhanga.¹⁶² Pastor Julius Oelke did not arrive at Muhanga until 1907. Although on his arrival he wanted to stay at Itonya, due to too much cold and rain, he decided to transfer the station to a place called Ilutila.

Having arrived alone, Oelke lived in a tent while seeking the assistance of the local population to clear the land and build a house, thus providing some local employment to the community. With the assistance of the local chiefs, the station was built by 1908. The formal establishment of the mission station was done in 1910.¹⁶³ The area had the advantage of having two church buildings, one at Itonya and a smaller one at Ilutila. For the third time the Germans decided to

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 5

¹⁵⁹ Gerald West, *Early Encounters with the Bible among the Ba Tlhaping: Historical and Hermeneutical Signs*, Unpublished paper, (University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 2002), p. 20.

¹⁶⁰ Kobler, *Miaka 100 ya Injili Dayosisi ya Kusini Kumbukumbu (100 Years of the Gospel in the Southern diocese)* (Njombe: ELCT, Southern diocese), p. 18.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika*, p. 100.

transfer the mission headquarters from Ilutila to Ng'uruhe (later on it came to be called Pommern-named after one of their home regions in Germany) in 1912. The German missionaries decided to transfer their mission station in order to block the Roman Catholic missionaries from advancing eastwards, for they already had strong roots at Tosamaganga and Nyabula, north-east of Pommern. But one can also argue that the missionaries wanted to put their station within reasonable distances of the district administrative station. Pommern is 50 kilometers from Iringa town, compared to the two former stations, which are in remote areas. The adverse weather conditions, which prevailed in Itonya, forced the missionaries to transfer the station to a place which was conducive for them to live. Although the missionary headquarters was moved to another place, missionary work in the former stations progressed well because of the indigenous teachers. Later on, a bush school and later a primary school was built at Ilutila. It was built by using some of the building materials that were already on site. Today, Itonya, besides being the oldest mission station in the diocese is a prominent preaching point of Idete congregation in the Idete district.

The buildings had a dual purpose, as a place of worship and as a school. The *mwaliimu* (teacher), who accompanied the missionary, was responsible for leading morning and evening devotions, as well as doing house-to-house evangelism. He also taught the catechumens to read, write and do arithmetic. In addition to the reading, writing and arithmetic, they were taught the basic teachings of Christianity. A special booklet known as *Bena Fibel* (the first book of Christian instructions in Kibena) was used, and it had a summary of all the Ten Commandments written in the vernacular language, Kibena.¹⁶⁴ As a

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

result of this school, a number of catechumens from Idete area were baptised at Pommern in 1914. These were: Aaron Kikoti, Andrea Mwaduma, Joseph Kiwope (later became a pastor), Lupituko Mkemwa, Yehoswa Kikoti, Yotamu Mkemwa, Isaya Kivelege, Alatanga Mgidange and Elisa Kikoti. These later became the first indigenous *walimu* (teachers) in the various mission stations in the Udzungwa area after being recruited by Herman Neuberg.¹⁶⁵ The Bena and Nyakyusa teachers patiently taught the first group of catechumens in Uhehe in the Udzungwa area. They preached to and evangelized the Hehe people. They spent most of their time teaching and preparing new converts for baptism. They also visited people in their homes.

The Bena people were trained at Kidugala by Otto Maas to become teachers and preachers. The Berlin missionaries opened a Bible School in 1904 where indigenous teachers were trained but it was closed due to the MajiMaji uprising. It was reopened in 1909. They had also a printing press and for the first time they published a hymnal in Kibena in 1914. Therefore, the Bena people were given educational opportunities from the very beginning of the missionary work and their compliance opened the way for ripe paternalism. In addition, the Ilembula Station that was built and presided over by Martin Priebusch, exemplified not only the operation of the semi-autonomous missionary unit in the Bena pattern, but also the tendency of the Berliners to champion the Bena people.¹⁶⁶

As the work of evangelism expanded, it became necessary to open more new stations. The implication of this was that more *walimu* had to be trained in order to take care of the new stations. With the help of

¹⁶⁵ Jenro Kivamba, *Historia ya Usharika wa Idete Jimbo la Idete 1899-1998*, Andiko la Stashahada, Chuo Kikuu cha Tumaini, Iringa, 1998. (The History of the Idete Congregation: Idete district 1899-1998, Unpublished Diploma Thesis, Tumaini University Iringa).

the *walimu* from Ubena, a number of Hehe Christians were recruited to take leadership roles in the new stations, as shown in parenthesis: Aaron Kikoti (Muhanga station), Yotamu Mkemwa (Fikano–Ipalamwa), Joseph Kiwope (Idunda), Luka Mwaduma (Kipanga), Andrea Mwaduma (Masisiwe), Isaya Kivelege (Mhanga), and Yehoswa Kikoti (Kimala). The *walimu* were the backbone of evangelism in their respective areas and all reported to the pastor who was stationed at Pommern. The language that was used in preaching and in catechetical instruction was the vernacular language of Kibena. All the manuals and hymnal books were in Kibena. The Hehe had to learn how to read, write and learn Luther's *Small Catechism* in Kibena. All the songs and the New Testament were in Kibena.¹⁶⁷ The Hehe and Bena are tribes that are closely related. They share names, clans, language and kinship with each other and sometimes the missionaries named these tribes interchangeably when they referred to the Bena or Hehe. However, the Bena were favoured by getting more education compared to the Hehe people because of the fact that all major mission stations and schools were opened and built in the Ubena area.

After Julius Oelke transferred the station to Pommern village in 1908, the Ilutila village was left under indigenous leadership. Mathew Ngahatilwa was assigned to take care of the mission.¹⁶⁸ With the advantage of being a native, used to the harsh condition, which could not be tolerated by the missionaries, the indigenous missionaries were ready to take up the leadership role of spreading the gospel to their people. The local people easily reached even the most remote areas to convey the message of Jesus Christ.

¹⁶⁶ Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika*, p. 101.

¹⁶⁷ Interview with Mathayo Ngahatilwa, 26 June 2000, Itonya -Idete.

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Mathayo Ngahatilwa, 26 June 2000, Itonya-Idete.

During the construction of the Pommern station, Oelke worked hand in hand with the local people. A builder called Kunche and Sister Sachs assisted him in the construction. The local people provided all the labour by collecting building materials, such as stones and timber, and making bricks and tiles. People gave their agricultural plots to be used for making bricks and tiles for roofing the mission house. Both men and women did the work unreservedly. Women were, also, responsible for grinding maize and finger millet for flour, fetching firewood and water, and for cooking food for the working crew. People contributed their foodstuffs like chickens and goats, to be shared by all who came to work on the mission.¹⁶⁹ The first building that was built at Pommern was not only used as a residential house for the missionary, but the stairs were also used as a classroom for the baptismal classes. The major means of evangelisation was through Christian songs, which had been translated into the vernacular language Kibena. Missionaries Nauhaus and Schumann, with the assistance of Bena elders, did not only translate the German songs, but added new songs, using local Hehe and Bena melodies. The songs attracted the local people to attend baptismal classes and worship services.¹⁷⁰ On 11 December 1912 Julius Oelke opened Pommern mission station, although it was only in 1957 that it was given the status of a congregation.

When active war took place in the southern part of Tanzania between 1916 and 1918, bringing conditions of turmoil and trial for the churches, which were deprived of missionaries, African leadership became more conspicuous. The following section deals with the arrival of the Scottish Mission who came to take over the Berlin Mission stations.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Emmanuel Mwachang'a, 16 August 1999, Iringa.

¹⁷⁰ Kobler, *Miaka 100 ya Injili Dayosisi ya Kusini: Kumbukumbu, (100 Years of the Gospel in the Southern diocese)* (Njombe: ELCT, Southern diocese, 2000).

3.3 The arrival of the Scottish Mission from Malawi

Just as the evangelical work in Uhehe was expanding, the First World War broke out in Europe and then in German East Africa. The German mission stations, not only in Uhehe but also in the whole of Tanzania, were affected from the early periods of the war. When the war began there were six Berlin missionaries together with their families in Iringa: Wilhelm Neuberg, Johannes Schwelnus, Paul Hermann, Otto Maas, Martin Klamroth and Oelke Julius.¹⁷¹ Later when the British took over from the Germans, all the German missionaries were interned. Since the Berlin missionaries in the Southern Highlands had not ordained indigenous agents as the other Berlin missionaries in Uzaramo had done¹⁷², the Scottish Mission Society from Malawi was invited by the British to take over and provide pastoral work in the former German mission fields¹⁷³. The American Lutherans, although they were the obvious co-religionists had their hands full in northern Tanganyika, and specifically renounced any intention of entering Iringa.¹⁷⁴ However, they warned that the Lutheran character of the church must be retained.

According to Anderson's report, the British Government recognised that the Scottish Mission was asked to take over the Berlin Mission fields in the Bena, Konde and Nyakyusa areas. Thus, in 1918, in response to the Scottish mission, they sent six indigenous Nyasa teachers, one evangelist named Joram Mphande in order to take care of the Christians who had been scattered because of the war. In 1921

¹⁷¹ KKKT, *Dayosisi ya Kusini, Miaka 100 ya Injili* p. 17. (ELCT, Southern diocese)

¹⁷² The German missionaries in Uzaramo before leaving ordained Martin Ganisya to take care of pastoral work in Dar es Salaam, Kisarawe and Maneromango.

¹⁷³ KKKT, *Dayosisi ya Kusini, Miaka 100 ya Injili*, 13. (ELCT, Southern diocese)

¹⁷⁴ Marcia Wright, *German Lutheran Missionaries in the Southern Highlands 1891-1914* (London: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 148.

they increased the number by bringing in more missionaries, doctors and technicians.¹⁷⁵ Even after the Scottish Mission Society took over the mission fields, the Africans were still the main agents who were used to evangelise the Hehe people.

In 1919, Pastor A. Melville Anderson toured the Southern Highlands mission stations. A crowd of Bena welcomed him. In the course of visiting twenty stations in the Ubena-Uhehe area, Anderson baptised 250 people and administered communion to 700 people.¹⁷⁶ Among the baptized were converts from Uhehe: Abrahamu Munyi, Lazaro Kidibule, Yesaya Kivelege, Zakaria Mwaduma, Siwonekage Mponzi and Yohana Kidibule.¹⁷⁷ The above converts, even though they were ready, had to wait for some years for their baptism, due to a shortage of pastors. Anderson was the only pastor who took over the whole of Uhehe for all pastoral services. Following Anderson's experience, one can argue that although all the German missionaries had been sent home, the indigenous agents had carried forward the missionary work of taking care of the people spiritually. Indigenous agents, including *walimu* and church elders did pastoral care and guidance. After evangelistic campaigns people began to attend church services. The local Christians responded quickly and carried the practice into their own hinterlands.

On another tour, in 1920, Pastor Anderson noted that the conditions of the mission buildings left much to be desired. There was decay because they were left unattended. The Scottish Mission embarked on the reconstruction of the mission stations, although its major focus was on education, helper training and formal measures of increased

¹⁷⁵ Dayosisi ya Kusini, *Miaka 100 ya Injili, Kumbukumbu*, p. 13, (Evangelical Lutheran Church in TanzaniaL, Southern diocese).

¹⁷⁶ Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika*, p. 148.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Muhuvile Nyanganani, 16 August 1999, Iringa.

congregational self-government.¹⁷⁸ It was important to focus on helper training because without well-trained and educated personnel, there were going to be difficulties for missionary work, due to the shortage of evangelists. The primary means of re-establishing contact with teachers and evangelists was a refresher course. At the end of 1921, Anderson organized a six-week course for 44 Bena teachers and from that time more and more of the prominent teachers made known their willingness to work under his leadership. Although there was a revival in the mission staff, the demand for village church schools was big. From Iringa there was a request to Anderson from local chiefs for schools.¹⁷⁹

In 1925, Pastor A. Melville Anderson reported that the condition of stations was very frustrating.¹⁸⁰ In Kidugala the British soldiers had demolished the house of the pastor and the cost of renovating it was very expensive. However, they managed to renovate the church tower by putting on a new roof and painting the whole church. Another house was built, as well as huts for animals. Facilities, which belonged to the dispensary and seminary, were all stolen except for the medicine cupboard. In the process of renovating the buildings, they started by building huts of grass for the sick and prepared furniture. The printing machine was found in the bush. Milling machines were all out of order, while platforms for the church were all stolen. Very few books were found in Ilembula and Lupembe, while all the facilities and animals were stolen. However, all the church bells were not stolen.¹⁸¹ Ilembula area had a different situation. There were 216 Christians, and this motivated missionary H.S. Watson to reopen the mission station. Christians, who had been scattered as a result of the war, eventually

¹⁷⁸ Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika 1891-1941*, p. 149.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

came back to their former mission stations and decided to rebuild their houses once again.

The period between the two World Wars, 1919-1938, was a peaceful one in Tanzania. As a result of this peace, German missionaries requested the British Government to allow them to return to their former mission fields. The British Government agreed, and in 1925 German missionaries started coming back to Tanzania. Pastor Martin Priebusch went back to Magoye, from where he supervised the whole mission work in Ubena-Konde. In 1927 he was transferred to Kidugala and the following year he took over from Anderson the leadership task of supervising all the mission stations of Ubena-Uhehe. In 1928, Pastor Herman Neuberg the son of Wilhelm Neuberg came back to Tanganyika from German and assisted Priebusch in Uhehe at the Pommern mission.¹⁸² In 1930 Neuberg was put in charge of the whole Bena/ Hehe and Ulanga area. His station was at Pommern, 50 kilometers from Iringa town. During this time very little was done in Uheheland by the Lutheran church. Missionaries concentrated more on the Udzungwa highlands where the Kibena language was used as a medium of evangelisation and instruction.

Great relief was experienced when the British Government allowed the German missionaries to return to their former mission fields. In 1928, Pastor Herman Neuberg took a missionary role in Uhehe and Ulanga and his congregation was at Pommern. Owing to his strong emphasis on evangelism, many more converts were baptised. Indigenous people, who had been tested, had to travel many miles to the main station to receive baptism. Among those who received baptism were

¹⁸¹ Kobler, *Miaka 100 ya Injili, Dayosisi ya Kusini, Kumbukumbu*. (Njombe: ELCT, Southern diocese, 2000), *100 year of the Gospel, Southern diocese*, p. 13.

¹⁸² Stephen Z. Mwaduma, *Dates and Important Events of Iringa Diocese 1899-1987* (Iringa: Don Bosco Press, 1987), p. 1.

Samwel Makongwa, Hosea Magelenga, Tufuwage Semahudza, Yehoswa Kikoti, Zakaria Kivelege, Hebel Chalale, Samwel Msuva, and Maritha Magelanga.¹⁸³

A network of out stations was built and in each station a teacher was responsible for preaching and teaching the catechumen and the students. With no exception, even in the most remote places where conditions seemed adverse for missionaries to endure, indigenous teachers faced the challenge. African teachers like Lupituko Mkemwa, Yotamu Mkemwa, Essau Nyanganani and Mathayo Ngahatilwa, proved themselves more suitable for evangelistic work than their European partners. They moved from one village to another preaching and teaching the Word of God to the Hehe people. The reason was obvious. They had the advantage of physical adaptation, which enabled them to work without many problems.

The outcome of the increase in converts meant an increase in the mission stations. Therefore, the converts who had grasped reading and the Christian teachings well were recruited to form a band of preachers in the various corners of the Uhehe district. A mission station was a preaching place as well as a school. For example, the building at Pommern served as a classroom during the week, and as a church on Sundays. In order to meet the demand, the missionaries made extensive use of the teachers. They became, so to speak, the real missionaries to their own people.¹⁸⁴ They had the task of teaching and indoctrinating the people. As Edward Mnyawami says, they were almost pastors, without pastoral ordination, for they really did pastoral care. They evangelised. They conducted Sunday services in the outstations. They examined the candidates for the sacraments

¹⁸³ Interview with Edward Mnyawami 23 November 2000, Iringa.

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 23 November 2000, Iringa.

(Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation); they did this as a preliminary to the pastor's "public examination of the same candidates". They made home visitations in the village to instruct and to baptise those in danger of death. They acted as liason and as public relations officers for the missionary. They interpreted for the pastor when the latter was on a visit to the station. In fact, the local church of the village station grew around the evangelists.¹⁸⁵

Following the increasing number of congregations in Pommern, it became necessary to group them into what was called *majimbo* (districts). Each *jimbo* had a number of stations. The *jimbo* was under the supervision of a senior teacher who was chosen by the pastor. The head of the *jimbo* had a supervisory role over the other teachers. He checked whether teaching and confirmation classes were correctly done. For instance, the Idete congregation had the following districts: Kipanga supervised by Andrea Mwaduma; Idete, under Isaya Kivelege; Idunda, under Yehoswa Kikoti; and Ukwega under Samwel Makongwa. All these supervisors had once been incharge of other teachers. The *jimbo* worked closely with the pastor and reported to him on the development of evangelism and bush schools in the respective places of influence.¹⁸⁶

In 1928 and 1931 all the mission stations were returned to the Berlin Mission Society. However, most of the missionaries who worked with the Scottish Mission remained in the Southern Highlands. Pastor Anderson continued to work in Iringa until his death and was buried in Iringa town. During this time, the most pressing activities for Julius Oelke in the area were the following: to clear out antagonism and bring reconciliation with the Catholics; to reflect on the relationship

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 23 November 2000, Iringa.

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Samson Mkemwa, 12 December 2000, Iringa.

between the Gospel and culture; to fight against the bad influence of settlers and miners; to nurture indigenous leaders; to educate Christians to take economic responsibilities; and to re-plan the primary school work in spite of the economic hardships.¹⁸⁷

The German Lutheran missionaries came to an agreement with the Roman Catholic Church missionaries regarding areas of mission work in Iringa, whereby the Lutherans agreed to proceed eastwards and the Catholics westwards. During this time, some cultural elements were accepted in the church. When the Berlin missionaries again resumed responsibility after the Scottish interlude, Julius Oelke was chosen as Superintendent of the recreated Bena-Hehe Synod. Oelke had worked in Uhehe and Ubena before the war. Oelke believed that God had prepared the Bena to receive the gospel by making the last seven commandments known to them. This was to make baptismal candidates conscious of the fact that Christian and traditional morality had a common base.¹⁸⁸

Starting in October 1934, when accepting 405 candidates at Kidugala for baptismal instruction, they had to pass a test about their knowledge of the last seven of the ten commandments as received in Bena folkhood. He explained to them that what they already knew of God's commandments was good, but that those laws could only become meaningful if they really got to know God. After all, these candidates had to promise to become good Bena or Hehe and it was made part of the ceremony of acceptance for baptismal instruction all over the church. But during the 1939 Synod in Iringa it became obvious that the baptismal candidates felt this promise to be nonsense. Oelke realized that he had missed the mark and so the

¹⁸⁷ Kobler, *Miaka 100 ya Injili Dayosisi ya Kusini*, p. 13.

¹⁸⁸ Missionary Conference 1934 Lupembe; quarterly report, Kidugala church archives III/34, 26/10/34.

promise was dropped.¹⁸⁹ Oelke, also, worked in close collaboration with the chiefs. He believed that the chief held his office by divine order, and believed, further, that only those whom God had renewed, namely the Christians, could only save this divine creation.¹⁹⁰ Oelke, during his time in Germany (1916-1931), had come under the influence of Bruno Gutmann, but had already applied his missionary concepts when he started missionary work in Uhehe in 1910.¹⁹¹ In doing so, Oelke was actually deviating from the old Berlin practice, imported from South Africa, of establishing mission enclaves. Oelke made sure that during his time, all who wanted to settle on the mission would remain the chief's subjects. They were required to do communal labour for the chief and for the mission.¹⁹²

This attitude brought about good relationships with the chiefs and, even when Neuberger later carried on Oelke's work, it gave him a comparative advantage over the numerically much stronger Roman Catholic Church operating from Tosamaganga. The history of the Pommern Mission in Uhehe is one of continuous quarrels with Catholic catechists and pastors. However, this thesis does not attempt to judge who was right or wrong. Oelke used the first Bena Hehe Synod, which met under his leadership to project further the new image of the church as an ally of Bena culture and social order. He stressed that no effort should be spared to win the chief's sympathy and suggested that Christians were allowed to wear the mourning headband and observe the clan taboo (*mujilo*) in order to build a bridge towards the non-Christian section of the Bena and the Hehe. For the first time, the

¹⁸⁹ Klaus Fiedler, *Christianity & African Culture: Conservative German Protestant Missionaries in Tanzania 1900-1940* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1966), 1996), 158.

¹⁹⁰ Bena-Hehe Synod Iringa, 1936 at Kidugala church archives.

¹⁹¹ Bena Synod, 1933 at Kidugala church archives.

¹⁹² Fiedler, *Christianity & African Culture*, p.159.

meeting was conducted in the Bena language, making a tremendous advance from the meetings under Schuler.¹⁹³

After the experience of the effects of the First World War on the missionary work, a decision to train indigenous leaders was made and Christians were taught stewardship. Each member of the church was required to give a certain amount in the form of an offering to the church. This offering was called *ulezi*. There was an increase every year. In 1926 the amount of offering per Christian was Sh. 2.50 per year. The church, also, had a farm which they called "the farm of God". In addition, each member who was baptized or took part in the Holy Communion had to pay a certain amount to the church. These contributions from the Christians supported the administrative work of the church.

3.4 The advent of the Swedish Evangelical Mission and establishment of stations

According to Gustav Aren, the Swedish Evangelical Mission (SEM) grew out of a revival movement in the church of Sweden under the influence of the Evangelical Revival in the British Isles and in other parts of Europe.¹⁹⁴ The center of this revival was in Uppsala. Here the university students came together for Bible study and prayer meetings under the leadership of Pastor Hans Jakob Lundborg, who had the vision of a nation-wide revival.¹⁹⁵ On 7 May 1856, Lundborg invited people with similar ideas to his house in Stockholm and formed a society for promoting the Gospel in Sweden. Later, it came to be called the Swedish Evangelical Mission.¹⁹⁶ During its fifth annual conference

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Gustav Aren, *Evangelical Pioneer in Ethiopia: Origins of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus* (Stockholm: EFS forlaget Uppsala, 1978), p. 114.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 118.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 119.

on 18 June 1861, the SEM reviewed its aims of service. It resolved to “form a special department for foreign mission with a view to sending out missionaries and farmers who shall settle at appointed places in heathen parts and train indigenous mission workers through the work of the Gospel”.¹⁹⁷

In 1923, the first missionary sent by the SEM, Dr. Erik Soderstrom, arrived in Wollaga in Ethiopia and settled in the Neqamte area. Pastor Martin Nordfeldt, who in 1927 opened a mission station in Najjo in Ethiopia, followed Soderstrom. In 1935 there was a war in Ethiopia and the Swedish missionaries had to flee due to harassment by the Italians. Therefore, in 1937, the SEM decided to send two missionaries to Kenya and Tanganyika to find new mission fields, and these missionaries were pastors Martin Nordfeldt and Herbert Uhlin.¹⁹⁸

In September 1938 the first Swedish missionaries, Martin Nordfeldt and Herbert Uhlin, arrived in Tanzania and went to Pommern in the Iringa area. The aim of the visit was to find a mission field. After some discussion with Pastor Hermann Neuberg, who was then in charge of Uhehe and Ulanga district, it was agreed that SEM had to direct their efforts to the east of Iringa town. This was a strategy to block the Roman Catholic Church from advancing in that direction.¹⁹⁹ The Benedictines had already established a mission station at Tosamaganga since 1898.²⁰⁰ Nordfeldt, after getting approval from the British officials in Iringa, opened a mission station at Ilula in 1938, while Pastor Herbert Uhlin went to Dongobesh where the SEM had established a mission station earlier.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 120.

¹⁹⁸ Olav Fjose, *Historia ya KKKT-Sinodi ya Mbulu (The History of the ELCT- Mbulu Synod)*, (Nairobi: Acme Press (K) Ltd., 1993), p. 15.

¹⁹⁹ S. N. Kilimhana, *Karne ya Kwanza ya Injili 1891-1991 (100 years of the Gospel)*, (Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 1991), p. 25.

Pastor Martin Nordfeldt first went to Mahenge in an attempt to establish a station. Because the place was too hot, he decided to go to the Ilula-Luganga area. He could not settle at Luganga because some members of the community, such as Kimwagawukali Mwachusi, Kiwele Mwakungile and Sungamkali Mwanyembe, would not allow him, even though he had collected some building materials. The experience of the Hehe with the Germans at Lugalo and Kalenga was a strong reason for their resistance.²⁰¹ With great determination Pastor Nordfeldt went up to Image village to a place called Ibanavanu to see whether there was a possibility of getting a site to establish a mission station. Ibanavanu is a nice plateau with good scenery. This was also the place where the *jumbe* (local chief) of the area, Yotimembe Mwamaginga, stayed. The *jumbe* refused to give him a piece of land for his mission because of security reasons. Nordfeldt went back to a place called Itunda in Ilula. Finally, at Itunda, Nordfeldt was accepted by *jumbe* Suluti Mwachongoma. Mwachongoma gave the missionary a house. Later, Suluti reported the issue to the leader of the Hehe, Chief Adam Sapi Mkwawa who, in turn, gave permission for him to establish a mission station.²⁰²

Pastor Nordfeldt gave the local chief, Suluti Mwachongoma, Tsh. 100 (equivalent to 2,000,000 Tanzanian Shillings today) for allowing him to establish a mission station in his territory. The role of Suluti was significant for the establishment of the mission in Ilula. Nordfeldt, with the help of indigenous teachers such as Lupituko Mkemwa and Yotamu Mkemwa from Udzungwa, who had working experience with the German missionaries in Udzungwa, embarked on the mission work in

²⁰⁰ Owdenburg Mdegela, *Miaka 100 ya Injili Uheheni (100 years of the Gospel in Uhehe) 1899-1999* (Dar es Salaam: Inter Press of Tanzania Ltd. 2000), p. 9.

²⁰¹ Interview with John Msigomba, 12 August 1999, Iringa.

²⁰² Interview with John Msigomba, 12 August 1999, Iringa.

the Ilula area. The teachers were also interpreters of the Kibena language into Kihehe. Joseph Benjamin, who accompanied the missionary from Ethiopia, became a teacher of the bush-school, as well as an interpreter. As evangelism took place, efforts to establish a mission station commenced. In early April people started to make bricks and in August 1939 two houses started to be built. On 1 September 1939, Pastor Nordfeldt moved into the new house, while the second one was used as a dispensary under Sister Greta.²⁰³

Since the missionary was new to the area and was faced with the language barrier, he used three ways to meet his goal of spreading the word of God. He opened schools, followed by medical care and then evangelism. The pattern of development of mission schools in most areas was surprisingly similar. Education started at the main mission station. Usually, the missionary started off by inviting a few young men of the community around the mission station to attend lessons in reading and writing. In most cases, the school was begun with full understanding, approval and support of the local ruler.²⁰⁴

Once the main school at the central mission station was well established, and the need for other schools was felt, small out-schools or, as they came to be referred to by the British officials "bush schools", were established in the neighbouring villages around the mission station. Africans ran the bush schools with rudimentary education from the main school. Occasionally missionary teachers from the mission station visited out-schools, not so much to get involved in teaching as to inspect the facilities and how the African teachers carried on.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Interview with Edward Mnyawami 12 December 2000, Iringa.

²⁰⁴ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 12 December 2000, Iringa.

²⁰⁵ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 12 December 2000, Iringa.

In order to get people Pastor Nordfelt opened a bush school at Ilula and put it under the leadership of Joseph Benjamin. The first students to enroll in the school were Yeremia Msola, Juma Chongoma and Simbamalindi Mnenegwa. Nordfeldt visited the *jumbes* and asked them to tell the people to send their children to school. The education offered was free and this attracted more students to join. These students learned religion, Christian education, reading, writing and singing.²⁰⁶

According to the school programme, religion was given special weight. The day started by singing Christian songs from the church hymnal, which was in Kibena, reading the word of God and saying prayers. The day ended in the same manner. General body cleanliness of each student was observed and each student had to have a school uniform. The smartness of the students attracted many children to join the school. Classes were held in a simple building made out of mud walls and thatched roofs although, later on, permanent buildings were built.

Medical care started immediately in 1938 under Sister Greta. However, although the dispensary was available it took a while to convince them. They were suspicious about whether a European could give them medicine that would cure them or whether it could be a way of killing them, thus, the people were afraid.²⁰⁷

According to Sister Greta, a Swedish nurse, one day a man went to see her and had a donkey with him. The donkey had an open sore and the man wanted Greta to treat it. Greta hesitated and advised the man to go to Iringa to consult the veterinary officer. But since Iringa was far and the donkey was very ill, she decided to dispense the donkey.

²⁰⁶ Interview with Elizabeth Msola, 13 January 2001, Ilula.

²⁰⁷ Interview with Elizabeth Msola, 13 January 2001, Ilula.

The man was asked to come with the donkey every day for a week. Eventually the donkey was healed. After this incident the man, who happened to be the local chief of the area, recommended that people with health problems could visit the facility for treatment. Gradually people responded and Greta held worship services every day before she gave treatment to the people. In this way people heard the Good News.²⁰⁸

In the beginning, the work of evangelism led by Pastor Nordfeldt was to visit people in their homes and share with them the word of God. Nordfeldt paved the way for his mission work when he prepared tea and bread and invited the *jumbe* and his people to the dedication of his new house at the mission station. The invitation was received favourably and through this generosity the people opened themselves to him. From there, Nordfeldt and his evangelistic team made frequent visits around the village and attracted many people. The team was composed of Bena Christians who worked in the mission station. The team contributed greatly to evangelistic work in the Ilula area because they acted not only as interpreters but as evangelists as well. Nordfeldt's team was composed of the following: Joseph Benjamin (teacher), Yohana Msemwa (cook), Israel Mwenda (housekeeper), Loti Boimanda (nanny), Stefano Mwakalebela (cook), Luponelo Mgeni (cleaner), Loti Mgeni (chief cleaner), Joel Kiwone and his wife (housekeepers) and Nordfeldt's wife.²⁰⁹

During weekdays, they went to the village and sang songs from the Christian hymnal and formed a choir as well. Many people were attracted and Pastor Nordfeldt preached and invited people to go to

²⁰⁸ Interview with Marko Maluli, 3 January 2000, Ilula.

²⁰⁹ Laiton Myinga, *Historia ya Usharika wa Image*, Andiko la Cheti, Chuo cha Theologia, (*The History of Image Congregation*, Certificate Thesis, Theological College) Makumira, 1996.

church and attend Sunday services. Nordfeldt offered the people some clothes, soap, salt, matches, bread, and sewing needles. Through these gifts, the missionary strengthened his relationship with the people and attracted them to go to church. During Passover and Christmas, he invited people, through the *jumbes*, and many people responded. However, in spite of all these efforts, no Hehe adults joined the faith during those days. Even the person who invited the missionaries to stay in his home before the missionaries had their own houses, died without being baptised.²¹⁰ The chiefs just wanted to access the goods and services provided by the missionaries without abandoning their faith. The old people still had a negative attitude towards the Europeans, due to the experience with the Germans, whom they had fought ten kilometers away from Ilula, and who later came to dominate the area after defeating Mkwawa. Because the missionary used the Bena evangelists to spread the Word of God, they made an assumption that Christianity was for the Bena and had nothing to do with the Hehe. In fact, the Hehe looked down on the Bena because before German colonization, there were inter-tribal wars and the Bena were always defeated. As a result, the Hehe occupied some of the Bena areas. There was the issue of the credibility of the Bena to the Hehe. The Hehe are known to be very conservative in adapting to new influences in their community. They were deeply rooted in their traditional beliefs and it was not easy to embrace a new faith brought by foreign people.²¹¹ According to the Hehe, one can also argue that although the missionary used the social gospel by giving people gifts, it raised some serious doubts among the adults on the authenticity of what he preached. Therefore, it was children, especially those who joined the school, who first accepted Christianity in this area.

²¹⁰ Interview with Edward Mnyawami 12 January 2000, Iringa.

²¹¹ Interview with Ananidze Msigwa 15 November 1999, Ilembula in Njombe.

Later on, more stations were opened in the Image area and in each of the stations indigenous agents from Njombe took leadership positions as *walimu*.²¹² These *walimu* from Njombe played a great role in teaching and recruiting indigenous agents in Image, who later on took over the mission work in the area.

As a result of the outstanding job of the village teachers in teaching and preaching the Word of God, the first batch of converts was baptized. These were Yerima Msola (who later became a primary school teacher), Lutangilo Sakafu, Isaya Maketa and Phoebe Msigomba (the daughter of Lutangilo Sakafu and baptized by Thore Fryhle as a baby) and others in 1942. Martin Nordfeldt was invited as a pioneer of the Ilula station. This was the beginning of the Ilula congregation. The Bena Christians had a great impact on the work of evangelism because they had already embraced Christianity and were aware of how God could use them to achieve something for the Christian mission, as planned for the Uhehe. Though novices in the Christian faith, which necessarily called for guides and teachers on the path of knowledge, the Africans at that time understood what it took to be a Christian.

Before the candidates were recommended for baptism, they attended school for a minimum of two years. They learned religion, how to read and write and arithmetic. They studied the history of the Bible and the small catechism. It was compulsory for each candidate to know the whole catechism by heart and be able to recite it before the evangelist. No one was allowed to receive baptism without passing this test, which was taken very seriously.²¹³ A number of mission stations and bush schools were opened in various parts of Uhehe. The missionary at Ilula

²¹² Interview with Edward Mnyawami 12 January 2000, Iringa.

²¹³ Interview with Phoebe Msigomba 25 August 2000, Iringa.

recruited a number of teachers and evangelists from Njombe, who were then posted to various stations in the area. Most of the evangelists came either from Ilembula, Kidugala or Lupembe. These were among the first mission stations to be opened in the Ubena area and there were already a number of Christians there who had been trained as teachers or evangelists, and could combine both roles.

The evangelistic drive that Nordfeldt had used led him to enter the Image area and open bush schools. In 1940 the first station was opened at Kidewa, which was followed by Uhominyi in 1941. Nordfeldt served Ilula from 1938 to 1941 and was transferred to Kidugala after being elected president of the Ubena-Konde Church.²¹⁴ Pastor Thore Fryhle and his wife, Eleanor, replaced him. Thore founded more stations at Lyasa in 1943, Balali in 1943, Ibumu in 1945, and was then transferred to Bukoba, the present North-western Diocese. In each of these mission stations opened, teachers who had been recruited in Ilembula, Njombe, were given leadership roles. The teachers with their stations in parenthesis were: Tulawona Mtulo who was later replaced by Joel Mhoka (Kidewa), Nehemia Chaula (Lyasa), Yereimia Mlagala (Balali), Ludsabiko Kiswaga and later Yehoswa Gwivahe (Ibumu) and Luponelo Mgeni and later Enock Mkocho (Uhominyi). These were the key figures in the evangelistic and educational work in the Image area.²¹⁵ Most of these were taken as long experienced Christians with many years of service so that they could endure the challenges of the Hehe people in this area. Although this area was described as "unfriendly", with threats of invasion that sparked off negative adjectives, the work of the evangelists in Image was very successful.²¹⁶ We accept that the foundation laid by the expatriate

²¹⁴ Interview with Phoebe Msigomba 25 August, 2000, Iringa.

²¹⁵ Interview with Mathayo Lubawa 15 January 2000, Image.

²¹⁶ Interview with Mathayo Lubawa 15 January 2000, Image.

missionaries would have been wasted had it not been for the contribution of the indigenous agents.

The missionaries opened schools at all the stations because they saw in them the bedrock for future development in the church and the country. The idea of schools alongside the establishment of churches, as is SEM's policy, is indeed of great interest. Bengt Sundkler²¹⁷ postulates that in the modern Christian movement in Africa the school grew out of the catechetical teaching of the church, and was felt to be an essential part of, and supplement to, the worship of the church. Schools went along with churches or vice versa. Church buildings served a dual role in many cases. They served as schools during the week and as churches on Sundays. Quoting Richard Niebuhr,²¹⁸ Sundkler says that the interior of a church building in one or other Christian organization gives an important indication of the particular conception of the church and its ministry. In most of the churches school black-boards were fixed. The identification of school and church was established. The one could not be divorced from the other. Later on, in the life of the church, attendance at Sunday school meetings was linked to good conduct at school. Strictness on school attendance was observed. Absenteeism at school on weekdays attracted the stroke of the teacher's whip.²¹⁹

The first converts, who were the outcome of the evangelistic work and bush schools, were baptised. In Kidewa and the Image area, the first native to receive baptism was Mathayo Lihinda Lubawa on 25 December 1944. Thore Fryhle baptized him. The first converts from Uhominyi station were Yakobo Muyinga, Emmanuel Myula, Samwel

²¹⁷ Bengt Sundkler, *The Christian Ministry in Africa* (London: SCM 1960), p. 296.

²¹⁸ Richard Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and its Ministry* (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), p. 80.

²¹⁹ Interview with John Msigomba 12 August 1999, Iringa.

Mlandali, and Elias Mlandali, while those from Balali were Obadia Mela, Lazaro Myinga (who later became an evangelist and then a pastor), Anania Nyangi, Yesaya Ndala, Christopher Makombe, and Luka Makombe.²²⁰ The first congregation members of Ibumu station baptized in 1947 were: Esau Mnyawami, Daniel Kimwaga, Israel Mbena, Martha Kinyaga, Juliana Semkemwa, Anna Semubega, Joseph Ikanyagwa, Lazaro Mbangwa, and Enock Maganza, while those who formed the Lyasa congregation were Gidion Magova, Ruben Magova, Joseph Gaifalo, Abel Gaifalo, Shemu Gaifalo, Yohana Gaifalo, and Alatanga Muyinga.²²¹

The SEM missionaries worked side by side with these African converts, trained or not trained. Some of the first converts were sent to remote places to open new mission stations. These African workers were used everywhere by God for the foundation of the church in ways which only they could have utilized.²²² These first converts were the solid foundation, which made the establishment of the church in Iringa possible. Thus, it is right to argue that the spread of the church was linked to the work of the small but growing number of Hehe village teachers. As the church began to expand, the need to select more baptised men for the position of teachers increased.

The prayer life, or the daily devotional life exercised by these African converts, is something worth mentioning. They sang hymns, read the scriptures, expounded them and said prayers. This routine form of worship became contagious. The teachers in each mission station had their share in this spiritual rise of the natives. Youths, both boys and girls, spent the evenings in Christian homes instead of their parent's

²²⁰ Interview with Mathayo Lubawa 15 January 2000, Image.

²²¹ Interview with Mathayo Lubawa 15 January 2000, Image.

²²² E. B. Idowu, "The Predicament of the Church in Africa", in C. G. Baeta (ed.) *Christianity in Tropical Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 422.

homes. One informant praised the teachers as people who nurtured the youth and their homes were a refuge to many of them.²²³ The spouse of one of the retired teachers explained her experience, saying that it was not an unusual thing for their house to have as many as eight to twelve youths every evening. Some of them opted to shift from their homes and to stay with the family after being converted to Christianity. The house was always full of guests, mainly people from the church. Some of the young people, such as Philip Lihinda, Philip Lutitu and Yakobo Lubawa, who later converted to Christianity, were given leadership roles in newly formed stations such as Ilambo, Mwino and Nyanzwa respectively and their work was remarkable.²²⁴

Bolaji Idowu, quoting Professor H. H. Farmer, maintains that the universal impulse to worship and the consequent practice of worship is a result of one central impulse, essentially that of "one divine personal will seeking all the time to make itself known ...the one living and personal God making himself known, keeping a grip on men ..."225 So was the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, desiring knowledge, asking Philip to teach him, who in turn taught his own people the ways of God (Acts of the Apostles 8: 26-40). In the early church, pedagogy was paramount and teaching was not restrictive because the Gospel was to be universally proclaimed, as was the commandment and commission given to the disciples: "*Go then to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples*" in Mathew 28:19. The Good News was to be proclaimed to anyone willing to listen and ready to learn. Those who were taught became true disciples by transmitting that message to others. Through this sharing, the church expanded. The newly converted Bena and later Hehe Christians carried on this tradition,

²²³ Interview with Petro Mpalanzi, 23 September 1999, Iringa

²²⁴ Interview with Tumwiwukage Maginga 15 August 2000, Image.

²²⁵ Kwesi A. Dickson and Paul Ellingworth (eds.) *Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1969), p. 12.

which included each and every one. The eunuch yearned for knowledge about God and, after a positive response to learning, he submitted himself to his teachers. This attitude later produced lasting results that only one empowered by God could achieve.

The above discussion illustrates three points: Firstly, there was a very close connection at this stage between education and evangelism. Secondly, there was a close link between education, baptism and wage employment and thirdly, there was almost a complete failure of Christianity to make any significant impact on the older members of the tribe.

The mission station was a preaching place as well as a school. Under the ordained ministry, the semi-literate evangelists of the pre-war age developed into an organized body of professionals, closely integrated with the emerging parochial system. The base of the ecclesiastical organization was still the village evangelist, who by now was a scholar of some two or four years standing. He taught literacy and the catechism on weekdays and conducted simple worship on Sundays. Above him and supervising the work of three or four evangelists in other villages, was a superior kind of lay leader, who had received a year or two of special training over and above his regular schooling. This latter was a possible aspirant for ordained ministry. Six or more of these groups of villages, each under a lay leader, would form a parish of an ordained minister. During weekdays the building served as a classroom and as a church on Sundays. The teachers were also preachers and catechists, who taught the children. Outside school hours the evangelists acted as pastor, guide, and adviser to the local community.²²⁶ At this center, the pastor would preside over the monthly meetings of his church council, which dealt with local

²²⁶Interview with Mathayo Lubawa 12 August 2000, Image.

questions of discipline and finance, and from there he would go out on foot for weeks to visit his numerous flock, to examine and baptize catechumens and to supervise the work of subordinate church teachers.²²⁷

Between 1938 and the 1950s, education work was an integral and significant part of the programme adopted by the missionaries. However, their primary aim was evangelisation. Education was seen as a way of gaining more direct contact with indigenous people. Through the provision of elementary education the teachers and evangelists got the opportunity to teach the local people, both children and adults, the basic principles of the Christian faith, as well as the rudiments of reading and writing. In the missionaries' view, a literate congregation could more rapidly absorb religious ideas through reading the Bible and could participate more effectively in activities like singing hymns.²²⁸ Therefore, teaching the local people to read and write was necessary for both the evangelistic and the educating mission. Mission stations became centers for the education of converts, and education became an essential part of missionary work. The indigenous agents were responsible for teaching, while the missionaries received reports from these stations. The best experience learned by missionaries was that the most effective method of presenting the gospel was by Africans witnessing to fellow Africans.

²²⁷ Interview with Ananidze Msigwa, 15 November 1999, Iringa.

²²⁸ L.C. Mgonde, " *Mission Education and the Kaguru*" History Student's Research Paper, (University of Dar es Salaam, 1966), 2.

3.5 The effects of the two World Wars on mission

Before 1914 the mission work in the southern part of Tanzania had progressed considerably. Missionary activity had reached a stable level of organization. There were 19 mission stations which had been established, 3,500 people had been baptized, two synods had been formed: Konde and Ubena-UHehe, two bible schools had been started, one at Manow in Konde synod and at Kidugala in Ubena-Uhehe synod. A total of 135 bush-schools had been started with 6,000 students. There was also a factory for making shoes and a printing press at Kidugala.²²⁹ Mission stations opened by the Berlin mission became centers of education and bases for frontier evangelisation.

The war that began in Europe from 1914 to 1918 and resulted in the defeat of Germany and the taking over of the German East Africa by Britain severely upset the work of missionaries. For the Christian missions it was a catastrophe in various parts of Tanzania. Early in the war the Germans arrested British missionaries and many of their converts. Teachers suffered dreadfully as porters and labourers on the supply route from Morogoro to Korogwe. Later, they were interned. Some like Deacon Paul Kasinde and four other teachers died in chains for being English-made Christians as it happened to twelve teachers from Magila in Tanga.²³⁰ Canon Peter Limo returned from his ordeal as overseer on the Handeni road with his right arm paralysed and deaf in one ear because a German had treated him like an animal.²³¹

German missionaries and their converts also suffered. Beginning in 1916, German East Africa received a coordinated attack from three

²²⁹ Samwel Kilimhana, *Karne ya Kwanza ya Injili (100 Years of the Gospel), 1891-1991* (Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 1991), p. 23-24.

²³⁰ John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (London: Cambridge University Press), p. 255.

²³¹ Ibid.

sides. The British assaulted from the north and southwest and the Belgians from the west. The British troops occupied all the mission stations of the Nyasa Province and Konde Synod without opposition. The missionaries had gathered with their families, the Berlin missionaries at Magoye in the Uwanji area, and the Moravians at Rungwe. From there, they were deported.

African teachers and leaders of both the Moravian and Lutheran communities were suspected and from the military point of view, the entire southern area continued to be insecure so long as the German force remained at large and highly mobile. The British soldiers charged the African teachers of giving information to the Germans. Some had to stay in the hiding places for weeks in order to avoid the British soldiers. Muhuvile Senyanganani tells a story of how her father, Esau Nyanganani, one of the Bena village teachers, had to hide from the British soldiers:

My father, who was a *mwalimu* and cook of the missionary, was sought out by the British soldiers after the Germans were sent home. They thought my father supported the Germans and knew German secrets in the area. We had to run away from home and hide in the bush for weeks. My mother, who sent him food, was the only one who knew my father's hiding place. In order to call my father to come and eat, my mother sang a Christian chorus as follows: [*with emotions and trembling voice Muhuvile sang*]:

*Ve Nguluvi Wimkomi wi yena e Mutwa ve,
Ve Nguluvi ve mkomi wi yena, Eeeena mutwave, Ve Nguluvi wi mkomi wiyena.*²³² (God you alone are great, O Lord, God You alone are great, Ooh yes Lord, and God you alone are great.) [*After a long pause Muhuvile continued*]

As soon as my father heard the song, he responded in the same manner after some time, and then proceeded to the place where the food was put. When the British stopped searching for

²³² Interview with Muhuvile Nyanganani, 16 August 1999, Iringa.

him he went back home and continued with his service as *mwalimu*.²³³

The first group of Africans teachers to be deported affirmed their blamelessness and stated: "We are sacrifices of a European war". Two teachers from each of the eleven Moravian and Lutheran stations who formed the cream of the educated Christians were arrested and transported to Zomba, Malawi where they remained from 1917 to 1919.²³⁴

The war not only affected the missionary work, but development in general in the country was brought to a standstill. By the beginning of the First World War, missionary activity in the Southern Highlands had reached a stable level of organization with African participation. The Berliners had been forced by the British to surrender the premise of white supremacy and to regard their mission stations as centers of education and bases for frontier evangelisation rather than as Christian preserves under missionary rule.

When the war ended in 1918, Tanganyika had been deprived the service of more than one hundred and fifty male German Protestants and fifteen unmarried women.²³⁵ Because the church was still at an early stage of its growth, the loss sustained was very great. There was a great shortage of leadership and all the work was left in the hands of teachers and evangelists.

After the First World War the British continued to expel the German missionaries out of Tanzania. By the end of 1919 the Benedictines fathers from Tosamaganga had seen 131 of their 134 personnel

²³³ Interview with Muhuvile Nyanganani 16 August 1999, Iringa.

²³⁴ Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika*, p. 143.

²³⁵ M. Langley & T. Kiggins, *A Serving People* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 82.

deported.²³⁶ The British expelled German missionaries mercilessly. The last left in 1922 and none returned until 1925. Roman Catholic missions generally used staff of French and Swiss priests. The situation was worse for the Protestants. Some work was taken by British societies but elsewhere there were no missionaries for several years. The absence of the missionaries disrupted many fledgling Christian communities. The few pastors who had been accepted to remain behind were confined to one particular station.

At the same time, there was great resentment against Christianity in Uhehe because of the bad experience with the Germans when they fought with them in 1891 and in 1896. The people who were not Christians were forced to enter the war by Christians from Europe. The war between the British and the Germans was not a good experience in the eyes of non-Christians. Christians were not expected to cause misapprehension and perpetuate hatred against each other, contrary to the gospel of reconciliation, peace and love. This experience made the Hehe people question the gospel proclaimed by the West, which was said to be more progressive than other regions. Africans, as a result of the war, were disillusioned about Christianity and the West.

Yet for Christianity the suffering of the First World War was also a strengthening time. As missionary control lapsed, so African Christians gained a responsibility which they could not otherwise have acquired at this time. The war consolidated power in the hands of the first generation of African Christians. Although the Iringa area received the service of pastor Anderson from 1920, the Bena teachers did most of the mission work. Anderson organized a six-week course for forty-four Bena teachers and from that time more and more of the prominent

²³⁶ Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, p. 256.

teachers came forward to work under him.²³⁷ Following the work of the African teachers, congregations started to show renewed life.

Other places had similar experiences. In Dar es Salaam before they were sent home, the Germans ordained Martin Nganisya to take care of pastoral work in Dar es Salaam, Kisarawe and Maneromango. His work required visiting all three mission centers, but local teachers who served without pay conducted the work at each. Three teachers handled the work of teaching and preaching at Maneromango: Yosia Mkumbalu, Anton Misokia and Daniel Mwenesano.²³⁸

Working together with pastor Ganisya, the teachers had to overcome a number of problems brought on by the war. The most pressing was the occupation of the mission by the British troops, during which the British did not allow worship services to be conducted. After the British colonial administration was established, it sought the Anglican bishop from Zanzibar to take over the mission, but Ganisya together with his teachers refused to merge with them which caused a serious problem to the authorities.²³⁹ There was no permanent missionary until 1926 when pastor Hermann Krelle returned. Krelle on his return noticed a number of positive results from the African leadership of the mission. Over one hundred persons were enrolled for catechumens; many people including no-Christians attended services, there were twenty youths in the confirmation classes.²⁴⁰

As the only African Lutheran pastor, Ganisya also visited Usambara to baptise and celebrate the Eucharist. "We told each other", wrote one

²³⁷ Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika*, p. 149.

²³⁸ S. von Sicard, *The Lutheran Church on the Coast of Tanzania, 1887-1914* (Uppsala, 1970), p. 53, See also Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 96.

²³⁹ Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, p. 258.

who met him, "how the Kingdom of God is going forward in Dar es Salaam, Uzaramo, in Tanga and in Digoland, in Usambara and on Kilimanjaro. We listened and sang hymns, we praised and thanked God for the great deeds he has done for us".²⁴¹

In Usambara, in the northwest of Tanzania, the leaving missionaries had considered ordaining an African pastor as a hurried decision. Instead, they selected seven teachers as shepherds. These teachers ran the Shambaa church from 1920 to 1925 with success:

Because of the rumours of war many left Christianity thinking that the Christians were not wanted. But when one congregation started inviting others during festivals, the fire was re-kindled and many came back to the congregation and were baptized... The word of God was further spread when the church was being run by natives. There was no opposition. Only a few individuals forbade their children to go to Church. Those who accepted Christianity were helped by the Holy Spirit and had a burning zeal without being forced by any circumstance. It was never because of poverty that they accepted Christianity. During that time there was a true manifestation of Love. At festivals many came from far and sang hymns and played trumpets.²⁴²

Such exaltation among small communities in a harsh world was experienced elsewhere when missionaries left.

The German missionaries had regarded Africans as inferior before the war.²⁴³ They developed a habit that Africans were not able to do anything without European leadership. When the Germans experienced humiliation, it was painful for some of them. When the Germans returned to their former mission stations, they found that the African

²⁴⁰ Thomas Spear & Isaria Kimambo (eds.), *East African Expressions of Christianity*, p. 73.

²⁴¹ Jakobo Ngombe to Delius in Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, p. 258.

²⁴² Guga, Timilai H. I. Research into the history of the Usambara-Digo Church, in Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, p.258.

²⁴³ Compare Kimambo and Temu, *A History of Tanzania*, p. 131; Berman, pp. 5 – 7.

Christians had done an outstanding mission work and they had developed a sense of self-determination.²⁴⁴ The experiences of the war opened up opportunities for African leadership in the church. A group of eight indigenous evangelists was sent for theological training at Kidugala in 1932 soon after the German missionaries took over their former mission fields. The eight evangelists were: Yohana Nyagawa (Malangali), Ludzabiko Kihupi (Ilembula), Ludzabiko Hawanga (Lupembe), Lutangilo Merere (Kidugala), Mtenzi Kyelula (Lupembe), Ananidze Chungu (Kidugala), Joseph Mpogole (Brandt) and Alaturanga Msitu (Pommern).²⁴⁵ There was a similar experience in central and eastern Kenya, where the pace of ordaining African pastors rose after the war was over.²⁴⁶

The period between the First and Second World Wars was a time of growth for the mission work in Tanganyika, especially in the Lutheran church. When a similar situation occurred again between 1939-1945, the churches were stronger and less severely disrupted. The situation had improved greatly. Furthermore, Lutheran missionaries from Sweden and other countries replaced the German missionaries who had been interned by 1940 and the growth of the church continued.²⁴⁷

Following the Second World War, gradually the Africans took leadership responsibility without enough managerial experience, but also without the means to enable them to carry out the work independently and effectively. The departure of the missionaries left the mission fields helpless. However, this situation challenged the African leaders and Christians to find new strategies to meet

²⁴⁴ Terence Ranger, *The African Churches of Tanzania* (Nairobi: 1972), p. 10; Kimambo and Temu, p. 129.

²⁴⁵ H. Kobler, *Jubilee of 100 Years of the Gospel* (Njombe: ELCT, Southern diocese, 1998), p. 12.

²⁴⁶ Robert Strayer, *The Making of Mission Communities in East Africa* (London: 1978), p. 69.

leadership needs and to run the missions. Pastor Herman Neuberg emphasised this point by saying: "the problem of not having enough money was because of the directive of Mr. Hitler to stop all the money contributed by Christians in Europe from being sent to foreign countries. This helped the Christians of all congregations to realize their stewardship role and to give more offerings and collections than they used to give before".²⁴⁸ The shortage of leadership brought forth ideas of self-reliance in evangelism, leadership and financial management.

It is against this background of uncertainty and of self-determination that the indigenous agents bore a comparatively greater portion of burden of mission work as preachers, teachers of catechumen pupils, interpreters and clerks. Due to the war the growth of the membership was slightly affected, in the sense that many catechumens remained for a long time without being baptised due to the lack of pastors. Moreover, the large number of Hehe/Bena on war service undoubtedly contained a sizable percentage of mission adherents, thus reducing the figures further. Let us now look at the emergence of the local leadership and how they interacted with the missionaries in various periods.

²⁴⁷ M. Langley & T. Kiggins, *A Serving People*, p. 82.

²⁴⁸ Herman Neuberg, *Historia Fupi ya Miaka 75 Sinodi ya Kusini, 1891-1996* (Peramiho: 1966), p. 15.

Chapter Four

The emergence and growth of indigenous leadership and the dominance of the missionaries (1899-1999)

4. Introduction

Bishop Henry Karlen in his report to Rome after being transferred from the diocese of Umtata to that of Bulawayo, commented: "Without an indigenous clergy and their leadership there can be no thriving church."²⁴⁹ The African catechists, teachers, evangelists and pastors singly and collectively, laboured tirelessly in God's vineyard to proclaim the Gospel to their own people in their own language. Scholars to African contributions and initiatives in the Christian mission studies have paid little or no attention and few have been made from the perspective of the Africans.

The aim of this chapter is to trace the emergence and the growth of indigenous leaders in the church and their contribution in the various periods. The suggested periodisation is as follows: the beginning of the missionary work in Iringa, by the Berlin Mission Society, and the Scottish interlude (1899-1939); the Swedish Evangelical Mission Society (1940-1965); the period during the pre-and post-Arusha Declaration (1966-1986); and, finally, the period of the formation of the Iringa Diocese (1987-1999).

²⁴⁹ R.H. Randolph, *Report to Rome in The Making of an Indigenous Clergy in Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1995), p. 136.

4.1 The period of the Berlin Missionaries and the Scottish interlude (1899-1925)

The Berlin missionaries, accompanied by the Bena Christians, were the pioneer propagators of Christianity in Uhehe, along the Udzungwa range, in 1899. Having established a mission station at Itonya, the missionaries devoted more attention to evangelism. Wilhelm Neuberg, like any other early missionary, considered himself to have been sent out with a special mission to liberate others, who were still under the bondage of heathenism, by using the traditional missionary methods: evangelism, education and medicine. The preaching of the gospel had priority over all other methods of evangelisation. The missionaries knew that once they had convinced some people who were rather conservative, it would be easy for them to continue their work. But who had to do the preaching? Neuberg, after having introduced Christianity in the Ubena area in 1898, took indigenous Bena Christians with him, who later became teachers at mission stations.²⁵⁰ The Bena Christians, who were also employees of the missionaries in their homes, assisted in proclaiming the gospel and taught and preached in the Kibena language. Although the archive sources do not mention the names of the Africans who came with Neuberg, oral sources reveal the names of the two Bena teachers, who were instrumental in the work of evangelism, as being Esau Nyanganani and Ruben, who was known only by his first name.²⁵¹ As the missionary became more involved with other details of the running of the mission station, the task of reaching out to the surrounding villages was left to the Bena evangelists.

²⁵⁰ According to missionary H. Kobler, most of the missionaries' journeys were on foot or by using a horse or a donkey. When a missionary travelled he was given a company of ten men. ELCT, Southern diocese, *Jubilee of 100 Years of the Gospel*, (Njombe: ELCT, Southern diocese, 1998), p.5.

²⁵¹ Interview with Gasper Magava, 11 November 1999.

Even though the Africans did not have any voice during these early stages, some leadership started to be recognized and played a crucial role in attracting people to Christianity. The Bena people were already excited about Christianity and took the opportunity to express their faith amidst the Hehe people. For evangelism, the German missionaries found it easier to convince the Hehe people using African missionaries, because they could understand each other much better. The Bena used the Kibena language, which the Hehe could easily follow, but, in so doing, the Hehe became weakened and it was the beginning of the Bena dominance over the Hehe.

The Berlin missionaries came from a country that had its own attitudes and views, thoughts and behaviour. It was a world of strict controls within clearly defined bounds, privately, socially and politically. The mission societies also reflected the tensions and ambiguities, which existed during the nineteenth century. The form of the pre-industrial extended family largely determined the social structures, which was patriarchal and authoritarian but cultivated along strong interpersonal bonds. The director of the society was regarded and addressed as the father, and the missionaries all called each other "brother", or "sister". In missionary writings black people are referred to as children.²⁵² Although Pakendorf refers to South Africa, this was also the case in Tanzania. It was very arrogant and disrespectful for the missionaries to refer to mature responsible people with their own culture and identity as children.

Therefore, where they established themselves in mission settlements, they exercised the structures they formed and controlled. They had their own principles of life and guidelines. This can be seen in the

²⁵² Gunther Pakendorf, "For there is no Power but of God" The Berlin Mission and the Challenges of Colonial Africa in *Missionalia* Vol. 25 November 1997, p. 269

station regulations that Alexander Merensky drew up for mission stations and which were subsequently used as a model for most Berlin stations. The instances of authority were given in descending order. Firstly, the station was placed under the protection of God whose word shall reign; secondly, the "great teachers beyond the sea" were to be regarded as masters of the property; thirdly, the missionaries, are the representatives and pastors of this congregation. Therefore no one may build, till the land or cut wood without their permission. The people are supervised by the fourth instance of authority and the elders, who also dispense justice.

Demands were too high and while the Germans were proud of their disciplined control, their flock frequently was of a different opinion, especially when they had the opportunity of comparing their situation with Catholic and Moravian converts. The Berlin Mission Society emphasised and infused an ethic of hard work, cleanliness and self-discipline. The dominance of the Berlin missionaries was expressed in the following viewpoints:

For the sake of his faith the black person must obey the existing authority. For the sake of his Christian character, one should humbly keep to the boundaries imposed on him by the existing differences in education and training.

For the sake of his Christianity, he should work in such a way that even under changed conditions he can eat his own bread and show himself to be a useful member in the total population²⁵³.

The nature of discipline that was imposed by the German missionaries in the mission stations was too authoritarian, to the extent that some people felt that Christianity was like slavery. The people lived in fear of the missionaries because they acted dictatorially in imposing absolute moral standards, which resulted into punishment. With remarkable

²⁵³ Ibid., p. 270.

similarity to the style of their mentors, the African clergy seemed to have operated in an authoritarian manner to councils. In 1937 Sehmdorf reported with pride how one of the African pastors exploited his hereditary and military background to maintain discipline in his congregation and school.²⁵⁴ The dictatorial attitude of the Germans was somehow inherited by some of the African evangelists and pastors in imposing the self-discipline in their leadership in their respective parishes, which had its own negative and positive effects.

As we have seen in chapter three, German missionaries were interned and deported but, more seriously, the Christian community was accused of pro-German sympathies and was deprived of any African leaders. As a result mission work was retarded. People had to leave and men especially, had to go to the battlefield. The British soldiers sought those who remained and others went on praying for the people involved in the war and for peace.²⁵⁵ In a way, it strengthened the mission work because the indigenous converts had to work hard to convince people to believe in Christianity. Towards the end of the war, in November 1918, five African teachers from the Blantyre Mission in Malawi, one from each of its major stations in Malawi, came to the Uhehe area under the leadership of Yoram Mphande.²⁵⁶ They came to take the vacant positions left by the indigenous teachers who had been taken to the battlefield, leaving the mission field without leaders.

After the Germans had been defeated, the British took over the country and worked with the League of Nations. The period between 1920-1939 can be called a transition period, because it starts at the end of the First World War and ends before the beginning of the

²⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 192.

²⁵⁵ Interview with Emmanuel Mwachang'a, 16 November 1999, Iringa.

²⁵⁶ Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika 1891-1941 Lutherans and Moravians in the Southern Highlands* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 146.

Second World War. It can rightly be seen as a transition period from one war to another war. It can also be called a period of peace because the years between 1919 and 1939, were years without fighting. During this time, few indigenous people held positions in the mission stations but never held any prominent positions. They were incorporated at the lowest level of leadership in the mission stations.

The European missionaries concept of opening schools in Uhehe especially, was only to prepare evangelists who could work as teachers under the supervision of the missionary. The evangelists were entitled to teach and prepare the catechumens, who were to be examined by the missionary and approved by the missionary for baptism. The missionary was, therefore, responsible for the Lord's Supper, baptism, supervision and pastoral visitation. The missionary's educational demands for the teachers were not demanding. A good moral conduct was essential. The ability to read, write and knowledge of the catechism was sufficient. These were the kind of people who had been trained to lead parishes and teach. They were not able to undertake the heavier duty of church administration, teaching the Bible and administration of sacraments, due to a lack of proper training. Adequate training for such tasks could only be the result of higher education, which the missionaries could not provide from the very beginning of their mission work, because they argued that education was not their priority. Their task was a spiritual one; therefore all other activities, including education were to be subservient to this. Paul Rother, a Leipzig missionary, who was depressed by the education situation in the Bena/Hehe Synod, opposed this opinion. In 1938 he challenged the Berlin missionaries by sending a number of grade I Chagga teachers of them was called Vehael Mmari from

Northern Tanganyika to the Synod to improve the education standard in the Berlin Synod.²⁵⁷

The *mwaliimu* had a few years of primary schooling at the main station. It was the only qualification or training that the village *mwaliimu* and leader had normally been able to acquire. He returned to the village armed with this small amount of learning in order to be useful to the community. He passed on what he had learnt to those who would otherwise have been denied all opportunity for formal education.²⁵⁸ The main aim of the Berlin Mission Society in training indigenous people was not for leadership qualities, but to reach the human soul through the Word of God. It was similar to what Bosch says: "Early evangelists usually had just a few years of schooling, followed by some months of church training. As their title implies, evangelists were commonly employed to "evangelise", that is, to preach the gospel to non-Christians and thus to assist the ordained ministry".²⁵⁹ Missionaries offered basic education to the early converts, enough to be their agents in the mission work, but not to educate them since they would take too much time studying rather than preaching. The missionaries communicated directly with the teachers in the stations. The teachers were usually married men, whom the missionaries had hand-picked, based on performance. They were highly respected members of their community because of the knowledge they possessed, their service to the church and God,²⁶⁰ and their age, which according to Hehe custom, granted them status.²⁶¹

²⁵⁷ Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika*, p. 205.

²⁵⁸ Interview with Petro Mpalanzi, 11 December 2000 Image, Iringa.

²⁵⁹ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis Books, 1992), p. 26.

²⁶⁰ It could hardly have been seen as wage labour since their pay was always quite low.

²⁶¹ They were incorporated in settling disputes in the village and were a refuge for many people with family conflicts.

These teachers were indispensable to the work of the Berlin missionaries because they had daily contact with the majority of parishioners whom the missionary pastor only reached once or twice a year.²⁶² The nature of the classes depended on the instructor's enthusiasm and training. Most Hehe Christians remembered the names of their teachers, and praised their dedication and energetic teaching style. It was the Hehe and the Bena teachers who provided the crucial link between the foreign missionaries and the Hehe villagers with their own religious questions and traditions.²⁶³ Although the establishment of ordained clergy was delayed, the African evangelists played an important leadership role, even if they were placed at the lowest level.

The question of training African pastors who could eventually take responsibility for their own church, was a far away dream. Schuler who had worked in Apartheid South Africa and was not able to provide the needed leadership, and as such, station paternalism (more or less autocratic), became the rule of the day in the Berlin Mission who had assumed mission responsibility again.²⁶⁴ The missionaries overlooked or even ignored the gifts and abilities which God has bestowed on the African people, who could be trained to take responsibility right from the beginning. It is the pride of the European nations which make them judge other races, especially the African, as inferior and underdeveloped. In this case, the missionaries subordinated the Africans by providing them with a low standard of education, which was only aimed at meeting the goals of the missionaries without thinking of the future needs of the Africans. Africans were considered to be immature and the time for them to hold leadership positions was not yet ripe, and they had to be content with their low positions in the

²⁶² Interview with Elia Mbangwa, 10 December 2000, Iringa.

²⁶³ Interview with Amos Luhwago, 15 November 2000, Iringa.

²⁶⁴ Klaus Fiedler, *Christianity and African Culture*, p. 15.

church. Ordination and education became promoted when Oelke became the superintendent of the re-established Bena-Hehe Synod.

Lutheran Christians in the Southern Highlands had to wait for forty-three years before experienced mature Africans could occupy ordained positions in the church. Owing to the fact that there were few ordained missionaries, the growth of the church was limited as a result of the overall scarcity of qualified personnel in the area. It is important to note that the attitude of missionaries towards African leadership in the church was not encouraging at all. In their opinion, the African was too immature to be lifted up to a leadership position. This conduct persisted throughout the years of the mission work in Tanganyika and lasted until the 1960s, when African political independence changed the attitude of foreign missionaries.

However, in 1932 the Berlin missionaries decided to train experienced teachers at Kidugala to be ordained as pastors. As a result of the growth of the church, there was a need for ordained indigenous leaders. There was an acute shortage of pastors. They were afraid that they might lose their established stations and converts to the Roman Catholic Church which was the rival church. The evangelists who joined the course and received ordination on 5 May 1934 were: Yohani Nyagawa, Ludzabiko Kihupi, Ananidze Chungu, Lutangilo Merere, Yosefu Mpogolo, Ludzabiko Nyato, Mtenzi Kyelula, Alatuvanga Msitu and Ezekiel King'ota.²⁶⁵

Theological training was offered to experienced teachers and evangelists. It was a generation of tried teachers and evangelists and it created a reservoir of leadership capable of fulfilling the duties of pastors. Most of them had been associated with the Berlin missionaries

²⁶⁵ Iliffe, (eds.), *Modern Tanzanians*, p. 57.

before the war and had continued on their own initiative to be teachers and community leaders in the absence of the missionaries. The eight men were familiar with the Germans in general. For instance, Ludzabiko Nyato and Yohana Nyagawa were former soldiers and had been taken prisoners by the British government during the First World War. After the war, they worked as teachers for some years under the Scottish mission and later under the Berlin mission in the Ukena and Uhehe congregations. Ananidze Chungu and Alatuvanga Musitu, like Nyato and Nyagawa were also prominent mission teachers who entered mission service before the First World War broke out.²⁶⁶ Besides, Ananidze Chungu had lived with Julius Oelke during his childhood and even travelled with him to Uhehe and stayed with him at Pommern before joining a mission boarding school and continuing to a Government school in Dar es Salaam in 1914. Lutengano Melele's studies were interrupted in 1915 due to the First World War, for he had been in the process of pursuing advanced education under Carl Nahaus (who had served as a Berlin missionary in Konde area) in Morogoro. Ludzabiko Kihupi and Mutendzi Kyelula were schoolboys in 1916. Except for Mutendzi Kyelula, all the civilians had been victims of the British and had been detained or imprisoned as dangerous people who were on the side of the Germans.²⁶⁷

In the process of assessing each one of the prospective leaders, missionary Julius Oelke made the following remarks on the teachers:

Johani *mwa* [son of] Nyagava

He has good talents and he reads the Bible diligently. He knows Kiswahili and English. Since he was a soldier he knows discipline and accountability. He is eloquent in speech, but he seems boastful.

²⁶⁶ Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika 1891-1941: Lutheran and Moravians in the Southern Highlands* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 191-192.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

Ludzabiko *mwa* Kihupi

He is talented and ambitious. He despises the pagans. He fits better in teaching than in preaching. His work is good and he respects his culture.

Joseph *mwa* Mupogolo

Hardworking and experienced in administration. He aspires to achieve unity and strength.

Alatuvanga *mwa* Musita

He is experienced. Calm, professional, fit and confident. Good in preaching and draws the attention of the audience.

Mutendzi *mwa* Kyelula

He knows his limitations. He is asthmatic. Shows great faithfulness in his work.

Lutangilo *mwa* Melele

Polite, calm and a potential leader, but does not want to make decisions.

Ludzabiko *mwa* Nyato

Well organised and a smart person (former soldier). He knows his people well and knows how to lead them.

Ananidze *mwa* Kyungu

Not very experienced. He confuses his audience with his words. He has a good house and good children. He impresses people.²⁶⁸
(*Translation mine*)

From Oelke's assessment, one might conclude that the indigenous pastors were competent despite their limited education. All of them showed good ability in pastoral leadership. One can only imagine how high they might have risen, what leadership they might have provided had the missionaries given them more educational opportunities. Nevertheless, the long experience they had as evangelists, combined with a good basic education gave them the competence to deliver good service to the people.

²⁶⁸ KKKT, *Dayosisi ya Kusini, Miaka 100 ya Injili* (ELCT, Southern diocese,), p. 8

Oelke's assessment of Kihupi is of some interest. Kihupi is assessed as a talented and ambitious person who despised the pagans. This may have had to do with his background. Before Kihupi was called for theological studies, he worked as a teacher in a school in Iringa town. Therefore, he was exposed to some of the development that took place in town. Furthermore, he had learned German from the German missionaries and translated German hymns into Kibena. His associations with the Germans made him interested in learning more. Kihupi was one of those African evangelists who called his own people heathens or pagans and even despised them. This attitude helps us to understand what was going on in the life of the church, especially as African believers got educated, they imitated the missionaries in theologising and even looked down on their own people. With few exceptions like Oelke, most missionaries tended to see heathenism in all that was African, and the result was that Western customs substituted the African customs.

According to Wright, there is another feature which was common to all the first pastors' backgrounds. Before the war broke out, some of them were catechumens and were baptised by Pastor Anderson. Furthermore, all of them served as teachers in Anderson's time.²⁶⁹ Anderson had managed to convey to them a sense of the importance of the present and future need for African church leadership, although by 1925 some had left the mission service for more opportunities in the government. Yohana Nyagawa was one who had left the church to serve in the government as a hospital attendant, but who returned and served the church first as a teacher and then as a pastor. Most of them were self-supporting to some degree, though some worked entirely

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

without a subsidy and survived the stresses and impoverishment of the mission in the 1930s.²⁷⁰

It is, however, striking to note that in the above list of students, all of them came from the Ukena and Uwanji/Ukinga area and none from the Uhehe area. One wonders why, in the whole area of Uhehe, especially in the Udzungwa area where Julius Oelke had served and Herman Neuberg was based as a missionary, not one African joined the theological training programme. According to Ludzabiko Kihupi, who was one of the first eight ordained indigenous pastors, the method used to select a candidate to go for theological training was by votes in the mission stations. The person who got the highest number of votes was sent for training. Kihupi was voted for by the church in Iringa town, where he had been working as a teacher in a school.²⁷¹ Although the method appears to be fair, it is important to note that the Ukena evangelists and teachers during that time formed the majority in the church. I argue in this case that Julius Oelke, who wanted the gospel to be rooted in the people's culture, could have given the Uhehe an opportunity to vote for a Uhehe evangelist, who could preach the gospel to the Uhehe reflecting their culture. The lack of geographical balance in leadership training brought a big disparity in trained leadership in the church, and it is a painful reality whose consequences are seen today in Iringa, where most of the educated and trained people are from the Ukena tribe. This trend goes back to the time of the Berlin missionaries.

The Berlin missionaries held a meeting among themselves from 5 to 7 May 1934²⁷² to evaluate the candidates for ordination. The discussion

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Dayosisi ya Kusini, *Jubilee ya Miaka 100 ya Injili: Kumbukumbu* (Southern diocese, 100 Years of the Gospel: Jubilee) (Njombe: ELCT, Southern diocese, 1998), p. 23.

²⁷² Ibid., p. 8.

centered on the candidates' character and abilities. Some of the missionaries were skeptical as to whether an African could become a pastor and become trustworthy, while others advised that they had to trust in God and, thus, decided to ordain them after theological training. Each was paid 25 Tanzanian shillings. (Equivalent to a quarter of a South African rand). The new pastors were given gowns without stoles and were not allowed to wear shoes because the Bena people had not yet started to wear shoes. It was important for the first indigenous pastors to respect their culture and not imitate European culture.²⁷³ Responding to the question why this was so, Pastor Allan Kyambile, son of one of the first ordained pastors said: "It was a way to differentiate between a missionary pastor and an indigenous pastor".²⁷⁴ The decision by the missionaries to differentiate between themselves and the indigenous Christians in this way is a clear indication of the racism that characterized the early European mission in Tanganyika.

Assessing the first indigenous pastors in 1937, missionary Sehmsdorf gave the following remarks:

Almost all the pastors are good people. They are gifted in preaching and know very well the behaviour of their listeners. They accomplish more in mission work than what I could. They show shrewdness against the priests and witches. In pastoral care, our colleagues are very strict and emphasise the commandments rather than the gospel. People like them because, unlike the chiefs, they show both strictness and love. The time has come for these *vadimi* (pastors) to be given licenses to perform marriages and to test catechumen who want to be baptised. Furthermore, they should learn how to control finances so that later on they can be able to lead the indigenous church ...Without my two pastors I could have not managed to do my work. Up to now, they have been receiving a very small

²⁷³ Interview with Allan Kyambile, 14 November 1999, Mafinga

²⁷⁴ Interview with Allan Kyambile, 14 November 1999, Mafinga.

salary, but without grudges, although their work causes more expenses²⁷⁵ (*translation mine*).

In light of the above, indigenous pastors did not administer marriages. They were still on probation. They were not allowed to wear shoes and stoles. The salaries of the teachers were at the mercy of the missionary. The pastor's salaries were so meager that they could not even buy the bare necessities of life. The missionaries' failure to give adequate material support to teachers caused suffering. There was no way to bring the matter to the attention of the missionary officials, for the missionary was the sole intermediary. His word was believed and taken as final. On the contrary, missionaries earned a salary plus an allowance for each child. They received a housing allowance, free transport maintained by the mission plus a holiday allowance. African ministers suffered these disparities in silence.²⁷⁶

When the African endeavoured to dress like the whites, they were treated with indifference. Once seen by Europeans dressed in Western style they caused ridicule as Swanson reports:

While walking along the streets of Iringa (South Tanganyika) we saw a comical sight. We know that the African, emerging from savagery and paganism, is in an adolescent stage and has decided weakness for the clothes and fineries on the white man, and loves to "dress up" when the opportunity affords. Here we met one who made us both look and wonder. He was dressed in a black derby and a Prince Albert coat! Whether they had come from a British official or from a German mission station, he walked with dignity. Yes we laughed. But then I wondered if we whites folks don't do some ridiculous things, too. I have seen whites parade our city streets dressed like the Mohammedans I saw in Cairo. Might we not smile at our own adolescent behaviour once in a while? The point of view makes a big difference.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁵ KKKT, *Jubilee ya Miaka 40 ya Injili Ubena*, p. 18.

²⁷⁶ Allan Kyambile, Interview with author, 16 December 1999.

²⁷⁷ S. Hjalmar Swanson, *Touring Tanganyika*, Augustana Book Concern, (Rock Island, Illinois, 1948), p. 178.

In addition to the above quote, the issue of dress and culture in general was debated among the Berlin missionaries.²⁷⁸ Some of the Berlin missionaries did not want the Christian converts to dress in clothes that were meant for the whites. The missionaries were strict and demanded obedience from their Christian converts, and never compromised with those Christians who tried not to heed to their missionary. On one occasion a bridegroom was asked to go out of the church to remove his shoes before the missionary could marry them. The local people interpreted this act as arrogance on the part of the missionary and that he never wanted an African appear like a white.²⁷⁹ One missionary argued that the missionaries wanted the Africans, especially the teachers, not to copy the whites, but abide by their tradition and culture.²⁸⁰ Here the bridegroom (indigenous pastor) had to abide to the command of the dominant, as Scott says:

The theatrical imperative that normally prevails in situations of domination produce a transcript in close conformity with how the dominant group would wish to have things appear. The dominant never controls the stage absolutely, but their wishes normally prevail. ... it is in the interest of the subordinate to produce a more or less credible performance, speaking the lines and making the gestures he knows are expected of him... . It is precisely this public domain where the effects of power relations are most manifest, and any analysis based exclusively on the public transcript is likely to conclude that subordinate group endorse the terms of their subordination and are willing, even enthusiastic, partners in that subordination.²⁸¹

In this case the missionaries' wish prevailed and the bridegroom had to express his concern before the marriage plans. These missionaries had forgotten that the Christians had earned money and had learned from their peers how to use it as they wished. They bought clothes for their wives and children as they wished. One can argue that

²⁷⁸ Fiedler, *Christianity and African Culture*, p. 149/50.

²⁷⁹ Interview with Allan Kyambile 16 December 1999, Iringa.

²⁸⁰ Interview with Allan Kyambile, 16 December 1999, Iringa.

missionaries wanted to maintain the gap by segregating an indigenous Christian, who is subordinate to a white Christian, who is dominant.

The relationship of an indigenous leader and a European missionary was not of collegueship and brotherhood, but strictly official. An African was not allowed to go close to the house of the missionary to keep him away from bringing flies into the missionary's house. Problems were discussed outside the house without any invitation into the house. This type of relation was that of a master and a servant.²⁸² Due to this type of relationship, some of the *walimu* (teachers) never attempted to face the missionaries, even if they had serious problems. However, some of the Africans were brave and managed to face them. One informant narrated an incident how a missionary insulted Mathayo Lihinda, a *mwalimu* who asked to be paid his salary for the treatment of his sick son in 1953. The missionary told the *mwalimu* that the Africans bore children like animals. That was a serious insult for an African. The *mwalimu* lost his temper and could not withstand the humiliation. He confronted the missionary furiously. However, sensing that the situation was not good, the missionary ran inside the house to call his servants to rescue him. The District pastor settled the case in favour of the *mwalimu*.²⁸³ Following the story, it shows how the missionaries undermined the indigenous agents despite the good job these agents did in teaching and preaching in the remote stations. They also looked down at the African culture.

Following the good work of the first ordained African pastors, the missionaries felt the need to have more ordained indigenous pastors to help spread the Gospel. Experienced teachers were chosen for theological instruction. In 1938 six more pastors were ordained. They

²⁸¹ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, p. 4.

²⁸² Interview with Elia Mdakilwa, 17 January 2001, Iringa.

²⁸³ Interview with Mathayo Lubawa, 12 August 1999, Iringa.

were Israel Mwipopo, Lunodzo Kahale, Elioth Kiwale, Jonathan Kyambile and Tupevilwe Sanga. One more, Sifike Ngajilo, was ordained in 1939, the year the Second World War broke out. In that same year, the German missionaries were interned, and travel for those who remained behind was restricted by order of the British government.²⁸⁴ Due to the internment of some of the missionaries there was a need for new leadership to replace those who were interned and there was a shortage of pastors to work in the mission field. In November 1939 the indigenous Christians from Ubena-Konde responded to this challenge by electing Pastor Yohana Nyagawa to be the Head of the Church. Although his position was short lived because of the challenges he faced from the British government and the alleged misuse of church funds of the church, he was the first African to lead the Church in the Southern Highlands.²⁸⁵ Nyagawa's story will be covered in depth in Chapter 6. Following Nyagawa's administrative problems, a Swedish missionary replaced Nyagawa and this will be dealt with in the following section.

4.2 The period under the Swedish Evangelical Missions (1940–1965)

In 1940 the Swedish missionaries took over the mission fields of the Berlin Mission Society in the whole of Southern Tanzania until 1959. In spite of the interruption of the Second World War, there was a growth of mission work and indigenous agents came into the picture and played an active role in church leadership. It was during this period that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania was formed in 1963.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ Ukanda wa Kusini, *Karne ya Kwanza ya Injili 1891-1991 (Southern Zone, 100 Years of the Gospel 1891-1991)*(Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 1991), p. 18.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

With the removal in 1940 by the British government, of the last Berlin missionary from the Southern part of the country, the fifty years of German control came to an end. Since then Lutherans received missionaries from Scandinavia instead of Germany and the elderly Martin Priebusch was allowed to remain as an adviser.

From November 1939, when Priebusch renounced executive authority until 1941, the Southern church was independent in the sense that it had no formal missionary supervision.²⁸⁷ Following Nyagawa's election, he designated all the senior pastors to look after various ethnic districts: Alaturanga Msitu in the Mahenge-Bena and Wandamba area; Lunodzo Kahale in Uhehe, stationed at Pommern; Yosefu Mpogolo at Brandt in Usangu; Sifike Ngajilo at Magoye in Uwanji; Tupelilwe Sanga at Bulongwa in Ukinga; and Ambonisye Sana at Manow for Unyakyusa.²⁸⁸ Since Nyagawa attempted to exercise extensive central control over the church, a detailed biography has been included in Chapter 6. While these developments took place, the Swedish missionaries under Martin Nordfeldt had just begun to introduce Christianity in the Uhehe lowlands by using Bena Christians.

After Nyagawa's leadership became suspected in finance and dictatorship, the process of divesting him of his powers began at a Church meeting in November 1940. With the support of the Swedish missionary, Nordfeldt, the delegates dismissed Nyagawa as Treasurer and later on, in 1941, at a church Synod they dismissed him as the Superintendent. He was assigned to serve at Pommern in the Uhehe highlands.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁷ Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika*, p. 208.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

Following Nyagawa's dismissal as Superintendent in 1941, an American, Gustav Bernander, a former missionary in Southern Rhodesia, briefly supervised the church in the Southern Highlands. Because of Bernander's inability to speak either Kibena or Kiswahili, he was forced to communicate through the English-speaking Chagga teacher at Kidugala. Being aware of his ineffectiveness as a supervisor, he resigned. Nordfeldt was appointed to take his place.²⁹⁰

Africans had been elevated to important positions in congregations and schools and as this took place the missionaries did not want the schools to lose their status because of any change in leadership. Evangelisation was confined to the African pastors, elders, teachers, and evangelists and they had the responsibility of awakening their congregational areas and reporting any concerns to their superintendents. Nordfeldt, after exploring the situation in the church, realized its great growth, which was attributed to the African pastors, elders, teachers and evangelists. The church expanded without the Bible since the old copies had been worn out: the Kibena version had been out of print since before 1939.²⁹¹

The missionaries had also developed a paternalistic relation between the congregations and the missions, between the African leaders and the missionaries. This was the case when the young churches were named "orphaned" missions, because these mission fields were left without the missionaries' supervision after being repatriated during the First World War. All the churches that were under the supervision of German Missions were called 'orphan'. It was not the wish of African Christians to be called so, but the wish of American and European Christians, who argued that these Churches had no financial support

²⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 214.

²⁹¹ Ibid., p. 217.

and German missionary personnel. In addition, they didn't have adequate qualified African leaders to run the already established churches.²⁹² In my opinion, the name 'orphan' has a paternalistic connotation of the giver towards the recipient. Such an attitude did not take the African contribution into consideration, which enabled the growth of the churches during and after the wars. African leadership, being backed up by their fellow converts, worked tirelessly to let the church stand.²⁹³ Elmer Danielson gives the following remark on this point.

In 1940, I was not personally acquainted with the African leadership ... As the war years continued, I became acquainted with hundreds, and my eyes were opened afresh to the great potential for Christ's church in African men and women. If tribute is to be paid to anybody for the growth of the church in numbers, unity and responsibility during these war years, 1940-1945, it is to the African leadership in each of these former German fields. It was a great work for Christ, faithfully and sacrificially performed by these unsung heroes of the Christian faith.²⁹⁴

The above quotation comes from a person who physically witnessed the role played by the indigenous agents. Had the World Missionary body heard these words as Niwagila points out, "they would have thought otherwise and withdrawn the name".²⁹⁵ F. Eboussi Boulaga in *"The Churches of Africa: Future Prospects"* makes a point and remarks:

Even if he (referring to the African Christian) is a child of the founder of the mission, he has to die to his childhood in order to become a father in his turn, the hero of a new line of men, but

²⁹² Gustav Bernander, *Lutheran War Time Assistance to Tanzania Churches 1940 - 1945* (Uppsala 1968), p. 23.

²⁹³ According to Elmer Danielson, the Africans had a point in rejecting the name. "The German missions were "orphaned" by the war but the African Christians were not orphans. Christ was in their midst!"

²⁹⁴ Bernander, *Lutheran War Time Assistance*, p. 54.

²⁹⁵ Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church*, p. 265.

in order to perpetuate the Negroes as colonisable objects of indocrination and charity.²⁹⁶

In my opinion, churches were and are still expected to support those churches in need, but without undermining them. They should regard their fellow Christians in Africa as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, and not otherwise.

Before Pastor Nyagawa stepped down, he proposed a programme to train additional indigenous people for mission work. This programme was taken over by Pastor Martin Nordfedt in 1941. It was during this period that some teachers from Uhehe were given an opportunity to receive theological education. Joseph Kiwope, who had served as a teacher at Lugoli-Idunda in 1932 and Fikano in 1944, received theological education at Lwandai in Usambara. My sources reveal that two people were selected to receive theological education, namely Joseph Kiwope and Yotamu Mkemwa. However, Mkemwa was never called but a Bena teacher took his place. Kiwope was ordained in 1949 and became the first Hehe to become a pastor. In 1949 another Hehe teacher, Lutangilo Mdegela, was selected to go to Lwandai. Prior to that, he had served as a preacher for seven years at the Kilanzi station and was in charge of other teachers at the Lukani station from 1942 to 1948. In 1952 Mdegela was ordained at Ilula. In 1955, three Hehe evangelists were selected to receive theological training: Lazaro Myinga, Waziri Chusi and Amon Mkemwa. Again, two candidates were dropped and only Lazaro Musinga joined Makumira Theological College, after having served as an evangelist at Kidewa station from 1948 to 1949 and at Balali station from 1950 to 1954. He was ordained in 1957.²⁹⁷ Meanwhile Iskaka Luvunga, who had served as a

²⁹⁶ Claude Geffre and Bertrand Luneau (eds.), *The Churches of Africa: Future Prospects*, (New York: 1977), p. 30 – words in brackets are mine.

²⁹⁷ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 23rd November 2000, Iringa.

teacher at Mwatasi station, joined Kidugala Bible School in 1954. From 1960 to 1961 he attended theological training and was ordained in 1962 in the position of deacon. He was ordained as a pastor on 16 December 1979 after having served as a deacon for seventeen years.

In the early 1950s Nyagawa had introduced another hierarchy of church leaders in order to improve the administration of the sacraments and other pastoral services. He divided Pommern parish into sub-districts, locally known as *majimbo*. A *jimbo* was a geographical area comprised of four to six congregations. Each *jimbo* was under the leadership of a senior evangelist who was given the title *jimbo* (head evangelist). For instance, Pommern parish was divided into three *majimbos*. Masisiwe was under the leadership of Andrea Mwaduma, Idunda under Joseph Kiwope and Idete under Aroni Kikoti.²⁹⁸ Therefore, a new hierarchy of leadership was introduced, which implied that the evangelist in the congregation reported all issues to the *jimbo* instead of sending them directly to the pastor. The *jimbo* was responsible for evangelisation in the area, opening new congregations and placing new evangelists in the newly opened congregations.²⁹⁹

Due to growing political awareness and the formation of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) in July 1954, a full scale political campaign began against the colonial regime in the country and the missionaries were compelled to review the needs of the church. One of the needs was to review the constitution of the church so that indigenous people could participate in decision-making. In 1959 a new constitution was confirmed in a Synod meeting at Kidugala and the name of the church changed from the Southern church to the

²⁹⁸ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 23 November 2000, Iringa.

²⁹⁹ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 23 November 2000, Iringa.

Lutheran church of Southern Tanganyika. It was, also, decided to have a full General Secretary of the church and that the head of the church and the assistant should be elected by the Synod meeting and should be in office for two years. It was also recommended that the Synod meeting should take place twice a year.³⁰⁰

In that Synod meeting Pastor Nielsson was elected to head the Church, and Pastor Lunodzo Kahale was his assistant. This was an important step forward because before the new constitution, the head of the church was chosen by the leaders of the respective mission societies that worked in the area in their respective countries of Germany, Sweden and Finland. Despite this change, the Synod meeting failed to elect an indigenous head of the church. Although the written sources are silent in giving a reason for the failure to appoint an indigenous leader, oral sources suggested that at that time there was no indigenous pastor who was qualified to take the position.³⁰¹ The missionaries deliberately exposed the indigenous people to basic education, which was not enough for competent leadership. As these changes took place, the people of Uhehe lost their first Hehe pastor, Joseph Kiwope, who passed away on 6 March 1960 because of stomach problems. A Bena pastor, Lupumuko Lugala took his place.

However, the majority of African clergy occupied a lower level of church leadership as compared with missionary coworkers. This was due to the lack of higher education that could enable them to assume higher positions of leadership in the church. But according to Allan Kyambile, a retired pastor, the missionaries were also afraid to give indigenous agents leading positions because they were afraid of being challenged, overtaken and overshadowed by them.³⁰² Kyambile, who is

³⁰⁰ KKKT, *Ukanda wa Kusini, Miaka 100 ya Injili*, p. 33-34.

³⁰¹ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 23 November 2000, Iringa.

³⁰² Interview with Allan Kyambile, 16 December 1999, Mafinga.

also one of the educated pastors, bitterly narrated that when he was elected to the position of Vice President of the Southern Synod by the Executive Council in 1961, the President, who was a missionary, immediately asked Kyambile to go for further studies. The Swedish President, John Nielsson, asked the elder pastors to tell Kyambile that he had plans for him to go for further education rather than taking the office. The elders advised Kyambile to accept the opinion in order to eschew unnecessary confrontations. According to Kyambile, he accepted the scholarship, not because he wanted to study, but to respect the elders' advice. In his own mind, he was of the opinion that the Swedish President did not want to work closely with young educated and revolutionary pastors.³⁰³ On the same grounds, two of Kyambile's colleagues were also given scholarships for further training. Kyambile was sent to Germany while Rhoden Ngota and Juda Kiwovele were sent to the United States of America.

In that meeting which took place at Pommern in Uhehe, the first indigenous General Secretary, Atuganile Kalyoto, was elected. Pastor Lunodzo Kahale was then offered and accepted the position. Missionary Henrick Smedjebacka, who was a lecturer at Makumira Theological College, was elected head of the church in the third Synod meeting in 1963 at Magoye.³⁰⁴ In all three Synod meetings missionaries were elected to lead the church, although Africans formed the majority in the Synod meeting. I argue that this has got to do with power relations. The missionaries had resources at their disposal, contrary to the indigenous people who had none. If an African had to head the church where would the resources come from? Therefore, it is my opinion that the indigenous people reasoned out that, once they

³⁰³ Interview with Allan Kyambile, 16 December 1999, Mafinga.

³⁰⁴ KKKT, *Ukanda wa Kusini Miaka 100 ya Injili*, (ELCT, Southern zone), p. 36.

took the highest post in the church, they would lose support from the missionaries.

The Berlin Mission Mission was unwilling to give advanced education to the Africans because they argued that their focus was on evangelism. Thus the missionaries formulated the policies as well as the plans necessary for the running of churches. They were responsible for the employment and dismissal of church and school workers, the fixing of wages and salaries of workers and recommendations of the promotion or demotion of school and church workers. Therefore, African pastors, teachers, and evangelists, who outnumbered the missionaries in the work of the church, continued to work in the comparable situations as labour employed by the management of an industrial corporation. They received orders from the top and those below (the majority being African workers) had to obey, lest they caused themselves trouble with serious personal consequences.³⁰⁵

It was the forces from outside the church that pushed the shift to African leadership. The missionaries were not ready for this change. Today they have realized that Africans should be trained to take responsible positions in the church.

It took six years for the Lutheran church of Southern Tanganyika to finally get an indigenous pastor to lead the church since the amendments of the constitution in 1959. In 1965 Yuda Kiwovele, who had been sent for graduate studies in the United States of America, returned as a potential future leader in the Lutheran church. Kiwovele was not acknowledged at this time, especially not among the missionaries. He was known to be very outspoken, sometimes too

³⁰⁵ Interview with Allan Kyambile, 16 December 1999, Mafinga.

sensitive and sharp in his expressions. He had the courage to advocate independence for the church. In 1965 it was rightly understood that the African church would develop in a sounder way under an indigenous leader. There were a few possible candidates at this time. Kiwovele's name was not to be left out and was already in the hearts of the people in Southern Tanzania. Many among the missionaries feared Kiwovele for his strong views and his radical, outspoken manner. Kiwovele was elected by a large majority to become the first indigenous head of the church under the new constitution and, later, to become the first bishop of the Southern diocese. Pastor William Mwakagali was his assistant. This took place at Mwakaleli in Konde.³⁰⁶ Responding to the question of why, during the two previous Synod meetings, the African delegates failed to come up with an indigenous head of the church, Edward Mnyawami gave two reasons. One reason was that there was no African with the ability and education to hold a post of such responsibility and worldwide importance. Such a position needed a person with a good education and ability to express himself. Secondly, the influence of the European missionaries in the church was still very strong.³⁰⁷ But it might also be that their experience with Nyagawa forced them to be extra careful in their deliberations. In addition, by choosing a missionary to be the head of the church, they were more certain of getting financial and material support from the missions in Europe. However, this tendency brought about a strongly paternalistic attitude in the church, which made the indigenous leaders lose self-confidence in their ability to lead.

By the end of 1965, the present Iringa diocese had three Hehe pastors and one Bena pastor. The Bena pastor, Nyagawa, had been given a special assignment from the time of his ordination to evangelise the

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 23 November 2000, Iringa.

Hehe. The Hehe and the Bena pastors were given leadership roles in the newly established congregations of Pommern, Idete, Ilula and Ithemi. The four pastors got support from the teachers, whose number increased each year due to the rapid growth of the church in the area. The indigenous pastors assumed responsibility and were able to walk long distances to reach the people and talk their language and be better understood. The pastors recruited evangelists, who later were given leadership responsibilities in the new stations. Although the number of evangelists increased, the number of pastors from Uhehe area remained constant.

During that time, there was only one Hehe theological student, Israel Kiponda at Makumira, who was the first student with a secondary school education. Following the election of an indigenous head of the Church in 1965, some new leadership developments began to take place in the Uhehe area. Edward Mnyawami, who had been a teacher in church schools and a school inspector, was appointed the Assistant Education Secretary of the Church schools in the Iringa/ Uhehe district. His role was to supervise and inspect all church schools in the Iringa district. Two years later, he became the Education Secretary of church schools in the Iringa district.

In his capacity as Education Secretary in the Uhehe area, Mnyawami played a tremendous role in motivating parents to send their children to school and to take part in improving and expanding the schools. Most of the schools offered primary education up to standard four and then students had to move to other schools away from the community. He challenged the parents and village leaders to add more buildings. By 1967, all eight mission schools in the Uhehe district were able to offer primary education up to standard seven. Mnyawami made a great contribution and played a great role in raising the standard of

education in the area. Further developments in church leadership took place in the Uhehe district. In 1967 Luhangano Magava became the Treasurer of the Iringa/ Uhehe district and worked under Lunogelo Vuhahula, who was the district pastor from the Ubena area. The Iringa district, besides having capable pastors who could hold leadership positions, had pastors from Ubena overshadowing them. Hammerton Mdegela, one of the early mission teachers and school administrators in Uhehe, gives some reasons as to why the Bena overshadowed the Hehe pastors. The Bena believed that it was easy to get a Hehe person who believed in God, but it was not so easy to get a Hehe leader who could lead the Hehe. It was thought so because all the books were written in Kibena and therefore the only people who could read and understand those books were the Bena. The Hehe were made to be the assistants. Furthermore, the Bena were seen to be the key people capable of leading others, and this attitude perpetuated tribalism. The Bena led most of the primary schools in Ubena and Uhehe. In Iringa/Uhehe at the mission schools of Ilula, Idete, Gangilonga, Kitowo, Bomalang'ombe, Ihimbo and Fikano, the Bena teachers led all except Idete, where Edward Mnyawami was the head. Meanwhile, there were no Hehe teachers who were sent to teach in the mission schools in Njombe. The first middle school of the Lutheran church in the Iringa district, Pommern, was led by Bena teachers from its inception until all church schools were nationalized in 1967.³⁰⁸

In 1965, in a church meeting of Iringa district at Mufindi, an agenda was tabled from the headquarters of the church in Njombe. It asked whether people from Iringa wanted to send their own people to Kidugala for theological training or whether they wanted to receive leaders from Njombe. The agenda provoked the delegates from Iringa and they refused to discuss it because they felt they were

³⁰⁸ Interview with Hammerton Mdegela, 6 November 2000, Iringa.

marginalised. Why should the Hehe people rely on people from Njombe while they had their own people who could be trained for leadership? As a result of that reaction, the bishop of the diocese made the ruling that the Hehe had to send their people to Kidugala for theological training. Following that decision, Martin Chuma and Samson Mkemwa joined Kidugala for one year's training before being ordained as deacons. Following what happened at the above-mentioned meeting at Mufindi, one can argue that most of decisions regarding the development of the church were made in Njombe, which was the headquarters of the church about 300 kilometers from Iringa. It is, also, logical to argue that the people who were first considered were the Bena, because they were close to the administrative office. The missionaries had also set a precedent from the very beginning and regarded Uhehe as a mission area, since the Roman Catholic Church had occupied it. In addition, those teachers and pastors who served in Uhehe from Ubena never counted themselves as residents of Uhehe, therefore, they never had a sense of belonging.

In 1967 Martin Chuma from Iringa was ordained after serving as an evangelist for a number of years. In the same year Israel Kiponda, who had graduated from Makumira Theological College, was ordained after being denied ordination the first time. Kiponda was to be picked up from his home by the leaders of the church on their way to Pommern, which did not happen. Kiponda found other means and arrived at Pommern ready for ordination, but rather late. The head of the church was not happy because Kiponda was late. He viewed this as disrespectful and decided to cancel the ordination. Many Hehe saw the reaction of the head of the church as aimed at marginalising Kiponda, who by then was a highly educated pastor with a general certificate in theology from the Lutheran College in Makumira. Following his training, Kiponda was definitely expected to be in a leadership position

in Iringa. This was a bitter experience for Kiponda. He had not expected to be treated that way by his fellow Africans.³⁰⁹ He was later ordained on 26 February 1967 at Ihemi. To the disappointment of the Hehe Christians, Kiponda was assigned to serve in a mission area among the Ngoni in Southern Tanzania in order to limit his influence among the Hehe in Iringa. After two years, Samson Mkemwa was ordained to become a deacon, after attending a one-year course at Kidugala in 1969. The number of pastors in Iringa increased to five and they took leadership positions in congregations within Uhehe, while lay people took administrative positions in the church.

4. 3 The pre and post-Arusha Declaration period (1966-1986)

As the church was slowly introducing indigenous leadership, the government of Tanzania was already undergoing great changes, which affected all walks of life in the society. A Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) declaration, known as the Arusha Declaration, was announced at Arusha on 5 February 1967. The theme of the document was *ujamaa na kujitegemea* (socialism and self-reliance). It was a declaration of intent. With Tanzania's heavy dependence on foreign economic assistance, its increasing elitism, and the emerging class structure it fostered in both rural and urban areas, the post-independence political system was rapidly moving the country away from Julius Nyerere's vision of an egalitarian and democratic society. His reaction was to formulate a policy statement in which he reiterated the basic principles of his political formula for independence and restated them in the form of specific guidelines for a transition to democratic socialism. The Arusha Declaration attacked incipient class formation:

³⁰⁹ Interview with Israel Kiponda, 11 October 1999, Iringa.

We can put the capitalists and feudalists on one side and the farmers and workers on the other. But we can also divide the people into urban dwellers on the one side and those who live in the rural areas on the other. If we are not careful we might get to the position where the real exploitation in Tanzania is that of the town dwellers exploiting the peasants.³¹⁰

According to Nyerere, exploitation and national economic dependency are both worsened by a premature commitment to industrial programmes that nurture capitalism. Early industrialization perpetuates neo-colonial subservience to other countries and in various ways taxes farmers to pay for the establishment of urban manufacturing centers. The outcome is the widening gap between urban and rural standards of living, over which a country has little control. For these reasons, the declaration stipulated that the Tanzanian approach to socialism should discourage private foreign investment and industrialization and concentrate on labour-intensive agricultural development. "Industries will come and money will come but their foundation is *the people* and their *hard work*, especially in AGRICULTURE. This is the meaning of self-reliance."³¹¹ Its policy was to build a socialist state, where the major means of production were under the control and ownership of the peasants and the workers themselves through their government and their cooperatives.³¹²

Through the transformation, which pushed all walks of life in the society towards *ujamaa* and self-reliance, the Church also became active in training indigenous people for leadership positions. According to the statement on 'partners in obedience' used by the Whitby International Mission Conference in 1947, young churches were urged

³¹⁰ Julius K. Nyerere, "The Arusha Declaration", in *Nyerere Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 28.

³¹¹ Ibid. , p. 33. Emphasis in original

³¹² Jan P van Bergen, *Development and Religion in Tanzania*, (Madras: The Christian Literature Society, 1981), p.11.

from the start of their evangelistic work to target and to bring into reality a self-governing and self-propagating church.³¹³ The leadership was to move from the missionaries to the indigenous leaders. It was only through putting an emphasis on training that this could be attained.³¹⁴ The growth in church membership resulted in the need for qualified evangelists who could carry the responsibilities of teaching, preaching and leading the congregations to maturity and full responsibility. Because of this need, from the early seventies the Iringa district adopted a general policy, which was to establish a self-ministering, self-propagating and self-supporting local church. A number of evangelists were admitted into the Bible School, while some of them with higher qualifications were admitted to the Lutheran Theological College in Makumira. The congregation paid the tuition expenses and allowances for the evangelists. One major hindrance towards achieving such a state was the shortage of pastors. Age and illness caught up with some of the pastors who were already in the district, due to hard work and unfavourable working conditions.³¹⁵ These people had worked against the tide of difficult circumstances, unlike many other modern pastors, because of their determination to spread the gospel.

Local vocations to the ministry also proved very difficult to come by in the district. It was not easy for educated people to join theological training, partly due to the lack of publicity, but also because of its poor remuneration. So the only possible option was to upgrade experienced evangelists. As a result, in 1973 Gabriel Makongwa was ordained as a deacon after a year of theological training, while Nicholas Mwachusi and Samson Mkemwa were ordained as deacons in 1974, after working

³¹³ International Missionary Council, *The Witness of a Revolutionary Church*, Whitby, Ontario, July 5 -7, 1947), p. 21.

³¹⁴ Illife, *Modern Tanzanians*, p. 87.

³¹⁵ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 12 November 2000, Iringa.

as evangelists for some years. In the same year, two students from Uhehe, Owdenburg Mdegella and Benjamin Ngede, joined Makumira for theological training for a diploma and a certificate programme respectively. Mdegella was the first candidate from Uhehe to join a diploma course in theology. Two years later another student from Uhehe, Abel Mtanga, joined Makumira for the certificate programme. Up to 1976, there were only three indigenous pastors and four deacons.

In 1977 Pastor Israel Kiponda was elected to head the district of Iringa and Martin Chuma was his assistant. The district had eleven parishes: Pommern, Ipalamwa, Tungamalenga, Ismani, Iringa, Ilula, Idete, Ihimbo, Ihemu, Kihesa and Masisiwe.³¹⁶ On 16 December 1979 four deacons were ordained after attending a course for a year at Kidugala Bible School. Those ordained were Samson Mkemwa, Aidan Muyenze, L. Kimbavala, and Gabriel Makongwa. In the same year, two graduates from Makumira were ordained, namely, Benjamin Ngede and Owdenburg Mdegella. This trend of training for leadership became a promising sign of moving towards a self-governing church. At this time, more evangelists, especially those who had gone through Kidugala Bible School, and some high school students joined Makumira for training. From 1970 to 1987, the students from the Iringa district who studied at the Lutheran Theological College, Makumira, averaged five. Because of the shortage of pastors, exacerbated by low interest in vocation at home by the educated, it became difficult to replace the tired and sick pastors. In 1981 Abel Mtanga was ordained and Gideon Mhenga and Ernest Mwaluvinga, who had served as evangelists, followed him. They were ordained in 1982 after graduating from the seminary. Elioth Sawike was ordained in 1984, while Lunodzo

³¹⁶ KKKT, *Dira Miaka 100 ya Injili Uheheni 1899-1999* (ELCT, Dira, *100 years of the Gospel in Uhehe 1899-1999*), p. 16.

Mang'ulisa, Aidan Muyenze and Benitho Madembo were ordained in 1985. The ordained pastors were given leadership roles in the congregations, which had been raised to that status.

The training of pastors went hand in hand with the training of evangelists at Kidugala Bible School. The congregations were responsible for recruiting people for church leadership, especially youths, both male and female. Church elders recommended names to the congregation pastor and discussed the candidates for recommendation in the congregation council. The congregation paid the expenses for the training at the Bible School. After graduating, the evangelists were assigned to serve in the parish. They taught Christian Education in primary schools, led Sunday services and morning services, taught confirmation classes and prepared people desiring baptism.³¹⁷

At the end of 1986, great changes took place in Uhehe/ Iringa. The Iringa district, which was under the leadership of Pastor Nicholas Mwachusi, was asked by the leadership of the Southern Synod to prepare to become an autonomous diocese. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

4.4 The period of the birth of the Iringa diocese (1987-1999)

In 1987 the Iringa district went for elections. Pastor Owdenburg Mdegella, who served Ihemi congregation as a pastor, became Bishop-elect and Nicholas Mwachusi was chosen to be the Assistant Bishop. Edward Mnyawami, who was once the Education Secretary of the

³¹⁷ Interview with Juliana Muyinga, 23 November 2000, Ilula, Iringa.

Uhehe district, held the office of General Secretary, while Gerson Munyi became the Treasurer.³¹⁸

As these changes took place, the newly formed diocese had no plan for its personnel. There were only 24 pastors when the new diocese was launched, compared to 32 parishes which needed pastoral leadership. During this time there was a strong spiritual revival in the diocese. The New Life Crusade ministry started to work with the new diocese at the same time. As a result of the revival movement and evangelization, there was a fast growth of the church. However, there were no plans to accommodate its growth both quantitatively and qualitatively. The shortage of pastors became a great concern for the pastors in the congregations and for the delegates of the Executive Council of the diocese. The problem kept on being raised at each meeting. In an attempt to solve the problem, a crash course programme to train pastors was launched in 1987.³¹⁹ (This will be discussed in chapter five on the training of leadership). Despite the effort to train leaders in the diocese, the speed of the growth of the church in Iringa posed great challenges to the administration and to the few indigenous pastors. The introduction of Theological Education by Extension (TEE) in the diocese brought about more preachers and the need for Christian nurture grew. The revival movement gave rise to many itinerant evangelists. This means that lay Lutheran Christians got involved in the preaching of the word of God in the diocese and this gave rise to new parishes in the villages. As a result of this numeric growth, another course was planned to train experienced evangelists to become pastors.³²⁰ Thus, in 1992 a group of eight evangelists from the Iringa diocese, three evangelists from the Dodoma diocese, two

³¹⁸ Dayosisi ya Iringa, *Miaka 100 ya Injili Uheheni 1899-1999* (Iringa diocese, *100 Years of the Gospel in Uhehe*) (Dar es Salaam: Inter Press of Tanzania Ltd. 1999), pp. 4-5.

³¹⁹ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 12 November 2000, Iringa.

evangelists from the South Central diocese and three evangelists from the Ulanga Kilombero diocese was admitted for two years of intensive theological training. The Dodoma, South Central and Ulanga Kilombero dioceses shared the same problem of a shortage of pastors in their respective places. After learning that Iringa was launching a two years intensive training programme that led to ordination, they sent their students for the course.

The author had the privilege to head the training, together with six other theologians. This training programme was favoured by the Executive Council of the diocese because it was cheaper and faster. It was cheaper because it was supported internally, with very little external support. Christians from Iringa, Mkwawa, Mlandege and Kihesa parishes were requested to accommodate the students for three months while plans were made to accommodate them in one location. Later on all of the students were transferred to Kihesa where they were accommodated. Parishioners of Kihesa supported the programme by providing food services and lodging. The class graduated in 1994 and was ordained on 31 July 1994, together with a Lambert Mtatifikolo from Makumira Theological College. The group consisted of three women and five men: Agnes Kulanga, Esther Chusi, Lena Muyenze, Yohana Mwachusi, Jocktan Kasuga, Israel Mbembe, and Saimon Msula.³²¹ Although this programme helped to alleviate the shortage of pastors in the diocese, some of the students were too old for the programme, for most of them were in their fifties. The efficiency and ability for the ministry of some of them was low. One can argue that although most of them could not serve for a long time, some of them have played a very crucial role in pastoral service in their respective congregations. Agnes Kulanga was the first woman in

³²⁰ Interview with Bishop Owdenburg Mdegella, 11 November 2000, Iringa.

³²¹ Interview with Bishop Owdenburg Mdegella, 11 November 2000, Iringa

Tanzania to be elected as a district pastor, despite her limited education.

In 1992, four people graduated from Makumira and were ordained in 1993: Patrick Kikoti, Bethuel Mponzi, Winston Musitapakwe and Donald Kiwanga. In 1995 two more people were ordained Askali Mgeyekwa and Norbert Mwitula, while in 1996 a group of seven theologians was ordained: Laiton Muyinga, Gerald Gaifalo, Aikam Chavala, Patson Lubava, Bernard Kahwage, Timothy Kimbavala and Harrison Kisabugo.³²² All of them, except for two, graduated from the Makumira Theological College. Phillip Kikoti graduated from the Moravian Theological College and Timothy Kimbavala from the Lutheran College at Iringa, presently called Tumaini University College at Iringa.

In 1994 eleven students were admitted to the Lutheran College, Iringa. It was a group of eight young men and three young women. Seven of them had worked as evangelists in the diocese and the rest came directly from secondary schools. This group graduated and was ordained in 1998. Together with the group, two graduates from Makumira were ordained.³²³ This was the largest group to be ordained since the inception of the Iringa diocese.

As time went by, the number of students being admitted for theological education rose and higher entry qualifications for the programme were set. This created problems for some of the evangelists who liked to pursue theological education. They needed to have a secondary school certificate with at least three subjects with C grades and above. However, this is a positive move because it is very

³²² Interview with Bishop Owdenburg Mdegella, 11 November 2000, Iringa.

³²³ Interview with Bishop Owdenburg Mdegella, 11 November 2000, Iringa.

important for the church to have well educated pastors who can cope with the changing society.

In 1999 four people were ordained, making a total of 67 ordained pastors in the diocese. From 1987 to 1999 a total of 67 pastors were ordained as compared to twelve who were ordained when Uhehe district was under the Southern diocese. This difference may be in part due to the laxity of the earlier leaders, who had the wrong notion that the Hehe had no call for ordained ministry, to recruit students for theological education from the Uhehe area.

Chapter Five

The Iringa diocese (1987-1999)

5. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine the establishment of the Iringa diocese. There are different ways of looking at this development. Due to the growth in the population of Tanzania as well as the number of the Evangelical Lutheran Christians, the increase in dioceses, which resulted through division, can be seen as part of an organic process. But it cannot be ignored that ethnic tensions, mother languages and traditions all played an important role in the division and reorganization of the dioceses. This was no different in the case of the Iringa diocese, one of the districts of the Southern diocese that was mainly dominated by the Bena tribe. I will discuss the factors which led to the beginning of the diocese, the claim to apostolic succession, the election procedure of its leaders and how it prepared its people for leadership. I will also discuss women's ordination, the *Umoja wa Wanawake* (Women's Union) and the youth movement and their contribution to mission work.

5.1 Initial discussions: putting the issue on the agenda

Before the Iringa diocese came into existence in 1987 it was known as the Uhehe district, being one of the six districts of the Southern diocese. At that time, the Uhehe district had only four parishes, namely, Pommern, Ilula, Idete and Iringa, with its headquarters at Pommern. By 1967 the number of parishes in the Uhehe district had increased from four parishes to seven. The Idete parish split into two parishes: Idete itself, and in 1962, the Masisiwe congregation was given the status of a parish due to its growth in membership. Likewise, the Pommern and Iringa parishes each bore two new parishes: Ihemi

in 1951 and Isimani in 1966 respectively.³²⁴ The growth of the parishes in the district can be attributed to the crucial role played by the indigenous pastors and *walimu* (teachers) who led the first four parishes and the congregations. In 1976 the Uhehe district was divided into two districts, Iringa and Mufindi. The name Uhehe was changed to Iringa district in 1977.³²⁵ During that period the number of parishes had grown to eleven. The new parishes were Ipalamwa, Tungamalenga, Ihimbo and Kihesa. The district headquarters were moved from Pommern to Iringa town because Iringa town was regarded as the central place for the whole district was equipped with good infrastructure and was the government headquarters in the region.

According to Obadia Kasumba, former General Secretary of the Southern Diocese, Bishop Juda Kiwovele of the Southern diocese mentioned for the first time the idea of the Iringa district becoming a diocese at the Executive meeting of the diocese in September 1982 in Njombe. Bishop Kiwovele shared his vision with Rev. Durst of the Bavaria Mission Society, who was also a member of the Lutheran Coordination Service (LMC). He said. "There will be a diocese of Matamba and a diocese of Iringa and all stations which were started by the Berlin Mission Society will be upgraded to become districts. These are Kidugala, Ilembula, Lupembe, Emaberg-Makambako and Yakobi."³²⁶ The officers of the diocese were surprised to receive this information for the first time but there was no further discussion on the matter. Although it sounded like a prophetic voice, in the eyes of

³²⁴ KKKT Dayosisi ya Iringa, *Miaka 100 ya Injili Uheheni 1899-1999* (Dar es Salaam: Inter Press of Tanzania Ltd. 1999), p. 9.

³²⁵ The Germans gave Iringa the name after defeating the Hehe at Kalenga fort. The Hehe people called the place Lilinga, which meant fortress and the Germans changed it to Iringa. The change from Uhehe to Iringa has some historical significance and an indicator of colonial hegemony.

³²⁶ Dayosisi ya Kusini Magharibi, *Injili Uwanji 1900-2000* (Dar es Salaam: National Printing Company Limited, 2000), p. 32.

his colleagues it was undemocratic. Bishop J. B. Kiwovele studied for his doctorate at the University of Heidelberg in Germany, before he became the bishop of the Southern diocese. Kiwovele had a plan in his mind. Only three Bishops in the ELCT meetings as compared to eight bishops from the northern part were representing the whole Southern region of the country. After sensing this inequality, Kiwovele came up with a plan to open new dioceses in his area in order to have a balanced delegation and hence fighting against northern dominance in the ELCT.³²⁷

On 2 February 1983, the Executive Committee of the diocese met. After all the agenda had been discussed and deliberations made, the Bishop tabled an extra item without the knowledge of his fellow officers. The item was about the Matamba and the Iringa districts. "The Matamba district is to become a diocese from now on for the good of the life and development of the remaining Southern diocese. Also the Iringa district is to become a diocese in order to protect the life and development of the remaining diocese."³²⁸ The statement provoked the delegates of the two districts in question, which resulted, in a serious and hot discussion. Members were not happy with the way the item was presented.

The idea behind the bishop of the diocese was to get rid of the two officials, his Assistant Bishop and the General Secretary. In order to get rid of them, he had to introduce the idea of forming new dioceses, which would make the two officials leave and go to their home district, Matamba. First of all, delegates from the Matamba district and Iringa got the impression that the mother diocese (the Southern diocese) did not want them to be part of the diocese. The words used in presenting

³²⁷ Interview with Pastor Israel Kiponda, 12 January 2000, Iringa.

³²⁸ Dayosisi ya Kusini Magharibi, *Injili Uwanji 1900-2000*, p. 33.

the item were interpreted to mean that the two districts were a hindrance to the development and life of the Southern diocese. One can even go further and interpret that the item aimed at throwing out the two executive officials who were natives of Matamba district. The Bishop of the diocese came from the Njombe area, a district dominated by the Bena tribe, while the Assistant Bishop and the General Secretary came from the Matamba district dominated by the Wanji tribe. The two officers from Matamba were seen to be a threat to the leadership of the diocese and to the Bena people in general. The formation of the new diocese was not the real issue but the aim was to make sure that the Bena people took leadership positions in the diocese. For the Bishop and those behind him the only way to remove them from the office was to make Matamba become an independent diocese. After a long discussion, the agenda was accepted and was forwarded to the Executive Council for further discussion.³²⁹

The Executive Council of the Southern diocese met from 24 to 26 November 1983 in Njombe and discussed the issue of Matamba and Iringa districts becoming dioceses. After a lengthy discussion, where the delegates expressed different views, the delegates were asked to vote in order to arrive at a conclusion. While the Matamba district was accepted to become a diocese by 25 votes, four votes were against and nine votes were neutral. The delegates voted against the Iringa district becoming a diocese.³³⁰ The Executive Council voted against Iringa because of economic reasons. At that time, the Iringa district was strong economically in comparison with the rest of the districts in the Southern diocese. By allowing the Iringa district to break away from the diocese, the delegates realised that the economy and strength of the Southern diocese would be weakened.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Ibid.

Although the Iringa district was voted against by the Executive Council, the leadership and delegates from the Iringa district left the meeting unsatisfied and with differing views. Firstly, since the item had originated from the top leadership of the diocese, some of the Iringa delegates felt that the leadership of the diocese disliked them and was not interested in the Iringa district being part of the diocese. Secondly, some of the people from the Ubena area, who dominated the Iringa district because several Bena pastors and evangelists had been posted into the parishes in the district, opposed the idea secretly while others openly opposed it. They wanted to continue to assert their Bena influence in Iringa.³³¹

Having not been satisfied with the decision of the Executive Council, the Iringa district under the leadership of Pastor Nicholas Mwachusi, sent an item to the Executive Council of the diocese officially and proposed that it was time for the Iringa district to become a diocese. A letter dated 26 March 1984 accompanied the item. The Iringa district central committee had discussed the item in two different meetings, at Masisiwe and then at Lulanzi. The first meeting was held at Masisiwe on 29 to 30 September 1983 and gave the delegates the opportunity to discuss the agenda in depth. The members of the district executive committee were briefed that the idea was first brought forward at the Executive Committee of the Southern diocese on 2 February 1983 in Njombe. Agenda KU/8/83 stated, "Iringa district should be a diocese in order to protect the life and development of the remaining diocese".³³² The delegates reached consensus that the time was ripe and appropriate for the Iringa district to be an independent diocese. Nevertheless, it was important to follow the necessary steps of

³³¹ Interview with Oswald Ndelwa, 22 July 2001, Iringa.

³³² Interview with Oswald Ndelwa, 22 July 2001, Iringa.

becoming a diocese, instead of declaring a diocese by force. Hence the agenda was sent back to the Executive Committee that was scheduled to take place on 29 to 30 March 1984, requesting that the Iringa district should like to become a diocese.³³³ Furthermore, the district leadership never reported the matter of being chased from the mother diocese to the ELCT headquarters. It was counted as an internal problem and it was, therefore, deemed appropriate to handle it internally.

The decision of the District Executive Committee had to be tabled before the district meeting of Iringa, which was held on 21 to 22 March 1984 at Ihemi parish. The members gave blessings on the decisions and the item was resubmitted at the 11 Southern diocese synod meeting, which was held at Chimala in November 1985. After a very hot discussion, there was no consensus but the delegates at the synod meeting were asked to vote. The delegates at the synod meeting voted for the proposal brought forward by the Executive Council that the Iringa district should become a diocese by a total of 223 votes out of 241 votes. One vote was against, five votes were disqualified and twelve voters did not vote for one reason or another. After the results of the votes, all the delegates from the Iringa district, under the leadership of their district pastor, Nicholas Mwachusi, went out and celebrated by dancing the Hehe traditional dance the whole night.³³⁴

The decision of the synod meeting to allow the Iringa district to become a diocese was a great victory for the delegates and Christians of Iringa, because they were not only going to be free from the domination of the Bena Christians but they were now also open to leadership opportunities and the chance to develop their district

³³³ Interview with Oswald Ndelwa, 22 July 2001, Iringa.

³³⁴ Interview with Elia Mbangwa, 12 January 2001, Kidewa, Iringa.

economically and spiritually. The distribution of development projects had not been even distributed within the diocese. The Njombe area of the Bena had more church schools, hospitals and church institutions than the Matamba and Iringa districts. This inequality in services created resentment among the leaders in the church.

According to the ELCT constitution, any geographical area within the ELCT which wanted to become a diocese, had to be given a blessing by the Synod meeting of the ELCT. Since the issue of the Iringa district becoming a diocese had been discussed from the district level up to the diocesan level, the ELCT executive meeting in 1986 accepted the proposal without any problem. It was later presented before the 7 ELCT Synod of 1986, which took place in Korogwe. The Iringa District of the Southern diocese was officially accepted by the ELCT to become an independent diocese in that meeting.³³⁵

Although the steps were followed one after the other for the Iringa District to legitimately become a diocese, the Iringa district had already chosen an interim leadership from 1 January 1986. The decision of the ELCT Synod assembly allowed the district to become a diocese as from 1 January 1987.³³⁶ This period gave the Iringa diocese in the making ample time to get prepared for the inauguration of the diocese and for the election of the leaders of the new diocese.

After the Synod Assembly of the Southern diocese held at Chimala, a committee for the Iringa diocese in the making met on 15 November 1985 to discuss the resolution of the Synod assembly. It was decided that a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Iringa district be

³³⁵ Dayosisi ya Iringa, *Miaka 100 ya Injili Uheheni 1899-1999 (Iringa diocese, 100 Years of the Gospel in Uhehe)* (Dar es Salaam: Inter Press of Tanzania Ltd. 1999), p. 4.

³³⁶ Ibid.

convened on 25 November 1985.³³⁷ It was also decided that a District Executive meeting be called on 5 December 1985 at the Iringa Lutheran Center. All the parishes were asked to contribute a sum of 800 Tanzanian shillings to meet the costs of the meeting. The delegation included four members from each parish, which comprised of the pastor, the treasurer and two other members. The delegates of the Executive Council had the task of electing the interim leadership of the Iringa diocese in the making, dividing the area into districts, and proposing members of the Executive Council and its various committees and departments in the new diocese.³³⁸

The outcome of the Iringa District Executive meeting of 5 December 1985 was the implementation of the directives discussed above. The Iringa district was now to be called the Iringa diocese in the making as from 1 January 1986 and was composed of five districts. The Idete district was composed of four parishes: Idete, Kimala, Ipalamwa and Masisiwe. The Pommern district was composed of five parishes: Pommern, Kidabaga, Ugesa, Bomalang'ombe, and Ihimbo. The Ilula district was composed of five parishes: Ilula, Image, Isimani, Ilambilole and Mbuyuni. The Ihemi district was composed of three parishes: Ihemi, Tungamalenga and Kidamali. Finally, the Iringa district was composed of three parishes: Iringa, Kihesa and Mlandege.³³⁹

In the same sitting the Executive Council appointed district pastors to lead the new districts: Ernest Mwaluinga for Idete, Samson Mkemwa for Pommern, Aron Mbena for Ilula, Owdenburg Mdegella for Ihemi, and Japhet Mbwaji for Iringa. Pastor Nicholas Mwachusi, who was the

³³⁷ Letter from Nicholas Mwachusi (who was the District Pastor of Iringa District to all Pastors and leaders of the parishes in Iringa district, dated 18/11/985, Archive of Iringa Diocese, Mkuu wa Jimbo File No. 1.

³³⁸ Ibid.

district pastor of the Uhehe district, was chosen to be the Head of the Iringa diocese in the making. Pastor Owdenburg Mdegella, who was a pastor at Ihemi, was elected the assistant to the head of Iringa diocese in the making, besides being the head of the Ihemi district. Tuluwene Kulanga and Gerson Munyi held the positions of General Secretary and Treasurer respectively, while Esther Chusi was appointed to lead the Women's department and Rhoden Mang'ulisa led the Youth and Children's department. In order to incorporate the laity in the leadership of the new diocese the meeting appointed two Christians from each district to be members of the Executive Council of the Iringa diocese in the making. It was decided, however, that this leadership was to hold office for only one year while waiting for the blessing of the ELCT Synod Assembly, which was to take place in June 1986.³⁴⁰

The ELCT Executive Council meeting among other things received a proposal that Iringa district of the Southern diocese as an independent diocese was being proposed to the 12 ELCT Synod Assembly held at Korogwe from 24 to 26 March 1986. The proposal was put before the ELCT Synod Assembly after the future the Iringa diocese had fulfilled all the requirements needed for a district to be given the status of a diocese. It was required to have enough membership (parishioners), adequate income sources besides the collections from its members, enough indigenous pastors and evangelists, and potential areas for mission work and evangelism and to be a reasonable distance from the headquarters of the mother diocese.³⁴¹

The Iringa diocese in the making had the advantage of surpassing the requirements set by the ELCT headquarters and this was indicative of

³³⁹ District Pastor File No. 1 Letter Ref. No. MJ/UH/102 dated 14/12/1985, Iringa.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

the need to have its own diocese in order to deliver spiritual, social and economic services more effectively. It was decided to make Iringa town the Iringa diocese headquarters, which was also the regional headquarters. It was strategically positioned because there was a variety of people there who, in one way or the other, would promote the development of the church. The ELCT Synod Assembly accepted the proposal and the Iringa diocese was instructed to present its constitution to the ELCT Constitution Committee for approval, before it officially took off. The constitution for the Iringa diocese was scrutinised and corrected from 24 to 26 March 1987.³⁴² All constitutions of the respective dioceses of the ELCT need to reflect the ELCT Constitution, which governs all the ELCT units in the church. This has the advantage of fostering unity in the church.

5.2 The claim to apostolic succession

Apostolic succession is the principle which claims an unbroken line of ordination for priest and pastor going back to the apostles. Churches with Episcopal polity, especially the Roman Catholic and the Anglican churches, stress it.³⁴³ In other words, each individual bishop is a successor of the apostles and represents the unity of the church in the diocese. That bishop possesses the real power of consecration and authority, except insofar as this is kept for the highest ecclesiastical authority. One exercises this in three ways: As pastor, one directs the church's life; as teacher, one proclaims the truths of the faith and guards their truthfulness; and as priest, one dispenses the mysteries of God as a means for promoting the blessing of the faithful. The

³⁴² Ibid. Minutes of the ELCT Constitution Committee 24-26/3/1987 (MM. 15/86).

³⁴³ Martin and Hans-Gernot Jung "Bishop Episcopate", in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* Vol. 1, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, (1999), p. 263.

appointment or confirmation of a bishop in the Roman Catholic Church is a matter for the pope, as is the arranging of his consecration.³⁴⁴

Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, the Lutherans discarded the idea of the divine right and special nature of bishops. Lutherans are inclined to put emphasis on the apostolic message: preaching, visitation and ordination rather than the office. The German Lutheran church's link in the line of bishops was basically stopped through the events of the Reformation. The Roman Catholic bishops of that time were also secular rulers having great political power. They did not want to give up their authority. It, therefore, hardly ever happened that a Roman Catholic bishop himself became a Lutheran even if his entire diocese had joined the Reformation.³⁴⁵

In northern Europe, Sweden and Finland there was a different political condition. That meant there was a continuation of evangelical episcopate without any breach to apostolic succession. Apostolic succession is stressed most strongly by the late Archbishop Aleksii Lehtonen of Finland who writes:

That the consecration to the episcopacy has been performed by means of imposition of hands and intercessory prayer from the early days of the apostles right up to the present time, and that the solemn transfer of the episcopacy has been thus continued as a long chain throughout the ages, are facts that emphasize its historic-ecclesiastical character—that is that the Christian Church as a whole, both in past ages and in the present time, supports the ecclesiastical leadership as it is expressed in the episcopacy. In other words, only the Church herself, the congregation of Christ, can entrust a person with the episcopacy, and the Church alone warrants this act, both as a historic reality throughout all the Christian centuries, and as the Church of today... The authority of the episcopacy does not derive from the

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Julius Bodensiek (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church* Vol. 1, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, (1965), pp. 97-98.

state or any other worldly power. Its authority derives from God only, through his Church...³⁴⁶

However, Rome is critical of the above claims to apostolic succession because they do not hold office in accordance with Roman Catholic principles. But Lutheran bishops whether standing in an undisputed continuous line of succession, as those in Sweden, or whether possessing no such succession, as those of post-war Germany, insist that they exercise their Episcopal ministry in accordance with the New Testament and that they are truly commissioned by the Holy Spirit when the church through their representatives elects them and with intercessory prayers and laying on of hands entrusts them with the Episcopal office.³⁴⁷

The question of the introduction of episcopacy into the Lutheran Churches in Tanganyika was discussed for the first time in 1955 at Marangu, Moshi during the All African Lutheran Conference which was organized at a supra-regional level. Marealle II, the paramount chief of the Chagga, put the idea forward and argued:

I would like to commend very seriously the thought and idea that the Lutheran Church here be given the opportunity of having bishops. The matter may sound revolutionary and perhaps un-Protestant to some of you. But I believe it would strengthen the voice of the church in its negotiations with both local and government beyond what it now has through its presidents and superintendents. The title of superintendent actually bears very little weight here. We have superintendents of prisons, forestry and all these people are in lower rungs of the ladder. I am in government myself-chairman of the Education committee, Land Board etc. When Roman Catholic bishops introduce anything to these boards or committees, they bear more weight than

³⁴⁶ Fredric Cleve, "Scandinavian Lutheran Bishops" in *Bishops But What Kind?* ed., Peter Moore London: SPCK, 1982), pp. 84-85.

³⁴⁷ Julius Bodensiek, p. 98.

proposals presented by our superintendents. We are not catering to men of the world but we are dealing with men of this world.³⁴⁸

From the above argument, it is possible to consider that Marealle's suggestion was motivated by church politics rather than by theological reasons. Some American and German missionaries objected to the idea on the grounds that it originated from outside church circles. However, Marealle's suggestion got some support from Africans because there were some congregations in Tanganyika which were surrounded by churches which had an Episcopal structure, so why not include this office in the Lutheran church?³⁴⁹

Following the conference of Marangu decisive steps were taken. In 1956 Matia Lutosha from Bukoba went to Sweden, Denmark and Germany where he held talks with partner organizations and learned more on the subject because the Haya church in Bukoba had an interest. The church of Bukoba declared that it would not make any decision about introducing episcopacy until an agreement had been reached by the Lutheran body in the country and internationally. No other church came with such an agreement.³⁵⁰

Three years later, a historical survey of how episcopacy had developed was studied and went even further to define the office of the bishop. Both Africans, such as Matia Lutosha and Sebastian Karumuna, and European missionaries, such as Holger Benettson, Johann Hellberg, Else Ortadius and Gerhard Jasper, made the study. They came out with the "Bukoba paper" called after the town where the study was carried out. The paper limited the power of the bishop, who could be

³⁴⁸ The All-African Lutheran Conference, Marangu, November 12-22, 1955, quoted in L. Kalugila, "Leadership Roles in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania", *Africa Theological Journal* (12/3, 1983), p. 146.

³⁴⁹ B. G. Sundkler, *Bara Bukoba: Church and Community in Tanzania* (London: (1980), p. 154.

suspended from his office in case of inappropriate teaching, way of living or working, or if a two-thirds majority of the synod agreed.³⁵¹ The Bukoba delegates went further to justify their proposed change in the church structure with four theological arguments:

- a) According to the proposal the bishop would be the spiritual leader of the church and free from administrative duties.
- b) In contrast to the present system of superintendents, a Bishop would ensure continuity in leadership of the church.
- c) The introduction of the office of bishop would strengthen the ecumenical ties to the greater church.
- d) The title of Bishop had a dignity which President and superintendent did not have.³⁵²

Whereas the first three arguments were hardly mentioned at all again, the last point about the title of bishop having dignity was continuously raised. "Askofu" or "Baba Askofu"- as the bishop is called in Swahili- does in fact command more respect than the more simple title "Rais" (president).³⁵³ According to the view of some African church leaders, there are close links between episcopacy and traditional structures. Erasto Kweka, bishop of the Northern diocese, says: "The bishop in the eyes of his people is almost equivalent to a chief in a type of clan."³⁵⁴ His colleague from North Western diocese, Samson Mushemba, shares a similar view: "We had chiefdoms in our area; people are used to this system of leadership. The chiefs were also leaders of the traditional religion. Therefore, introducing episcopacy was easy."³⁵⁵ In February

³⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 156.

³⁵¹ Extracts from the Bukoba Paper quoted in Friedler Ludwig, *Church & State in Tanzania: Aspects of a Changing Relationships, 1961-1994* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), p. 49.

³⁵² Ibid. , p. 49.

³⁵³ C. K. Omari, "Episcopacy, a sociological trend in the Lutheran Church in Tanzania", *Africa Theological Journal* (16/1, 1987, pp. 4-12), p. 8.

³⁵⁴ Bishop E. Kweka, quoted in Friedler Ludwig, *Church & State in Tanzania*, p. 50.

³⁵⁵ Bishop S. Mushemba, quoted in Friedler Ludwig, *Church & State in Tanzania*, p. 50.

1961 the Haya Church elected their first bishop and the Swede Bengt Sundkler became the Bishop of Bukoba.³⁵⁶

The Lutheran Church in Northern Tanganyika, however, introduced the title of bishop even more quickly. As early as as December 1960, the synod had changed the title of church president to bishop, seemingly without any deep theological discussion. But it is clear from the *modus operandi* that this change was considered to be not just a procedure. H. Smedjebacka in his book on the history of the Lutheran Church in Northern Tanzania notes: "The minutes tell about the great joy at the General Assembly, and that all the delegates were asked to inform the home congregations in a judicious way about the event in which they had played a part. Nothing of this nature had taken place when the title superintendent was changed to that of president."³⁵⁷ In February 1964 there was a change in the constitution which limited the bishop's term of office to four years. A bishop from Germany ordained Stefano Moshi in 1964.

Through such events episcopacy was introduced in different forms into the Lutheran church of Tanganyika. Because of the connection with Sweden, the tradition of apostolic succession was continued in the North Western diocese of Bukoba. However, the bishop of the Northern diocese, where the German influence was strong, did not represent this tradition nor did the apostolic succession apply to any other new bishop. Most of the newly founded regional units of the Lutheran church quickly decided to make bishops their spiritual leaders. However, the forms of episcopacy continued to differ: some of the dioceses were led by bishops without apostolic succession, others with apostolic succession.

³⁵⁶ Sundkler, *Bara Bukoba*, p. 158.

³⁵⁷ H. Smedjebacka, *Lutheran Church Autonomy in Northern Tanzania, 1940-1963* (Abo, 1973), p. 263.

In 1978 the Southern synod through its synod meeting changed its name and became the Southern diocese and introduced episcopalian leadership. The minutes of the meeting read:

Sinodi ya Kusini ya Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania ina bahati kwamba imepata kuwa na watumishi wamisionari walio wachungaji toka makanisa na vyama mbalimbali ambavyo kwanza inajiona imo ndani ya mfuatano huo wa kimitume (unaosemwa na wengine) ni NENO NA SAKRAMENTI. Hao wachungaji wamisionari mbalimbali wengine wametoka katika vyama na makanisa yenye Uaskofu wa mfuatano wa kimitume. KWA HIYO TUNACHAGUA UASKOFU WA KIMFUATANO NA TUNAKAMILISHA KUKITAJA KITU KILE AMBACHO KILIKUWAKO KWETU TAYARI ILA KILIKUWA HAKIJATAKWA RASMI.³⁵⁸

The Southern diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania is fortunate that it had missionary pastors from churches and various societies who were from the apostolic succession tradition and we fall in that tradition (which some say) is the WORD AND SACRAMENT. Some of those missionary pastors came from the tradition of apostolic succession *and others did not*. THEREFORE WE CHOOSE TO BE UNDER APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION AND WE AFFIRM WHAT WAS ALREADY HERE BUT WAS NOT OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED. (*Translation mine*)

Following that decision, all new dioceses which were formed out of the Southern diocese, like the Konde diocese, South Central diocese and Iringa diocese, followed the apostolic succession tradition.

One can conclude that some of the African church leaders against the opposition of missionaries had pushed the introduction of episcopacy forward. Already the influence of the African leaders had grown due to political developments. It is obvious that there is a connection between the creation of new church structures and the independence struggle. It is, also, no coincidence that the appointment of the first bishop took

³⁵⁸ Solomon Y. Swalo, "Uongozi Mikononi mwa Wananchi" (Leadership in the hands of the Indigenous people) in *Karne ya Kwanza ya Injili 1891-1991 (The First Century of the Gospel)*, Dar es Salaam: (Dar es Salaam University Press, 1991), p. 44.

place at the same time as independence, the beginning of the 1960s. After having discussed the background of how apostolic succession came about in parts of the Lutheran church, let us now look at the election procedure of the leaders of the Iringa diocese.

5.3 The election procedure

Before the Christians of the Iringa diocese went into elections, a letter written by the head of the Iringa diocese in the making stipulated that, according to the Iringa diocese constitution, the diocese had decided to follow the apostolic succession tradition.³⁵⁹

Following this line of thought, the constitution of the ELCT, Iringa diocese, in the by-laws of the constitution, reads:

The bishop shall be elected by the diocese through the Synod meeting and shall serve the diocese until the retirement age of 65. The Synod Council shall present three names of pastors to the synod who shall be voted for.³⁶⁰

At the first Synod meeting of the Iringa diocese, held on 8 October 1986 at the Lutheran Center in Iringa town, the first leaders of the new diocese were elected. The talk of the day in the Synod meeting was the question of who was to become the first bishop. With reference to the constitution, the nomination committee brought three names of pastors before the Synod meeting. After the first vote, pastor Benjamin Ngede was eliminated and two names of pastors, Nicholas Mwachusi and Owdenburg Mdegella remained for the final vote.

³⁵⁹ Iringa district file no. 1, Letter Ref. No. ME/ DI/ 01 /106 on Iringa to become a diocese dated 8/8/1986 at Iringa diocese archive.

³⁶⁰ The Iringa diocese Constitution 1987, p. 12.

According to the Constitution of the Iringa diocese, one of the conditions was that a pastor had to be forty years and above to run for a bishop position. Nicholas Mwachusi had the qualification. Owdenburg Mdegella was only 35 years old, five years below the set standard. Mdegella's name was accepted on the argument that although he was under age, he had the advantage of being educated and it was argued that education was important for sound leadership. On the other hand, there was a group that was of the opinion that experience, age and wisdom were inevitable in leadership. The two sides influenced the delegates in the synod meeting. As a result, the delegates were divided into almost two equal parts. Each one of the two contestants played his part in influencing the synod members in one way or the other.

It became clear, according to one informant, that almost all pastors who had a special certificate from the Kidugala Bible School favoured Nicholas Mwachusi. They had reasons for doing so. He was, also, a graduate of Kidugala, was mature and a man of wisdom, and had leadership talents in spite of limited education. Mwachusi as the Iringa district pastor had spearheaded the formation of the new diocese. Hence for some members it was appropriate for him to take the leadership of the diocese. Furthermore it was a normal trend that the district pastor who led the formation of the diocese became the bishop of the new diocese. Nevertheless, the pastors who graduated from Makumira and bishop Kiwovele favoured Owdenburg Mdegella because he was his student at Makumira.³⁶¹

The delegates had to vote three times and yet in all cases the difference was by three votes only.³⁶² However, before repeating the

³⁶¹ Interview with Venance Chaula 15 August 2001, Iringa.

³⁶² Interview with Elia Mbangwa, Kidewa, Iringa 14 December 2000.

exercise for the third time, the delegates, under the chairmanship of Bishop Juda Kiwovele, agreed that whoever received the highest votes by any margin was going to be declared the winner. According to the Constitution, the winner had to get a two-thirds majority, but none of the candidates managed a two-thirds majority. After voting for the third time, Pastor Owdenburg Mdegella won by getting 43 votes against 40 and was announced bishop elect, while Nicholas Mwachusi was elected assistant to the bishop. Edward Mnyawami and Gerson Munyi were elected as General Secretary and Treasurer respectively.³⁶³

However, the author is of the opinion that the election was unconstitutional. If the constitution is the law that governs the diocese, it was wrong for the delegates to include the name of a pastor who did not fulfill the guidelines of the constitution. Also, the results of the election reveal that no one managed to get a two-thirds majority. The meeting should have opted for another strategy to do the election without bending the constitution. What happened during this election could set a precedent, something that is detrimental to the wellbeing of the diocese.

It took almost another year after the first election before Bishop Erasto Kweka officially inaugurated the Iringa diocese. On the same day, 27 September 1987, Bishop Samson Mushemba from the Northwestern diocese consecrated the new Bishop. Two other bishops assisted the act of consecration, Solomon Swalo of the South Central diocese and Olaus Braenstrom from Sweden.³⁶⁴

³⁶³ KKKT, *Dayosisi ya Iringa, Miaka 100 ya Injili Uheheni*, (ELCT, Iringa diocese), p.

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³⁶⁴ Ibid.

5.4 The training of leadership

During the 19th century, the training of indigenous clergy for the ministry was done in Tanzania by in-service training and by time spent in theological colleges. The early indigenous clergy were not ordained as ministers but were teachers (*walimu*). They were *walimu* who started with the first churches and schools. Many of the evangelists, in spite of many years of service, were not given opportunities to undergo theological training to qualify them for ordination. As a result, many of them had already retired when the Iringa diocese was established.³⁶⁵

When the Iringa diocese was established in 1987, there was no plan for its leadership training. It had been under the Southern diocese, which had not trained enough leaders from the Iringa district under the pretext that the people from the Hehe tribe did not have a call to take leadership in the church. Since the Hehe people had been involved in tribal fighting, there was doubt whether a Hehe could be a true Christian and even take some leadership role. When the Iringa district became a diocese in 1987, there was only one pastor with a Bachelor of Divinity, four pastors with General Certificates in theology and nine pastors with special theological training from Kidugala Bible School.³⁶⁶ The rest of the pastors and evangelists who served in the district before it became a diocese returned to their home dioceses. There was a slogan of '*mtu kwao*' (go back home) and it affected the leadership in Iringa.³⁶⁷ Very few pastors and evangelists opted to remain in Iringa. This had a positive and negative impact on Iringa diocese. On one hand it provided an open opportunity for the natives of Uhehe to take up leadership positions, filling in positions which were

³⁶⁵ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, Iringa 15 December 2000.

³⁶⁶ Interview with Owdenburg Mdegella, Iringa 20 December 2000.

³⁶⁷ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, Iringa 15 December 2000.

left open by their colleagues from Ubena. Also, there was a chance for the natives to go for theological training since there was no competition any more. On the other hand, there was a shortage of trained leadership.

The shortage of trained leadership in the church became the center of discussion in the Executive Committee and Executive Council meetings of the diocese. The training of pastors and evangelists had to be met by sending qualified candidates to the Makumira Theological College (then changed to the Makumira University College) and the Kidugala Bible School. But the demand for more pastors became acute. The increase in church membership, which was the outcome of the spiritual revival in the Lutheran church in the mid-1980s, led to the opening of new parishes and congregations, which needed pastoral and spiritual leadership. Getting qualified candidates for theological training at Makumira Theological College was another problem. Edward Mnyawami pointed out that those available, due to lack of formal education or secondary education, were not accepted by the college and some of them were not the right ones to send for theological training.³⁶⁸

The new leaders were also asked by the Executive Council to make contact with teachers in primary and secondary schools, secondary school students and teacher's training colleges to establish contacts and talk to them about joining the ministry. This was done through the Students' Christian Fellowship, which was active in all secondary schools in Tanzania. However, due to the urgent need for pastors, the

³⁶⁸ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, Iringa 15 December 2000. In order to join Makumira Theological College, one had to have passed Secondary school education and had three credits from grade C and above of any subject or had completed Form 6 i.e two years of high school after secondary school education. Before 1991, primary school leavers had to pass a special entry examination of English and Kiswahili which was composed and examined by Makumira Theological College.

option of sending students to Makumira was seen to be too bureaucratic and meant that the diocese had to wait for five years before its students could graduate and receive ordination. The period was too long for the diocese. Alternatively, in 1988 the Iringa diocese, through its Executive Council, decided to open a two-year short course in theological training. The course enrolled experienced evangelists and teachers and was conducted by Stefan Holmstrom, together with three other theologians in the diocese. The course content was to enable the experienced evangelists to acquire more theological training, which could later lead them to be ordained as pastors.³⁶⁹ The decision had two advantages. First, it was now possible for Iringa diocese to get a good number of pastors within a period of two years. Second, it was cheaper. The local congregations raised funds for running the programme with small assistance from partner missions. Eleven people were ordained from the short course and two more people, one a graduate from the Mwika Bible School and one from Makumira. Two years after its establishment 26 November 1989 the Iringa diocese ordained thirteen people to become pastors.³⁷⁰

In evaluating the programme, Pastor Oswald Ndelwa commented:

The programme was successful in the sense that the diocese managed to get eleven pastors in two years, something which could have taken ten years or more. However, one can comment on the quality of leadership which they had acquired when we look at the fruits of their work. Almost all of them were strong in mission and revivalism but weak in theology and pastoral ministry.³⁷¹

In other words the diocese managed to increase the number of pastors in the diocese who took leadership positions in the new parishes,

³⁶⁹ Interview with Owdenburg Mdegella, 21 August 2001, Pietermartzburg.

³⁷⁰ Bishop's Report 1996 at Ipogoro Synod Meeting, Iringa diocese archive.

³⁷¹ Interview with Oswald Ndelwa, 12 August 2001, Iringa.

which had been opened. But the major problem was the quality of training offered to the students. The students were theologically weak and emphasis was put on revivalism. One reason is that the head of the programme had a great interest in revivalism at the expense of other important subjects. The students spent a lot of time singing spiritual choruses and praising. They were good at mission work and opened new out-stations but lacked the basic theological foundations of the Lutheran church and the pastoral care and counselling ministry. This was noticed in their failure to nurture the new converts and give them the fundamentals of the Lutheran faith. After three years of service they were called back for three months for extra training. However, the programme was not helpful because some of them were too old to accommodate any changes. Also, since the leaders had praised them earlier that they had undergone better training for the ministry than those who were trained at Makumira, these pastors became proud and never admitted their weakness.³⁷²

Revivalism and evangelism, which picked up so fast among the Christians in the early 1990s within the Lutheran church, resulted in church growth. The church leaders had not taken into account how to accommodate the numerical growth in membership. For example, the Iringa Town Lutheran parish had to introduce two more services on each Sunday to accommodate the new parishioners who had joined the parish³⁷³. A number of new congregations were opened in various parts of the diocese through the initiatives of lay Christians, who later required some spiritual services from the parish station.

While the church expanded, the diocese had not laid any plans to train leaders for the various congregations which were opened for spiritual

³⁷² Interview with Oswald Ndelwa, 12 August 2001, Iringa.

³⁷³ Interview with Oswald Ndelwa, 12 August 2001, Iringa.

guidance that could lead them to spiritual maturity. A number of itinerant preachers emerged as a result of this revivalist movement and moved from one place to another sowing the Word of God, which was followed by conversions of people. The new converts demanded spiritual nurture and guidance both in rural areas and in town settlements.

In order to face this challenge, two strategies were laid down. The first was to equip people for the ministry by introducing Theological Education by Extension (TEE). Secondly, the diocese opened a second special class to train pastors. In the ELCT of Iringa diocese, an interesting and innovative TEE programme has been going on since 1985, when the Iringa district was still under the ELCT Southern diocese. The programme was coordinated by a Swedish missionary pastor, Stefan Holmstroem,³⁷⁴ and assisted by a retired education supervisor, Mr. Ernest Sanga.

As the Iringa diocese was in the process of being officially established in 1987, the TEE programme was intensified and received great support from the new leadership of the diocese and the SEM missionary. However, in the early stages of the development of the Iringa diocese, TEE was not one of the immediate solutions for the shortage of leadership in the congregations. But as the leadership need arose, TEE was given more attention as one of the solutions to overcome the leadership shortage, as the coordinator of the programme wrote in his report in 1988:

The Iringa diocese runs a Lay Christian TEE training programme with approximately 300 participants at the end of 1988. The

³⁷⁴ Gabriel E. Mgeyeka, *The Historical Development of Theological Education by Extension (TEE) in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, Southern diocese, 1990-1997* (Unpublished Master's Thesis University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg), p. 28.

standard is uneven due to several factors, eg, lack of time, manpower for the coordination of the programme, differing motivation among group leaders and lack of funds for some crucial activities such as gathering the participants for joint seminars and Bible camps.³⁷⁵

It was important for the diocese to plan and get the required and right personnel who would devote their time to the programme. A coordinator was required to work full time, with freedom to plan the work personally, according to the nature of the work. The coordinator had the following responsibilities: to lead the congregational TEE programme together with the SEM missionary; to lead the TEE-group in his congregation; to administer and keep the office with tests, certificates and records; and to assist in the planning of new groups, Bible camps and seminars for leaders. He was, also, the representative of the TEE programme on behalf of the diocese and a member of the TEE board.³⁷⁶

In launching and strengthening the TEE programme, the Iringa diocese had four major objectives in mind. The first objective was to motivate and encourage old and new Christian converts to read the Word of God, which would enable them to grow spiritually and acquire knowledge. The second objective was, to train lay Christians to be leaders, who would acquire the knowledge and have the spiritual strength to lead the church in various areas such as children and youth, women's groups, church elders, Christian education teachers and evangelists. The third objective was to improve the skills and ability of the preachers especially in the out stations to the level of evangelists. Through this programme the church would be able to upgrade preachers who had not been adequately trained. The fourth objective was to get new people, who would specialise in mission and

³⁷⁵ ELCT, Iringa Diocese, Reinforcement of TEE Programme Basic Level in Iringa Diocese Paper, p. 1.

³⁷⁶ Ibid. Appendix A.

further theological training and ultimately be sent to plant the church in mission areas within the Iringa diocese and outside.³⁷⁷ Therefore, the ultimate goal of the TEE programme was to produce enough trained lay Christians and evangelists to ensure sound growth in number and quality on the part of the body of Christ, which is the Lutheran diocese of Iringa. In order for the programme to reinforce and partly enlarge the running of the lay training programme, it was necessary to motivate the group leaders and enablers so that they could stay to lead their groups until their basic level of three years was finished and, also, to encourage the learners to participate with joy and to reduce dropouts.

Since the establishment of the TEE in the Iringa diocese in 1986, more than 4,000 students have gone through the programme over a period of fourteen years. At present, the programme has 133 classes with a total of 1567 students. The majority of the students are young adults. Both women and men participate. The programme involves studying independently at home at an average of four hours each day besides their normal routine of meeting with their teachers once a week. This requires a high level of discipline and commitment.

This research³⁷⁸ has established that the strength of the programme lies in the fact that it is a diocese venture heartily backed by the leadership of the diocese. Many of the congregations and pastors are involved in the programme and help in motivating lay Christians to participate in the programme actively. There is an amazing stock of potential group leaders.³⁷⁹ What needs to be done is to have more seminars for them and uptodate learning materials, which could be

³⁷⁷ Interview with Venance Chaulla, 15 August 2001, Iringa.

³⁷⁸ Interview with Venance Chaulla, 15 August 2001, Iringa.

³⁷⁹ Interview with Venance Chaulla, 15 August 2001, Iringa.

locally prepared to suit their context.³⁸⁰ Meanwhile the TEE coordinator of the diocese visits these classes at least once a year to encourage the students, to sort out problems and to answer some questions. It was noted that youths took more interest in the programme because they have fewer family commitments as compared to married people and speculate opportunities of employment within the diocese.³⁸¹

According to the TEE programme director, Venance Chaulla, some achievements have been realised in the church.³⁸² First, a number of congregations have trained leaders: not only the evangelists, but also the church elders attained the same knowledge from the programme. Secondly, the shifting of Lutheran Christians to other denominations has been minimised because of improved leadership in the congregations and improved teachings and services. However, this might be difficult to prove because there could be other factors that led the trend to change. Most of the Christians who shifted to other denominations have opted to come back to the Lutheran Church. Thirdly, the diocese has managed to get competent and committed preachers who are ready to serve the church, irrespective of the availability or non-availability of remuneration from the diocese.

Fourthly, due to the above achievements, the church members have grown spiritually, intellectually and the church services have improved. Christians have developed a high sense of ownership of the church. As a result, they take an active part in evangelism and prayer and offer their time and strength for the service of the church. Fifthly, the TEE programme has produced three phases of classes. All the graduates have been commissioned officially for the service of the church in various places in the diocese. In 1993, 43 people graduated, in 1996,

³⁸⁰ Interview with Venance Chaulla, 15 August 2001, Iringa.

³⁸¹ Interview with Venance Chaulla, 15 August 2001, Iringa.

³⁸² Interview with Venance Chaulla, 15 August 2001, Iringa.

46 people graduated while in 2000, 47 people graduated.³⁸³ This forms a strong band of indigenous evangelists who have been scattered in the diocese.³⁸⁴ In short, there are visible fruits in several congregations: and preachers stay longer in the ministry and work has improved. When the author visited the Bible and fellowship groups in congregations, the sanctuaries were full of people praising and studying the word of God three days a week and, for the Kihesa and Ilula parishes, people met every day in the evening. Christians have a new spirit of evangelism. Groups have been formed for evangelistic trips in various congregations and evangelism is done once every month.³⁸⁵

Nevertheless, this research has noticed that there was a big disparity within the diocese with regard to the development of TEE. The development of TEE in the Ilula, Ihemi and Iringa districts is very low compared to the other four districts of Pommern, Idete, Ipalamwa and Cathedral. One contributing factor for this disparity is the lack of commitment of the pastors and evangelists in the respective districts in motivating and teaching the available classes. The author noted that there was an imbalance in the visits made by the programme coordinator. More visits were made in Pommern, Idete and Ipalamwa. A possible explanation for this imbalance is that all the coordinators except one came from these areas and also that the pastors incharge of the programme in the parishes were committed to the TEE programme and mobilised the people to join the programme. In 1990, the TEE leaders visited 24 stations out of 40 and the board congratulated them for that.³⁸⁶ However, the district pastor of Iringa was asked to investigate the poor development of the TEE programme

³⁸³ Iringa diocese, Evangelism and Mission Annual Report, TEE programme, December 2000.

³⁸⁴ Iringa Diocese, Evangelism and Mission Annual Report, December 2000.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

in his district. It was the last of all districts. Meanwhile all pastors in the diocese, whose TEE classes were not faring well, were asked to explain possible reasons for the failures. Women had the highest record of TEE attendance, despite their family commitments.³⁸⁷

In a report by the TEE director in 1991, it was reported that the visitations to the TEE stations were not satisfactory and the board directed the coordinator to make plans to visit them. The board also showed great concern about the TEE classes, which showed great weaknesses. The district pastors whose TEE classes had ceased from functioning were asked to explain the reason for the weakness and to come up with possible solutions.³⁸⁸

In my view, the TEE programme is a very important tool in the Iringa diocese and needs to be developed further so that the training, which both the lay leaders and evangelists receive, can help them, not only in leadership but also in interpreting the Word of God correctly. African Christians today have assumed ownership of the Bible and they view it as God's book for them, one that everyone has the right to read and interpret. This ownership goes farther, extending into teaching as well. If one were to look at who actually teaches the Bible in our congregations, one would be amazed.

The Lutheran church, just like other mainline churches, has many formally trained teachers or theologians. Most of these are leaders in their parishes, and they are expected to be the primary teachers. Often, however, time and the pressure from other duties do not allow them to do much teaching of the Bible, other than through a Sunday sermon which is getting shorter and shorter as years go by.

³⁸⁶ Iringa diocese, TEE Annual report 4 March 1990, Iringa.

³⁸⁷ Iringa Diocese, TEE Annual report 4 March 1990, Iringa.

³⁸⁸ Iringa Diocese, TEE Board meeting 11 February 1992, Iringa.

Lay leaders teach the Bible in many Protestant churches. Some of these teachers were trained in Bible schools, taking courses of various duration, from as short as a few weeks to as much as three years. These people – called evangelists, teachers or Bible women - are sent to work under a pastor, but it is they who become the primary leaders and teachers in their respective congregations. They exert enormous influence in the daily reading and teaching of the Bible and other activities in the church.

The author noticed that apart from these trained lay leaders, every street or village has numerous Lutheran untrained leaders teaching the Bible in small groups or in homes. They are both male and female, and have no formal training in the Bible. Sometimes some of these may be appointed formally, and some pastors prepare material for them to use or may give them some orientation. Together with these, we also have the revivalists. These are Christians who stress the need for a spectacular conversion accompanied by signs of strong and deeply felt emotion brought on by emotional preaching.³⁸⁹ Furthermore, "revival always involves the preaching of divine judgement, confession of sin, repentance, acceptance of salvation as a free gift, the authority of the Scriptures and the joy and discipline of the Christian life."³⁹⁰ The revivalists claim their mandate comes directly from God, and who need nobody's permission to teach the Bible. Their teaching is informal, conducted anywhere, any time. Their theology is self-styled and often crude.

³⁸⁹ Ferdinand Deist, *A Concise Dictionary of Theological and Related Terms* (Pretoria: J. L. van Schaik (Pty) Ltd, 1984), p. 220.

³⁹⁰ Everett F. Harrison, (ed.), *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1960), p. 460.

However, these charismatic leaders have played a crucial role in the history of African Christianity, for they work with unparalleled zeal for Christ and the word of God without payment. These African preachers who mainly belong to the youth groups and women's leagues in the church have been responsible for planting Christianity in many places in the Iringa diocese and most of the stations opened are vibrant parishes. Leaders like these are many, though often disliked by the mainline churches, but for better or for worse, they are doing a great job. Therefore, it is evident that the majority of Bible teachers in Iringa (and this is the case in the whole of Tanzania and even Africa) have never had any formal Bible teaching. It is, thus, very crucial for the church, through its theologians, to recognise that their own influence as leaders and their modes of interpretation are not the only ones available. It is important for pastors to cultivate a healthy interaction between themselves and these youths and women within the church who most of them are untrained readers of the Bible. Pastors need to assist these untrained teachers, who for the most part, are in close touch with most of their church members. This can very well be done through the TEE programme and also by organizing short seminars and making use of the available facilities and expertise at the Tumaini University at Iringa.

In 1995, at the Tumaini University at Iringa, a total of seventeen students from TEE were selected to undergo training only for mission work in the Iringa diocese. The group was trained for four years. Students had three weeks of study in their respective work places and one week of intensive instruction at the Tumaini University College at Iringa. They had also field experience on missionary outreach once a year for two weeks in remote areas within the Iringa diocese.³⁹¹ Although the programme proved to be helpful to the students, the

³⁹¹ Interview with Venance Chaulla, 15 August 2001, Iringa.

time spent at the college was too short. It was not possible for the students to have ample time to interact with their teachers at the college. It was also not possible to use the available facilities, such as the university library, because the time was too short for the students and they lacked English language proficiency. However, this group was and will be a great asset for the diocese for mission work in the area.

The urgent need for a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, Iringa diocese, opened the possibility of reintroducing another short course in theological training lasting for a period of two years. Qualified theologians from the Iringa diocese conducted the course. The main content of the course was to enable the well-experienced evangelists to get more theological training and some leadership skills and later be ordained as pastors.³⁹² The training took place at one of the parishes called Kihesa in November 1992. The class was composed of three experienced women evangelists and five experienced men. Due to poor administrative planning the course was postponed for three months after a period of studies of one week only. The training resumed in January 1993. In the middle of 1994, the class was transferred to the Lutheran College Iringa, which was under construction. The class graduated in July 1994 and ordination took place on 4th September 1994. Another band of preachers and leaders in the Iringa diocese was formed.³⁹³

The author has noted that the Iringa diocese has trained second class leadership. The quality of pastors who are in the field leaves a lot to be desired. Unfortunately, a good number of them do not have secondary school education, which would enable them to pursue further education. This is a big weakness in the leadership of the church.

³⁹² Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 16 August 2001, Iringa

³⁹³ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 16 August 2001, Iringa.

Emphasis now should be put on upgrading pastors to reach a first-degree level in theology and on training new pastors of first degree and above.

In 1994 the Iringa diocese, with the help of the St. Paul Area Synod in Minnesota, started to build a college to train its own leaders in the diocese, who will be missionaries to their fellow Africans in the southern part of Tanzania. The dream started in 1987 when some American Global Volunteers visited Iringa. After describing the growth of the Lutheran church in Iringa and the shortage of leadership, Bishop Elect Oldenburg Mdegella, Arne Blomquist and Don Fultz came up with the idea of building a small college.³⁹⁴

The idea was accepted at the St. Paul Area Synod, which had been a companion church with the Iringa diocese since 1987. The congregation in St. Paul started to contribute towards the project. In 1993, the St. Paul Area Synod, with the permission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America sent two missionaries to work hand in hand with the Christians in the Iringa diocese on the project. The building project began in March 1993 and the first buildings were dedicated in 1994. The first theology students were admitted in January 1994.

For the first time in the history of the Iringa diocese eleven students were admitted to pursue a diploma in theology. The students graduated in 1999 and their ordination took place in the same year at Pommern. The College has grown into a University and has been known as the Tumaini University at Iringa since 1996. It offers other secular courses besides theology. In 1996 it offered a first degree in Business Administration, in 1997 it introduced a degree programme in

³⁹⁴ Interview with Oldenburg Mdegella, 11 August 2001, Iringa

Journalism; in 1998, it introduced a first degree in Law; and in 1999 it introduced a first degree in Bachelor of Theology. Through Tumaini University, the Iringa diocese has been able to train more pastors because it is cheaper than Makumira, where the costs of transportation and other allowances are a great burden for a young diocese.

5.5 The ordination of women

The first churches to admit women to official ministry were those who had abandoned the threefold order of bishop, priest and deacon at the Reformation and which had little or no centralized hierarchical structure.³⁹⁵ It was not however, until the 20th century that the ordination of women became a serious concern in the life of some churches.

The first of the Lutheran churches to ordain a woman to full ministry was the Evangelisch-Lutherse Kerk in the Netherlands in 1929.³⁹⁶ Since then members of the Lutheran World Federation have gradually admitted women to their ordained ministry, though some still do not do so. The most significant decision was taken in 1958³⁹⁷ when the Swedish church, which claims to maintain the apostolic succession, became the first such Lutheran body to permit the ordination of women to the priesthood. The first ordinations took place in 1960.³⁹⁸ In the USA the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) and the American Lutheran Church (ALC)³⁹⁹ ordained their first women pastors in 1970.

³⁹⁵ F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 1761.

³⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 1762.

³⁹⁷ Musimbi, R. A. Kanyoro, "Women in the Lutheran Communion," in *Search of a Round Table Gender, Theology & Church Leadership* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1977), p. 129.

³⁹⁸ F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (eds.) *The Oxford Dictionary*, p.1762.

In Africa the first women were ordained only in the 1980s, and the number has increased in the 1990s. So far, 68 per cent of Lutheran churches, which are members of the Lutheran World Federation, ordain women,⁴⁰⁰ though the numbers will continue to rise as the churches in Asia and Africa follow suit. A number of churches in Africa ordain women and since the ordination of women is an issue for African churches, one would assume that to reach this point was an important step. However, there has been a marked discrepancy over time with regard to the practice of ordaining women. In Namibia, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia ordained women long before the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) – another church of the Lutheran confession in the same country.⁴⁰¹

For instance, the Anglican church in Uganda ordained women long before the world Anglican Communion voted to do so.⁴⁰² But in the neighbouring country Kenya, the Anglican church ordained women in only one diocese in 1990 and those women were not recognised by the other dioceses until a vote took place in the whole communion globally while in South Africa they ordained women in 1992.

The above examples reveal that in Africa the discussion and actual practice of women's ordination was centered on each particular church and not necessarily according to confession or country. The Lutheran church that ordained women in Namibia in 1978 has its roots in Germany, where ordination of women had taken place for a long time. While the ELCIN, which has its roots in Finland ordained women in

³⁹⁹ The Lutheran Church in America (LCA) and the American Lutheran Church (ALC) are predecessor bodies too the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

⁴⁰⁰ Musimbi, R. A. Kanyoro, "Women in the Lutheran Communion," in *In Search of a Round Table Gender, Theology & Church Leadership* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1977), p. 129.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Ibid. p. 147.

1992, and it only got involved in the debate after Finland had decided to ordain women in 1988.⁴⁰³

Whatever the differences in the practice of ordaining women are in the churches of Africa, ordained women are still in the minority. Since the experience is very new, in some cases the sight of a woman in a clerical collar raises the eyebrows of the people. Due to the novelty of the phenomenon even the ordained women themselves are still thrilled about their role as pioneers. They are still in the process of finding their place within the male dominated church and male clergy structure.

While in some other parts of the world ordained women have begun questioning their contribution, African women ministers are at a point where they are still being tested. They are struggling their best to show their calling and to convince the church and society that they can be in the calling. Some of the new women pastors are on an extremely difficult journey, and, in some cases, it is a journey in the dark.⁴⁰⁴

There has been some resistance to the whole phenomenon of ordaining women in the Lutheran church. There are 25 Lutheran churches in Africa, which are members of the Lutheran World Federation.⁴⁰⁵ Some countries have a number of churches with different origins but have joined to form a national unit. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania is a cluster of 20 dioceses.⁴⁰⁶ Each of the dioceses has its own autonomy and more often than not has a bilateral relationship with its mother mission.

⁴⁰³ Ibid., p. 149.

⁴⁰⁴ Interview with Agnes Kulanga, 15 August 2001, Iringa.

⁴⁰⁵ Musimbi, R. A. Kanyoro, p. 148.

There has been a strong resistance towards the ordination of women in some of the Lutheran churches. It is often said that male clergy rather than parishioners, are the most strongly opposed to the ordination of women. This may be because male clergy are conversant with the various arguments against ordination. But professional jealousy could be another reason: the fear that women might challenge the monopoly of power in the church by men.⁴⁰⁷

Some constitutions of African Lutheran churches forbid women from being ordained, and some of them spell out clearly that the clergy must be male. One of those is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) that had to review its constitution in order to ordain women.⁴⁰⁸ On the other hand, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone has the most inclusive constitution within the LWF members in Africa in matters concerning the ordination of women. The constitution stipulates that the bishop of the church shall be its executive officer, the president of the corporation and chief minister and counsellor in spiritual and temporal matters, the spiritual head of the ELCSL and that a man or woman may fill this office. Similarly, all other church offices are open to men and women alike.⁴⁰⁹ This sounds very revolutionary. But, although the constitution is open in affirming the role of women, which brings joy, skepticism remains there when it comes to the practical part. It does not matter how well the document has been written, but how well it complies with what can be done according to the context of the Sierra Leone community. Its success will not depend on what it says in its constitution but how it lives out

⁴⁰⁶ Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania) *Kalenda 2002* (Calendar), (Moshi: Moshi Printing Press, 2002), 44.

⁴⁰⁷ Musimbi R.A. Kanyoro, "The Ordination of Women in Africa" in *In Search of a Round Table*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997), p. 149.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

that constitution. The first woman to be ordained in Sierra Leone was in 1996.⁴¹⁰

Today the question of women's ordination is seen by African women within the whole context of women's participation in the life of the church and society. Women of all ages and educational levels from the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Evangelical and independent Churches express dissatisfaction because they are not included in the structures which make decisions.⁴¹¹

African women are no longer silent on theological issues, ordination being one of many. In villages they continue daily to sing and pray and live their theology in languages, which are appropriate to them. The theological reflections of African women on these issues are the window through which we see their vision and hear their voices. In order to get a true picture we need to listen to the discussions of women as they go to fetch water from the river, fetch firewood, braid their hair, and meet in hundreds of women's groups. These voices have not made their way into church minutes because women are not yet on church boards and if they are, their voices are not yet taken seriously.

A Tanzanian lay woman who was among the women who sang and danced in the streets in 1990 after the decision to ordain women had been passed by the ELCT Synod assembly confided her feelings of joy and said: " We have been blessed. At last God has blessed us with women pastors! We women can see ourselves in the ministry."⁴¹² This was seen as a godly vision for the women in Tanzania, following lengthy discussions and debates in the church. God calls both men and

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Ibid. , p. 151

⁴¹² Ibid. 152.

women to complement each other, side by side in ordained ministry, as in other aspects of life.

Professor Cuthbert K. Omari, discussing women's ordination from a Tanzanian point of view in 1985, comments.

When we consider the role of women in the ministry, we must do so from the point of view of leadership in the community as a whole. This point must be emphasized because the pastorate is a form of leadership, which has been held exclusively by men for a very long time. When the community of believers brings women into this ministry, what are the sociological and cultural implications?⁴¹³

In other words, Omari is concerned about the sociological and cultural implications of the question of ordaining women in Tanzania. Men have dominated this form of ministry for a long time, just like other forms of careers which they used to dominate in society. In order to obtain equality in other careers women in Tanzania had to struggle to be included in forms of leadership. However, this progress came about through the women's initiatives together with some help from men. There are men who still have the view that women should not be involved in leadership. They argue that the place of women is in the home or that women should be given opportunities to serve rather than to lead.⁴¹⁴ This argument applies to women in the leadership of the church as well.

Men rule African society and it is men who uphold arguments in favour of systems and structure, which do not give women opportunities for leadership. Thus the system and structures found in the church are the outcome of men's and not women's views. Although in some places women have proven to be more capable leaders than men, on the

⁴¹³ Cuthbert K. Omari, "Women's Ordination: A Viewpoint from Tanzania" in *In Search of a Round Table*, p. 153.

⁴¹⁴ Interview with Samson Mkemwa, 10 September 2001, Iringa.

whole men are recognised as the leaders in society and women as the followers.⁴¹⁵

The first problem that the ELCT wrestled with, before the question of women ordination came into existence, was the issue of giving women equal opportunity to study theology. At the ELCT Synod meeting in 1966 at Bukoba, Omari expressed the opinion that women were to be given the same opportunity as men to study theology. That is to say, Omari suggested to the ELCT leaders that the church should give all young people of the church, who are the leaders of tomorrow, equal chances to be fully involved in the life of the church. The issue of ordination was not raised as Omari says: " I did not wish then to raise the issue of ordination because I knew it was only a matter of time. I saw no serious objection to women studying theology."⁴¹⁶

In the mid 1960s, the church refused to train women theologians because of the view that women were weak people and therefore their place is in the home. Arguing against this view, Omari said that, in accordance with the division of service and ministry in the church, women were evangelists and assistants so why could they not be pastors.⁴¹⁷

The Lutheran Church being one of the progressive churches, women entered the college and graduated alongside men. There was no question of women not being able to cope with theological studies. The question, which arose, was whether they were to be ordained or not. In 1986, Omari, a guest speaker at the graduation ceremony of Makumira Lutheran Theological College, ventured to state openly that the refusal

⁴¹⁵ C.K.Omari, "*The Community of Believers and the Involvement of Men and Women on Equal Terms*," paper presented to the seminar on the decade of the Churches, ELCT, 16-21 January 1989.

⁴¹⁶ Omari, *Women's Ordination*, p. 155.

to ordain women as pastors was a matter of social education and not of theology.⁴¹⁸ He stressed further, "I not only expect to witness the ordination of women as pastors, but look forward to having a woman bishop in Tanzania."⁴¹⁹

In fact, Omari challenged Makumira as a church institution to support the idea of women's ordination and to be a pioneer in educating the society that women were capable not only of being pastors but also leaders in the church as well. The Makumira institution took the challenge seriously, and a strong debate began among theologians in 1987. As a result of this, the issue of women's ordination dominated in the ELCT dioceses and featured in the church bulletin, *Uhuru na Amani*. However, the arguments were mainly based on the cultural and sociological significance of the ordination of women as pastors rather than the theological. Within the Makumira community, those against women's ordination went to the extent of refusing to attend church services which were led by women theologians.⁴²⁰

Culturally, the ordination of women was seen as a step forward in the struggles of women to take part fully in the life and leadership of the church and its various councils. For a number of years women and women's groups have served the church in a variety of ways. The emancipation of women has taken place in many parts of the world including Africa. Women have not only availed themselves of educational and occupational opportunities, but have acquitted themselves creditably. In the church African women through praying together and working together they have accomplished much. The task of motivating congregation members and believers has belonged to

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

⁴²⁰ Interview with Oswald Ndelwa, 12 August 2001, Iringa.

women most of the time. Furthermore, it is women who are reliable participants in worship services and in self-reliance activities of the church.

This is well exemplified in the lower levels of church leadership. Women have faithfully kept to their task. They have for a long time, without reservation, rendered service in meetings by preparing and providing food for the men as they held their meetings. They teach Sunday schools and take care of the general cleanliness of church buildings. Phoebe Msigomba, the first woman secretary of the Iringa diocese has this to say.

Women are the pillars of the church. Look at the attendance in Sunday services, the majority are women. Look at the fellowship and Bible studies attendance, they are the majority. They are active, strong and ready to invest their efforts into the church's mission. They love the church very deeply and are ready to commit themselves to work for it despite the frustrations by the church leaders who fail to receive and respond to their gifts and callings.⁴²¹

If we acknowledge that leadership commences from such low levels, then we realise that women's leadership in the church goes way back to the time of the New Testament. When women want to take higher responsibilities in the church, they should not appear as a threat to men.

One of the arguments against women's ordination was that women were weak, and if they were to take leadership positions, especially pastoral leadership, they would weaken the church further. Such perceptions were based on the structure of the society.⁴²² In fact, men are just as weak as women, especially in spiritual ministries. It is true

⁴²¹ Interview with Phoebe Msigomba, 15 August, 2001, Iringa.

⁴²² Omari, p. 156.

that women are more inclined to be kind and compassionate. However, it should not be taken as a weakness but an asset in the ministry of a pastor.

As noted earlier, the absence of women from the higher levels of responsibility is characteristic of the whole Tanzanian society. It is not, therefore, surprising to find the same attitudes prevailing in the church, especially within its structures. However, the whole idea of ordaining women is not to be taken as a demand for women to be involved in leadership or decision-making. Instead, it is a fight for equal rights and equal participation for all people, regardless of biological or social differences. This was and should be the responsibility of all those who seek to defend the rights of every human being to speed up the development of society, especially within the decision-making bodies of the church.

The general trend of the society is for men and women to take part together in leadership and management according to ability. In the light of this, the claim that women should be ordained is not due to the fact that they are women, but because they deserve it and it is their right as faithful members of the body of Christ. The argument is that women should neither be denied the opportunity to hold key leadership positions nor be granted key leadership positions simply because they are women. They are to follow the same procedures in order not to defeat the aim of achieving strong and reliable leadership in the society. A female theologian from the ELCT, Northern diocese, debating on the issue of women's ordination, writes in the ELCT *Uhuru na Amani* magazine thus:

Tunafahamu kwamba wanawake wakipata nafasi ya elimu wataelimika kama wanaume na wakipata nafasi ya kuongoza wataongoza kama wanaume.

We know that once women get the chance to pursue education, they will be educated just like men and when they get a chance to be leaders they will lead like men.⁴²³ (*translation mine*)

By ordaining women, the church is taking a step forward in raising the social status of women.⁴²⁴ The church has for a long time taught that Christ is above culture, therefore, the church cannot be blocked by tradition and culture from implementing its calling to ministry. The ordination of women should be taken as a way of breaking the cultural barriers that for a long time prevented the church from seeing that those women were being treated unjustly. So, women must be given leadership opportunities within the church especially when they have the same abilities as men, and, actually, are even better qualified in some cases. Since the church has supported and defended human rights in line with its traditions and teachings, it is my opinion that it has to take a step further by not only ordaining women but also giving them leadership positions and getting them involved fully in the leadership structures. Arguing on the issue of women's ordination, the former Presiding Bishop of the ELCT, Dr. Sebastian Kolowa, wrote:

Hoja za kimsingi za kuwabariki wanawake: Kanisa ndilo la kwanza kuleta nuru ya elimu kwa wanawake lakini suala la kumbariki mwanamke linaleta mgogoro hasa katika jamii za kiafrika bila shaka utokee ufunuo wa Roho Mtakatifu ili kuondoa mgogoro huo.

Basic arguments for ordaining women: The Church was the first to bring the light of education to women but the issue of ordaining a woman is bringing a conflict especially in the African society and no doubt a revelation of the Holy Spirit will resolve that conflict.⁴²⁵ (*translation mine*)

⁴²³ Rose Materu in *Uhuru na Amani*, Toleo la 4, 1987 at Iringa diocese archive

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ Sebastian Kolowa, "Hoja za kimsingi za kuwabariki wanawake" in *Uhuru na Amani*, Toleo la 2, 1989 at Iringa diocese archive.

Another leader of the ELCT argued along the same lines on the need to look at traditions and culture not only critically but also in the light of the changes taking place in the society and world at large.

Tunahitaji kutazama upya utamaduni na mila ambazo katika maendeleo ya wakati huu zinahitajika kufikiri kwa upya. Si vizuri kubaki katika ya zamani ambayo bado yametawala jamii na kanisa, serikali na mshirika mengine.

We need to re-examine the traditions and culture that do not go with the developments of today. It is not good to cling to the old views which are still followed by the society and the church, the government and other organisations.⁴²⁶ (*translation mine*)

The Makumira Lutheran Theological College community broke their silence when the lecturers contributed to the debate and showed their stand on women's ordination.

Daima tukumbuke ya kuwa Injili haifungwi na mapokeo/utamaduni. Bali inaleta uhuru na mabadiliko. Mafundisho ya Biblia hayaainishi kwamba nani na ana hali gani anayepaswa kutenda huduam hii ya kiuchungaji na nani hana haki kufuatana na jinsia.

We should always remember that the Gospel is not bound by traditions/cultures. Instead it brings freedom and changes. The teachings of the Bible do not stipulate who is required to serve as pastor and under what conditions and who does not have the right according to gender.⁴²⁷ (*translation mine*)

In the light of the above arguments, the ELCT body in 1990 decided in principle to ordain women.⁴²⁸ However, it was left to the individual dioceses to determine when to ordain women. The ELCT embraced the service of priesthood of all believers and equality in the church. This meant that the ELCT incorporated women and men in the leadership of

⁴²⁶ Joram Girgis, "Hoja za kimsingi za kuwabariki wanawake," in *Uhuru na Amani*, Toleo la 2, 1989 at Iringa diocese Archive.

⁴²⁷ Lecturers of Makumira Lutheran Theological College, "Hoja za kimsingi za kuwabariki wanawake," in *Uhuru na Amani*, Toleo la 1, 1990.

⁴²⁸ Minutes of the General assembly of the ELCT 1990 held at Morogoro Junious Seminary 13 July 1990 in Iringa diocese archive.

the church. The decision was not only recognition of the contribution women can make; more important, it was a restoring of their original and legitimate image and dignity.

Furthermore, by ordaining women the church has taken a revolutionary step. But I think at the same time it is wise to take into consideration the view of the opponents. Disagreements on the issue should not in any way be a cause for division in the church. Efforts and better strategies must be sought to educate one another, until there is a state where everyone recognises that the question of ordaining women as pastors is one of sociology and not of theology as such.

Following the ELCT resolution to ordain women in 1990, the Iringa diocese went ahead to implement the decision and ordained the first woman pastor in Tanzania, Tudzeline Kihwele, on 20 November 1991. Kihwele was trained as an evangelist at Kidugala Bible School for three years. She worked as an evangelist at Ihemi parish before she went back for a two years theological training at Kidugala. It was not possible for Kihwele to pursue higher theological training due to her poor educational background. Some critics argued that Iringa's fast decision to ordain the woman was based on a spirit of competition and fame among its leaders rather than on the quality of leadership.⁴²⁹

While other dioceses within the ELCT began ordaining women, two of the twenty dioceses, the North Western diocese and Karagwe have not agreed to ordain women. The Iringa diocese never had much resistance on the ordination of women. The Hehe, just like any other African community, for a long time had had their own worship services known as *tambiko* which took place in cemeteries, big trees, thick forests,

⁴²⁹ Interview with Oswald Ndelwa, 12 August 2001, Iringa.

mountains and big rivers.⁴³⁰ Within the Hehe traditions, women were allowed to lead worship services in other words to render the service of a priest. The woman had to be the first born of the family because she carried the first name of her grandmother and special rites were performed for her. She was trained to perform the job from her childhood under the guidance of her elders. They taught her the words, which she had to say, and the actions, which she had to do accordingly. After growing up, she took the responsibility on her own.⁴³¹ Therefore, the traditions and culture of the inhabitants of the Iringa diocese accept a woman to be given leadership position.

Reflecting on her role as a pastor, Agnes Kulanga says, "*kama ningejua kwamba huduma ya kichungaji ni ngumu kiasi hiki, nisingethubu hata kidogo.*" (Had I known that the pastoral service was this hard, I would not have dared).⁴³² This is indicative that the service is a hard job and one needs to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit, the family and the whole community of believers.

However, women pastors in the Iringa diocese enjoy completely equal status with men pastors: the same benefits, the same job structure and the same remuneration. The women pastors have not only fulfilled the task entrusted to them by the church, but in some cases their performance surpasses that of their male counterparts. This positive development has led a modest section of initially opposed community members to become supporters. This was also evident during the district elections that took place in the Iringa diocese in 1999. The pastors were asked to secretly write the names of pastors whom they wanted to be their district leaders. Pastor Agnes Kulanga received the

⁴³⁰ Fulgens F. A. Malangalila, *Mwamuyinga, Mtawala wa Wahehe (Mwamuyinga, the Ruler of the Hehe)* (Peramiho: Benedictines Publications, 1987), p. 6-32.

⁴³¹ Interview with Tumwiwukage Maginga, 16 July 2001, Kidewa, Iringa.

⁴³² Interview with Agnes Kulanga, 20 July 2001 Iringa.

highest figure. There were only seven female pastors against 55 male pastors. She became the first woman district pastor in the Lutheran Church in Tanzania and most likely in Africa.⁴³³

Agnes Kulanga graduated from special theological training at Iringa Lutheran College in 1994 and was ordained on 26 November 1994 at the Iringa Lutheran church. Prior to her further theological training she had attended Kidugala Bible School (where she was trained as an evangelist) worked as an evangelist, as first woman secretary of the Uhehe district, as a parish worker in Dar es Salaam and as Women's secretary for the Iringa district, as well as a member of the Executive Council of Southern Synod and later Southern Diocese.⁴³⁴

Women's ordination is recognition of the rightful status of women. Its inherent meaning lies in the concepts of partnership and stewardship, because recognition and acceptance result in motivation, encouragement and, hence, full participation. Women's participation in the Iringa diocese today can be said to be holistic. Women can seek election freely in any hierarchy, at each and every level. They are the bona fide colleagues of men. The Iringa diocese constitution asks for equal representation in meetings, especially at the diocese level. Two people, one male and one female, both on the Executive committee and on the Executive council of the diocese, represent each district.⁴³⁵

The way is, therefore, open for women's specialised gifts and ministry to be used to the utmost. Women's representation in important meetings looks set to grow because the constitution emphasises collective leadership. Through collective leadership it becomes easier to comprehend the needs of all the people, and, therefore, the church is in

⁴³³ Interview with Owdenburg Mdegella, 21 August 2001, Pietermaritzburg.

⁴³⁴ Interview with Agnes Kulanga, 20 July 2001, Iringa.

⁴³⁵ The Iringa diocese Constitution 2000, p. 11.

a better position to provide a holistic service. Holistic leadership paves the way for a new model of the priesthood of all believers and it facilitates consolidated lay participation. Irrespective of gender and age, all take part in the service of the fellowship. Increased participation enables all to identify with the church and with such common identity, each retains one's identity.

Traditionally, indigenous women only worked in the fields and seldom took part in social organisations and meetings. Moreover, they lacked opportunities for education. Presently, women are accorded status within the church; they are trained and then return to serve their communities, providing effective service and leadership both in the church and in the society. Such new developments have motivated women in the villages to take pride and gain confidence in themselves and have resulted in changes in tribal social concepts. Through educational church programmes, in the diocese, there has been a growing emphasis on the education of both girls and boys. Women have also gradually increased their own involvement in church activities.⁴³⁶

However, there are two sides of the coin. Women pastors do face some practical as well as technical problems in their ministry. But this should not be understood as suggesting that men do not have problems: male pastors have their own problems, albeit different. Due to the differences in physical abilities, talents and backgrounds, some women pastors are not able to work in isolated rural areas, while others cannot be transferred because of their husbands' work. In cases where a husband and wife are both pastors, adjustments must be made in order to strike a balance between their ministry and their family

⁴³⁶ The Chalinze congregation in the Ilambilole parish in Iringa district is composed of and run by women.

commitments.⁴³⁷ Out of eight female pastors in the Iringa diocese, three pastors are placed in town because their husbands work in town. Five women pastors are placed in the rural parishes and their performance is good. Two married ordained deacons are also placed in rural congregations.

Besides the achievements mentioned above, I think there is a great need for education and training. Giving more educational opportunities to women will increase their confidence and self-awareness. Women within the church recognise the need for training in order to gain responsibilities and competences. It is my opinion that a special programme needs to be planned for all women pastors in the diocese who are below diploma level to undergo further training, especially in administrative, management, finance, and communication skills. This will enable them to know about the world in which they live inside and outside the church.

5.6 *Umoja wa wanawake* (The Christian Women's Organization)

In addition to the training and ordination of African pastors, women's organizations played a key role in the growth and expansion of the Christian community among Africans in Africa generally and in Tanzania in particular. These organizations were given different names: in Zimbabwe the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the American Methodist Episcopal Church called them the *rukwadzano*, while the Swedish Church Mission called them *vashandiri*. In the Wesleyan Methodist Church the *ruwadzano* were the most potent evangelistic agency among Africans in Zimbabwe between 1919-1939.

⁴³⁷ Interview with Bishop Owdenburg Mdegela 21 August 2001, Pietermaritzburg.

In order to encourage African women to take part more actively in the Wesleyan Methodist Church, a movement called the "African Women's Prayer Union" was launched in the Transvaal in South Africa by Mrs. Amos Burnet. Its success there led to its expansion to Zimbabwe in 1919 where it came to be known locally as the *ruwadzano* in Mashonaland and the *manyano* in Matebeland.⁴³⁸ The *ruwadzano* and *manyano* women were also known as the "Red Blouse Women" because of the red blouse which formed part of their uniform.

The origin of the *rukwadzano rwe vadzimai* veMethodist Episcopal Church is associated with Lydia Chimonyo, who started the organization in 1929 after a conference had approved such an organization in 1928. It began with theological students' wives at Old Mutare and some of the workers' wives, who took some time for prayer each time they went out to look for firewood. Eventually they organized themselves in a more formal way. They met every Sunday morning at about four o'clock in the church building at Mandisodza village and Lydia Chimonyo, whose husband was then a theological student at Old Mutare in Zimbabwe, was the first official leader of the group in 1929.⁴³⁹

Today, there is a growing interest among scholars in Africa in the history of black Christian women's organizations. Some of the scholars who have done research into women's organizations include: Deborah Gaitskell's doctoral thesis of 1981 on white and black Christian women's organizations on the Witwatersrand during the first half of the twentieth century⁴⁴⁰ and her subsequent publications, which have provided information on the history of the *manyanos*. Similar studies

⁴³⁸ C. Thorpe, *Limpopo to Zambezi* (London: Corgate Press, 1951), p. 110.

⁴³⁹ John Wesley Z. Kurewa, *The Church in Mission: A Short History of the United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, 1897-1997* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p. 95.

⁴⁴⁰ D. Gaitskell, *Female Mission Initiatives: Black and White Women in Three Witwatersrand Churches, 1903-1939*, PhD thesis, University of London, 1981.

exist in Zimbabwe⁴⁴¹ as seen above and in Lesotho⁴⁴² that reveal that the first women's organizations in Southern Africa were Protestants.

Recently, female theologians have come with new insights into the history of the *manyanos*. Of particular significance is Beverley Haddad's research work on the women of Sweetwaters and Nxamalala near Pietermaritzburg and their "theologies of survival". Haddad studied the life stories of twelve women of Mother's Union, an Anglican sodality in St Raphael's, Sweetwaters.⁴⁴³ Other works are Nyambura Njoroge's doctoral thesis on the moral agency of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa's Women's Guild in Kenya.⁴⁴⁴ Other interesting studies on women groups include: a study of Chigwirizano cha Amayi a Christiku, and the Presbyterian sodality in Malawi⁴⁴⁵ by Isabel Phiri, and Edith Born's research on the Methodist *manyanos* in South Africa, which is based on oral interviews conducted in the mid 1990s.⁴⁴⁶

The *manyanos* constitute the backbone of the Christian communities in all African mission churches, as well as in the African Independent Churches. The contribution of their members to the life of the church is vitally important. A woman called Lieselotte Kohle in 1952 started a women's organization in the Iringa diocese. Kohle was sent by the Berlin Mission to work as a missionary in the Ubena-Konde Synod. The

⁴⁴¹ F. D. Murorewa, "Through prayer to action: the Rukwadazno women in Rhodesia", in T.O. Ranger and John Weller (eds), *Themes in the Christian history of Central Africa* (London: Heinemann, 1975), pp. 256-267.

⁴⁴² M. Epprecht, "Domesticity and Piety in Colonial Lesotho: the Private Policy of Basotho Women's Pious Associations", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19/2 (June 1993), pp. 202-224.

⁴⁴³ B. G. Haddad, *African women's theologies of survival: intersecting faith, feminisms and development*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 2000.

⁴⁴⁴ N. J. Njoroge, *Kiama kia Ngo: An African Christian Feminist Ethic of Resistance and Transformation* (Accra, Asemba Publishers, 1997).

⁴⁴⁵ I. A. Phiri, *Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy: Religious Experience of Chewa Women in Central Malawi* (Blantyre: Christian Association Literature in Malawi, 2000), pp. 80-102.

aim was to train and assist women in obtaining Christian and ordinary academic education and skills. At the same time, the organization attempted to create, promote, and build the women's identity, self-assurance, self-esteem, self-respect and self-emancipation. The *Umoja wa Wanawake* was intended to offer education and a wide variety of opportunities in order to keep women at the congregational level up to date. Women gathered to learn the word of God and songs, to take care of their homes and families and to promote the economy of the family.⁴⁴⁷

Women have become very active in the congregations of the Iringa diocese. They keep the churches' surroundings neat and clean and decorate the buildings. They receive guests visiting the congregation and at all meetings and seminars serve food which they prepare. Women attend Sunday services and fellowship meetings in large numbers. According to the constitution, the objectives of the *Umoja wa Wanawake* are: to promote spiritual growth among women through meeting together for the study of the Word of God and for prayer worship, sharing and giving; to create a group that will provide caring fellowship, friendship and loving mutual support for Christian women; to develop spiritual gifts in women by giving them the opportunity to use these gifts initially within the women's group, for example, leadership, preaching, teaching, helping, giving, encouraging and praying; and to meet specific practical needs arising in the local congregation or district. Training opportunities are offered in order to educate all women and to attend to the needs of their social, psychological, physical and spiritual life.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁶ Edith Born, *From Memory to Hope: A Narrative History of the World Federation of Methodist Women* (Ferum College, Virginia, Virginia 2000), pp. 215-243.

⁴⁴⁷ Hance Mwakabana, *The Lutheran Church in Urban Tanzania*, (Helsinki: 1982), p. 153.

Christian women's groups in the Iringa diocese meet at congregational centers. Any woman single or married may become a member of the women's group. The *Umoja wa Wanawake* congregational leadership is elected by the congregational *Umoja wa Wanawake* general meeting, and is responsible for the running of the organization. The local leadership is formed from among the congregational women, consisting of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. The wife of the pastor automatically becomes the advisor of the group and is never given any leadership role in the organization.

The meeting schedule varies from place to place. Most groups meet once or twice a week. They usually meet every Sunday and Thursday to discuss activities for the week, to sing and to study the Bible. Every group starts with Bible reading, followed by a short prayer, before splitting into smaller sewing, needlework, and cookery, knitting or plaiting groups.⁴⁴⁹ In addition, the group plans its own evangelism trips and visitations to people's homes and other congregations, assisting bereaved families by cooking food and even washing their clothes. Women raise money for their activities through offerings at their meetings or through special fund-raising events. The funds are administered by the women's organization in accordance with their budget. The women's groups, also, contributes to all church activities.

Other activities include learning and rehearsing the songs which are sung during Sunday worship. Women also learn childcare, hygiene, leadership skills, and literacy where needed.⁴⁵⁰ Their programmes include exploration and discussion of the societal and ecclesiastical challenges facing women. Issues concerning the woman's role in the community, her participation in leadership at the diocesan level, and

⁴⁴⁸ Constitution of Iringa Diocese, p. 24.

⁴⁴⁹ Interview with Sara Mhanga, 12 November 2000, Iringa.

⁴⁵⁰ Interview with Sara Mhanga, 12 November 2000, Iringa.

their participation in the Christian women's programmes are dealt with in order to enlighten and broaden their thinking. Three features emerge in the activities of the women's organizations: first, that local *Umoja wa Wanawake* leadership is well able to plan and supervise its own activities; secondly, that these activities are designed to promote knowledge and skills; and thirdly, that participants are exposed to physical and spiritual stimulation. The group's activities aim at educating the whole woman.

At the congregational and parochial levels, the contribution of Christian women has been admirable. Their diaconical services and evangelistic activities are beyond comparison. They are well represented on all committees and at all meetings at the congregational, parochial, district and the diocesan levels. But, in spite of all the contributions, which women have made in the Lutheran church, they have remained essentially the unsung bearers of the Good News in Africa.

5.7 *Umoja wa vijana* (Youth Groups)

In 1953 there was a Synod meeting of Ubena/Konde where it was proposed to start a youth department. After two years, in November 1955, Pastor Henrick Smedjebacka and two youths who had finished their teachers' training course at Kinampanda, Lutengano Sanga and Japhet Nyambo, decided to start a church youth movement. Invitations were sent to pastors and evangelists so that they could help in mobilizing the youth together. The call for the meeting was well received by both male and female youth and a total of 200 youth gathered at Magoye.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁵¹ Interview with Marko Maluli, 15 November, 2000, Iringa.

The following objectives were set for the *Umoja wa Vijana*: youths were to have meetings where they could enjoy meeting with other Christian youth and learn their role inside the church study the Bible and sing songs and they were to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to all people in their congregations and parishes. In 1955 there were many meetings that took place and many youths attended.

In 1956 at a Synod meeting at Pommern in Iringa the delegates asked about the development of the youth movement which had started at Magoye. Pastor Smedjebacka reported that the youth movement was making very promising progress in the Uwanji area and proposed that it should be introduced in all the congregations and parishes of the Synod. The Synod meeting gave a directive that a course had to be planned to prepare youth leaders. On 27 July 1957 a youth leadership course was conducted at Brandt, as was proposed at the Synod meeting at Pommern. As a result of the youth leadership course, a leadership manual-guide was compiled and that was the beginning of the *Umoja wa Vijana* of Iringa.⁴⁵²

Marko Maluli, after attending the course at Brandt from 25 to 27 July 1957, led the *Umoja wa Vijana*, together with Samson Mkemwa, Gabriel Makongwa and Agnes Mkemwa from 1957 to 1963. The following led the *Umoja wa Vijana* in the Iringa district and later the Iringa diocese: Peter Kinyaga from 1964 to 1967; Lutengano Nselu from 1968 to 1978; G. Lukosi from 1979 to 1985; Rhoden Mangu'lisa from 1986 to 1992 and, James Sanga from 1993 to 1999 when Benitho Madembo took over.

The strongest branches were at Pommern, Ipalamwa, Ilula, Ihemu and Iringa. The *Umoja wa Vijana* is generally comprised of non-married

⁴⁵² Interview with Marko Maluli, 15 November, 2000, Iringa.

young adults. Although members are mostly teenagers, there is a growing number of older young people who are working but not yet married.

The youth group elects a leadership committee to organize its activities. Usually the chairperson of this committee may be an older youth but must be a full member of the church. The duties of the youth leader or chairperson are to preside over the meetings and to supervise all the youth work activities. The leader delegates power and ensure that every member participates in the various tasks of the group. The youth leader is expected to set a good example in both conduct and actions, and to give all necessary information concerning the group to all parish, district and diocesan organs dealing with youth work. The movement has a strong female representation, both in its leadership and at all levels of the congregation, parish and district.

All members of the *Umoja wa Vijana* are expected to participate fully in the tasks and programmes of the movement. Every member is expected to attend Sunday services and to participate fully in the activities of the congregation, parish and the diocese. Members are expected to attract and encourage others to join the *Umoja* and to be ready to teach Sunday school, participate in manual work, do handcraft, invite and receive guests and visit the sick, the aged and prisoners. They make study tours, hold Bible studies and participate in work camps.⁴⁵³

The aims of the *Umoja wa Vijana* according to the Image Congregation constitution, which is a reflection of the diocese constitution, are as follows: to provide Christian teaching to young people so that they may trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and grow in their Christian faith;

⁴⁵³ Interview with Benitho Madembo, Youth Director, 15 November 2000, Iringa.

to enable young people to understand the relevance of the Christian faith to the practical issues of daily life; to encourage Christian young people to become active and faithful members of their local church, and to begin to use the gifts the Lord has given them in leading meetings, preaching, witnessing to others, Sunday school teaching and visiting the elderly and the sick; and to provide social activities for both Christian and non-Christian young people, so that those who do not yet know Christ may find him through Christian fellowship.⁴⁵⁴

The *Umoja wa Vijana* raises its own funds through offerings at the weekly meetings on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. They, also, have special fund-raising activities which are coordinated by the youth leadership with the advice of the pastor. They plan their own evangelistic trips and visitations in collaboration with the pastor's plan. They contribute immensely to church activities, singing in the choir at Sunday morning worship, going on evangelistic trips and presenting Scripture readings.

The movement has changed greatly since 1955 because most of the youths move from the villages to townships to seek employment. Therefore the movement is stronger in urban areas than in the villages where job opportunities are scarce. Also most of the youths join various secondary schools in the country as a result the congregations are left with few youths in the church.

One problem, however, is the large number of youth in villages who have completed primary and secondary school. Can the congregations help these young people to earn a living and be self-reliant and, if so, in what way? The *Umoja wa Vijana* tries to involve Christian youth in creating productive projects, such as farming, animal husbandry,

⁴⁵⁴ Constitution of Image Congregation, 1999, p. 8.

poultry, and small scale industry (especially carpentry and basketry). Other efforts are those such as that at the Kihesa Congregation, which is jointly building a youth skill center with St Mark Lutheran Church in St. Paul in America, aiming at creating opportunities for youths to learn some skills.

5.7 Conclusion

We have noted that the formation of the diocese was connected with an emphasis on ethnic identity which to a great extent was shaped by an earlier period of the missionaries who worked on ethnic lines. This point is well summarized by C. K. Omari who said:

Unfortunately the Lutheran Church in Tanzania has been very fast according to specific ethnic groups. Almost all new Dioceses and Synods are demarcated according to ethnic boundaries. For example, the way the former Ubena-Konde Synod broke into three different Dioceses, and now the fourth is coming up, is according to the existing major ethnic groups in that area. Thus one sees that there is a diocese predominately, Nyakyusa while the others are predominantly Kinga and Bena ethnics. The new one coming will be predominantly Hehe. Tanzania abolished chieftains in 1962 because Nyerere wanted to have control of the country and bring about unity among his 121 or so ethnic groups. It was a political strategy for the development of a newly independent country. It would have been difficult to lead a country with divided loyalties. The emergence of episcopacy in the Lutheran Church along ethnic lines, brings back this nostalgia to the people. They have their own recognized leader, whom they call *Baba Askofu* (Father Bishop).⁴⁵⁵

Iringa diocese improved its leadership personnel greatly after breaking from the mother diocese and became the first diocese to ordain women in the Lutheran church in Tanzania. It has well established *Umoja wa Wanawake* and youth groups which are instrumental in the mission work of the church.

⁴⁵⁵ C. K. Omari, "Episcopacy. A Sociological Trend in the Lutheran Church in Tanzania", *Africa Theological Journal* (16/1, 1987, pp.4-12), p. 9.

Chapter Six

The missing link: Case studies of unmentioned heroes

6. Introduction

In this chapter, I will present four case studies of four key Tanzanian Christians from the Iringa Diocese. The focus of attention will be on their lives, careers, activities, ideas, examples and contributions.

Although there are 90 ordained indigenous pastors in the Iringa diocese, I have decided to focus on four only: Yohana Nyagawa, Lutangilo Mdegela, Lazaro Myinga, and Nicholas Mwachusi.

I have selected Nyagawa as the most prominent pastor in Uhehe. He was one of the first indigenous pastors to be ordained. As we have discussed in chapter 4, he spent most of his time in the ministry serving in the Uhehe area. He paved the way for other teachers to pursue theological education. Nyagawa served in all the major stations of Pommern, Ihemu, Ilula and Idete.

I have chosen Lutangilo Mdegela because he represents the second group of pastors who followed after Yohana Nyagawa in the spreading the word of God in the Uhehe area. His major contribution was on evangelism and the opening of new congregations. He was also the link between the German missionaries whose major focus was in the Udzungwa highlands and the Swedish missionaries whose concentration was in the Ilula area and its surrounding villages.

I have decided to select Lazaro Myinga because he is the first product of the Swedish Evangelical Mission work in Ilula. He is also the product of the Bena evangelists in the Ilula area which is the second wave of mission work in Iringa after Pommern. Myinga played a great advisory

role during the process of the establishment of the Iringa diocese. He was an important link between the leaders of Ubena and those of Iringa. Besides fostering the unity of the Iringa diocese, Myinga had the longest term of service in the ministry.

I have chosen Nicholas Mwachusi because firstly, he represents the third group of pastors ordained after independence and after the church was under the African leadership. Secondly, one cannot speak of the history of the development of the Iringa diocese without including Mwachusi. He was the chairman of the arrangements of the Iringa diocese in the making. He played a very significant role and dynamic role in the formation of the Iringa diocese.

Finally, I have chosen Phoebe Msigomba and Mathayo Mkomiganga Lihinda in order to give space to the voices of women given their importance in the development of the church as indigenous agents. Phoebe was the first woman to be a teacher in the church schools and also the first woman to serve as diocesan Women's Secretary. I have included Mathayo Mkomiganga Lihinda to represent the voices of lay indigenous agents as missing links in the development of the Iringa diocese.

The remaining 86 pastors can be grouped into three groups. The first group comprises of pastors ordained from 1949 to 1979. A total of 14 ordained pastors out of which eight of those were ordained after having an extra year of training after their Bible School. The remaining six had an average of four years of theological training at Lutheran Theological College Makumira. Between 1981 and 1987 only 6 pastors got ordained. The exception of Abel Mtanga and Aleck Mhanga who were ordained in 1981 and 1987 respectively, the rest were former

evangelists who later pursued further theological education at Makumira Theological College.

The third group is from 1989 to 1999 which shows a big increase in the number of pastors. There was a sudden rise of pastors because the young Iringa diocese decided to introduce a two years special training programme for experienced evangelists. In 1989 thirteen pastors were ordained out of which one was from Makumira Theological College. The trend dropped from 1990 to 1992, and there was an increase in 1993 and in 1994 when another special programme graduated and became ordained. The Iringa diocese besides sending its students to Makumira, they also sent to the Moravian Theological College in Mbeya. At the same time the Iringa diocese established its own institution to train pastors at a diploma level. The first class graduated in 1998 and ordained the highest number since the inception of the diocese. Therefore between 1989 and 1999, 60 pastors were ordained as compared to 20 from 1949 to 1987. (Refer appendix 3).

6.1 Yohana Nyagawa: "Son of Priebusch"

Yohana Nyagawa stood out as an exemplary pastor in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania. During the early years of mission work, as we saw in chapter three, the missionaries developed a method of presenting the gospel more effectively. They recruited baptised Africans, who had performed well in reading, writing and Christian instruction, and engaged them in teaching and preaching. They were missionary agents in the area. Training for evangelistic ministry entailed long periods of working as a *mwalimu* (teacher), during which time familiarisation, friendship and trusts gradually developed between the African agents and the missionaries. For some of the indigenous agents it was a stage on the way to ordained ministry.

Nyagawa, like many other evangelists, began his professional training as a *mwalimu* (teacher) and was engaged in teaching and preaching. He was born in 1900 and both of his parents passed away when he was still young. In the same year that they did, the Berlin missionaries arrived at Kidugala and vaccinated people against small pox. Nyagawa was vaccinated. The MajiMaji resistance broke out when Nyagawa was five years old. Being very young, he had to be carried although in some places he could walk as his relatives ran away from the war.⁴⁵⁶

He joined a bush school in 1912 while staying with his sister who was married to Simbamwene at Palangavanu. Simbamwene sent Nyagawa to school not because he loved him most, but because Nyagawa was an orphan. In those days parents never wanted to send their children to school not only because they did not know the value of education, but also because they wanted their boys to take care of their cattle at home and the girls to work in the houses and get married.⁴⁵⁷

Children who went to school were orphans, children of slave-wives or children of wives who were disliked by their spouses. After six months of school at Palangavanu, Nyagawa decided to go to Ilembula to attend a bush school, which had been established by the missionary, Priebusch. Nyagawa had expected to stay with his brother at Ilembula, but, to his disappointment, his sister-in-law was very harsh towards him. He got a job from an Indian businessman known as Baluchi, who owned a shop where he lived, worked, as well as attended school. His day started at 4 am, for he had to fill eight pots of water before he went to school. He was paid one and a half shillings a month. Before

⁴⁵⁶ A. L. Sakafu, "The pastor: Yohane Nyagawa", in *Modern Tanzanians* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1973), p. 193. Sakafu who was a student of the University of Dar es Salaam interviewed Yohana Nyagawa in 1970 thus making the story reliable. However, much about his service in the church was not covered.

going to school he had to attend morning prayers at the church, and this is where Nyagawa was introduced to Christianity as a student.⁴⁵⁸

The First World War interrupted his schooling. At sixteen he joined the German forces, though too young even to carry and handle a gun properly. The Germans needed young people like Nyagawa for their army. Nyagawa was ready for baptism when he joined the army but never got baptised. Nyagawa thought of his faith seriously when he encountered hardships in military training. Life became harder each day and the German leaders became harsher. He was given several assignments. One day Nyagawa shared a joke with his friends that they would kill any soldier who mistreated them. This joke was reported to the German officers. Nyagawa and his two friends were in trouble. Because of what they had said, their punishment was to be shot in front of their fellow soldiers. As they waited for their punishment, Nyagawa prayed silently that if God would spare him, he would commit his life to the service of God.⁴⁵⁹ The German officer asked each of them his tribe and place of birth and religion. The officer was astonished to learn that all of them belonged to the Bena tribe and that they were all Lutherans. This information surprised the German officer because all the time the Germans had stayed in Tanganyika they had had no problems with the Bena. Furthermore, the Bena in Kidugala had invited the Berlin missionaries to open missions in their area. Following this information, the officer changed the type of punishment because he was also a Lutheran. According to Nyagawa, Christianity had saved him from death and from there on; he dedicated his life to the service of God.⁴⁶⁰ This was a turning point in his life. One can possibly argue that Nyagawa's love for God deepened because his life was spared. The

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 194.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 196.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

British army captured Nyagawa and his colleagues on 3 November 1917. After being released from a prison camp in Malawi in 1918 he returned to Ilembula, strengthened in his faith in Christ.⁴⁶¹

6.1.1 Nyagawa: from a soldier of the crown to a soldier of Christ.

After being freed, Nyagawa returned home and immediately began preaching even before being baptized. This is indicative of his enthusiasm and faith. This was followed by his first assignment to teach catechumens at Ilembula. He was baptised on 6 November 1921 at Ilembula by Pastor A. M. Anderson, a missionary of the Blantyre mission from Malawi, who had taken over a portion of the Berlin field during the First World War. Nyagawa recalls:

Kabla ya kubatizwa niliishi katika hofu kubwa ya kifo. Sasa nimepona. Kabla ya ubatizo wangu nilichagua jina la Stefano. Lakini niliona mara tatu katika ndoto kwamba nilibatizwa na jina la Johani (Yohani), basi nikachagua jina hilo.

Before being baptised I lived in great fear of death. Now I am healed. Before my baptism I had chosen the name Stefano. But I saw three times in my dream that I had been baptised with the name Johani (Yohani), so I decided to choose that name. (*translation mine*)⁴⁶²

On 8 December 1922, Nyagawa married Ambonise se Mubede.

In 1923 Nyagawa had a vision:

One night I saw a very surprising thing. As I lay on my bed while still awake, I saw the whole house being filled with bright light from above. I woke up my wife so that she could also witness,

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., p. 197.

⁴⁶² Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania, Dayosisi ya Kusini, *Miaka 100 ya Injili* (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Southern Diocese), p. 8.

but she could not see anything. I prayed, then the light disappeared.⁴⁶³

Nyagawa served as a *mwaliimu* (teacher) until 1925 when he decided to find other opportunities in Dar es Salaam, where he worked as a medical attendant in the government service. Nyagawa left the service of the church because Anderson had given equal increments to all teachers regardless of their seniority. Nyagawa saw this as being unfair. He resisted Anderson's style of administration indirectly because he could not express his dissatisfaction to the missionary due to the master-servant relationship that prevailed. During his stay in Dar es Salaam he attended the Lutheran church and was impressed by Martin Ganisya, who in his time was an outstanding example of African achievement as a pastor and an influential community leader.⁴⁶⁴ Ganisya offered Nyagawa an opportunity to serve as an evangelist in Dar es Salaam, but he declined, arguing that if he had to work for the church, then he would rather return to his home village where his people had not heard the gospel.

Nyagawa returned home with the intention of working in the church, but contrary to his intention, he asked for a job and became a tax collector because the government paid a higher salary than the church. But as he worked for the government, he had no peace in his heart. Nyagawa says:

... niliacha kazi ya kanisa nikawa mtoza kodi. Muda si muda nilihangaika sana kwa vile niliacha kazi ya injili. Sikuweza kuacha kazi ya serikali. Kwa hiyo nilianza kuhubiri injili kazini. Watu 20 waliongoka. Lakini bado nilikuwa sina raha.

I left the work of the church and became a tax collector. Within a short while I was restless because I had left the service of the

⁴⁶³ Ibid. , p. 9.

⁴⁶⁴ Carl-Erik Sahlberg, *From Krapf to Rugambwa* (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1986), p. 113.

gospel. I could not stop working for the government. Therefore I began preaching the gospel at work. Twenty people converted. However, I was restless⁴⁶⁵.

Nyagawa believed strongly that the restlessness in his heart was because he had ceased to render his service to the church. But if he had such a conviction, why did he not resign from the government and resume his service of the gospel? I argue here that the government salary which Nyagawa was paid, was much better than the salary of an evangelist which, besides being small, was unreliable. Therefore, Nyagawa sought a job that paid well.

In 1927 Nyagawa recalls having a dream, which made a difference in his life. He heard the words from the gospel according to St. Luke 12:47 which states: "That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows..." The following morning he wrote a letter to the District Officer telling him his decision of working for the church. Nyagawa believed he would be punished if he resisted the voice of God. His first station was at Kanamalenga where he built a big church for sixty Tanzanian shillings. This was his personal pension money paid to him for serving in the army. Before they built this church, services were held in people's homes. Fifty people converted to Christianity in this village and, later, he was transferred to Ilembula where he worked as assistant to a Berlin missionary, Martin Priebusch.⁴⁶⁶ After working under the German missionary, Nyagawa picked up the German work ethic and authoritarian style of administration and this explains his nickname "Son of Priebusch".

In 1929, Nyagawa started his mission work in Malangali. He opened a Christian village in Isimikinyi area with about ten members, who held

⁴⁶⁵ KKKT, Dayosisi ya Kusini, *Miaka 100 ya Injili*, (ELCT Southern Diocese), p. 9.

their worship services in the house of a church elder called Asangye Bangu. Since Malangali was a Government District headquarters and there was a Government School, a lot of people from Unyakyusa and Ubena settled there. Pastor Martin Priebusch, who had arrived at Kidugala to take over from Pastor Anderson, read a report made by Anderson on the development of Christianity in Malangali. The report prompted Priebusch to send Yohana Nyagawa and Lameck Malekela from Ilembula to go and serve Malangali. Lameck Malekela proceeded to Kasanya, while Nyagawa remained at Malangali. He arrived at Malangali on 3 December 1929, as a preacher and teacher of religion at Malangali Central School.⁴⁶⁷

Nyagawa is remembered for his mission and evangelism. He challenged the people of Isimikinyi to work hard on the farms in order to have enough food. With the help of other Christians, they built a big church and a bush school. He engaged other helpers, who assisted him in teaching and preaching the Word of God, and opened many mission stations in the surrounding villages. The helpers led the morning and evening devotions, taught Sunday schools and even led Sunday services. All the helpers were answerable to Nyagawa.⁴⁶⁸

Nyagawa was a dreamer. In 1932 he had another dream, and this time he was sick. On his way to Ilembula hospital he failed to go ahead and had to sleep at Kilangali. As he started to get some sleep, he saw a person standing near his head and the person told him: "*Wewe ni jembe langu, utachunga watu wangu na kuwalisha*"(You are my hoe, you will shepherd my people and feed them).⁴⁶⁹ Nyagawa felt that it was God speaking to him, commissioning him to serve Him. Such a

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ Sakafu in Iliffe, *Modern Tanzanians*, p. 89.

⁴⁶⁸ Sakafu in Iliffe, *Modern Tanzanians*, p.199.

⁴⁶⁹ KKKT, *Dayosisi ya Kusini, Miaka 100 ya Injili*, (ELCT Southern Diocese), p. 9.

dream, to Nyagawa, confirmed the word of God he had received from the gospel of Luke earlier. Nyagawa experienced a lot of miracles and dreams in his life and it was such experiences that made him strong in faith and dedicated to the service of the Church.

6.1.2 Nyagawa's Theological Training

Following the experience of the First World War, when all the missionaries were interned and sent back to Germany, the importance of having trained African leaders was felt. This was after the church experienced a great shortage of pastors, when all the Berlin missionaries were required to leave the country. The church was left without pastors because all African clergy were just evangelists and teachers. As a result of this experience, in the 1930s, the Berlin Mission decided to train African evangelists to become pastors. The decision to train Africans for ordained ministry was made at the Kidugala Conference, which took place in 1930.⁴⁷⁰ In 1932, eight experienced African evangelists began theological training at Kidugala Bible School. Each year they attended theological training for three months and worked in their congregations the remaining months of the year. Yohana Nyagawa was one of the eight evangelists and was ordained on 4 November 1934.⁴⁷¹

4.1.3 Nyagawa's formative period as the pastor of the Hehe

After his ordination Nyagawa's first parish was at Malangali, where he served from 1934 to 1941. From there he was assigned to proclaim the Gospel in Heheland, especially in the Udzungwa area. Writing to Martin Nordfeldt on his readiness to work with the Hehe, Nyagawa says in his letter:

⁴⁷⁰ Sakafu in Iliffe, p. 199.

. . . Tena naongea tu, hapa Malangali nilifika 3 December 1929 karibu miaka 12 nae Bwana Mungu akanibariki kwa utumishi wangu, hapa na pembeni, upande wa Nyororo Uhehe, na upande wa Mufindi na Mugololo chini ya milima ya Mufindi, na mipaka ya Ubena na Uhehe yaani Saja, humo mote yamo makundi ya Kristo Bwana wangu. . . Mimi napenda sana kusaidia na kule Pommern, yaani nikae katikati ya Uhehe na Ujungwa, pale ni katikati. Nami napenda sana kuwatumikia wa ndugu zangu Wahehe. Baba yangu zamani alimfuata Sultani wa Uhehe yaani Mkwawa katika vita ya zamani, nami nataka kumfuata Bwana Yesu Mfalme Mkuu anapopiga vita katika Uhehe, yaani anapomfukuza shetani Uheheni, yaani linapotangazwa popote Uheheni Neno la Injili la Wokovu hii ndio furaha yangu kwa huruma ya Bwana. Roma 1:16

. . . Here I am just saying, I arrived at Malangali on 3 December 1929 almost 12 years ago and the Lord God blessed my service here and on the outskirts, Nyororo in Uhehe area, Mufindi and Mugololo on the footsteps of Mufindi mountains, at the borders of Ubena and Uhehe that is Saja, in all these places there are groups of Christ My Lord. . . I like very much to help also at Pommern that is, I should stay in the middle of Uhehe and Ujungwa. I like very much to serve the Hehe. A long time ago my father followed the Chief of Uhehe, Mkwawa, during the war. I want to follow my Lord Jesus the Supreme King as He fights in Uhehe, as He drives away the devil from Uhehe, when the Gospel of salvation is proclaimed everywhere in Uhehe. This is my joy in the mercy of the Lord. Romans 1:16.⁴⁷² (*translation mine*)

In other words, Nyagawa's letter gives a report to the missionary on the mission work and on the geographical area which he served. The area covers two political districts and all these stations are very far apart from each other. All these places were covered on foot. Nyagawa appears excited as he looks forward to working among the Hehe and would like to serve as a soldier of Christ in proclaiming the Gospel among the Hehe people who had military ability in tribal wars, unlike his father, who appears to have served as Mkwawa's soldier. Critically Nyagawa would have liked to continue serving Malangali area especially

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.

⁴⁷² KKKT, Dayosisi ya Kusini, *Historia ya Jimbo la Mufindi*, p. 20.

after opening a number of stations which needed pastoral care. However, because he has been required to serve somewhere else, he shows his excitement to serve the Hehe people whom he believes are under the reign of the devil.

After the internment of the Berlin missionaries during the Second World War, Martin Priebusch, who had been allowed to remain due to old age, convened a meeting for all representatives of the congregations. He asked the representatives to elect an indigenous pastor who could lead the Church. The representatives elected Yohana Nyagawa in absentia in 1939 and Martin Priebusch remained in an advisory role.⁴⁷³ At that time, the leader of the church was known by the title Superintendent. Nyagawa had to go into leadership of the young congregations without much leadership experience. However, this was one of the most important steps in the building of an independent and indigenous leadership in Southern Tanzania. The experience of the First and Second World Wars, as discussed in chapter 2 revealed to the Africans the fact that Europeans were not superior people because they could initiate such fatal errors as starting global conflicts. Secondly, endowed with the responsibility of leadership, without much skill or experience, the Africans realised that they could lead the church and the Church grew in membership.

6.1.4 Nyagawa's leadership challenges

The changes that took place in the leadership of the Lutheran church in Southern Tanganyika in 1939 were received with differing views. It was time for the Africans to build up an indigenous church with indigenous personnel. At the same time, the missionaries and the British Government officials hardly believed that Nyagawa, an African, could

⁴⁷³ Sakafu in Iliffe, *Modern Tanzanians* p. 199.

lead the church successfully throughout the Southern Highlands of Tanzania. In the eyes of Europeans, Africans were seen as inferior, backward and lacked creativity and imagination. Due to such an attitude, Europeans were not ready to come under the leadership of an African. Many Europeans did everything within their power to bring back the leadership of the church back under a European. It is important to remember that even after World War II, Africa was still described as stagnant, without history prior to the colonial period.⁴⁷⁴

As a result the Iringa District Commissioner called Nyagawa for an interview and among many other questions, he asked: "Your missionaries have been returned to Germany. Where are you going to get the tax and salaries for your teachers? Could it be better if you were taken over by other missionary organisations?" Nyagawa responded: "We have a way of getting money. Each Christian pays some amount of money, and we also collect money through thanksgivings provided during baptism and on Sundays."⁴⁷⁵ The motive behind such an interview was to intimidate Nyagawa. It was not out of concern for the welfare of the church. It was a strategy to demoralize the inexperienced Nyagawa. The response by the pastor shows that already the local church under the leadership of indigenous clergy had started to exercise self-reliance in the church.

As events started to unfold, it was clear that the Colonial government was not happy to see the church being led by an African. As this took place, a number of missionary organisations took a keen interest in the former Berlin Mission field. One of them was the Swedish Evangelical Mission, which already had sent a missionary to Iringa at Ilula. After sensing what was transpiring among the Europeans, Nyagawa called a meeting of all church representatives from the area in May 1940. He asked the members to decide

⁴⁷⁴ James Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History* (New York: The Guildford Press, 1995), p. 6.

⁴⁷⁵ Sakafu in Iliffe, p. 200.

whether they wanted to be led by other missionaries or by indigenous leaders. Unanimously, the members decided that indigenous leaders should lead the church.⁴⁷⁶

After the declaration, news reached the Governor who, in turn, sent his delegation from Dar es Salaam to Malangali to interview Yohana Nyagawa. The representative asked tricky questions:

Representative: "Were you a soldier in the German army?"

Nyagawa: "Yes".

Representative: " How many people did you kill in that war?"

Nyagawa: "In war you fight people who are as clever as you are. You take cover when you fire at the enemies. So do they. Therefore you cannot know if your bullet has killed a person, a monkey, a bird, or anything."

Representative: "That is a clever answer."⁴⁷⁷

It is my opinion that since Nyagawa was a soldier in the German army during World War I, the British counted him as an enemy, who could still have close ties with the Germans. Therefore, it was important for the British government to put the leader of their choice in charge of the church rather than Nyagawa, who had fought against them.

One of the missionaries who had interest in taking over leadership of the Berlin Mission field was Martin Nordfeldt. He was from the Swedish Evangelical Mission (SEM). He relentlessly tried to convince African leaders to accept his leadership. Nyagawa refused to accept him, even as a helper, until an official meeting of representatives was called to decide on the matter. According to Nyagawa, the meeting had all the power to accept or reject the missionary's request.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 201.

In order to decide on the matter, a great meeting was called at Uhambule in December 1940. After a long discussion on the matter, the members asked the Swedish missionary to produce a letter from the Berlin mission commissioning him to take over their mission field. The SEM missionary produced a letter written in a language which none of the representatives could read. The members requested a translation into Swahili, but he declined. To end the matter, a resolution was passed that Martin Nordfeldt should work as the helper of Nyagawa and, in 1941, he was asked to stay at Kidugala.⁴⁷⁹

Nyagawa had great vision. He believed that education was the key to success. He wanted to promote the education system of the Church. He opened a network of bush schools, and started two schools at Kidugala, a day school and a boarding school. The Uhambule meeting among other things recommended that there was a need for the Church to have a missionary who was qualified in education. It was noted that the Church was weak in education and that it was wise to put more emphasis on education.

In order to solve this problem, Nyagawa decided to seek help from the Government. He asked the Government to assist him in the Kidugala Education Project. He particularly petitioned for a continuation of the grant for Kidugala Bible School. On 31 December 1939 he wrote a letter to the Department of Education and brought the self-governing church to the attention of the officials for the first time:

As the aim of this school is to train scholars who will be needed in teaching and preaching, the community would not like to leave off the work, but the great obstacle is money. Being in such a difficult the community has decided to ask the government for help (money-in-aid), and it trusts that its Government will have sympathy with its citizens that they may get out of the darkness and come to the light of civilisation.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika*, p. 210.

The Provincial Commissioner being faced by such "new African Religious and Educational plan" became worried by the lack of European supervision and rejected the request for paying a grant to Kidugala as a boarding school, under the leadership of an African Chagga teacher. In the eyes of a European, an African, even though qualified, was seen as unfit to assume a leadership role without supervision. The commissioner, however, agreed to continue African salary grants for a village primary school under the auspices of the Native Authority.⁴⁸¹ The refusal of the grant was not only because the commissioner did not trust the leadership of the African teacher but was also, afraid that such initiatives would bring about disintegration of the church. All British officials assumed that church independence was temporary during the time of reorganization and assignment of the custody of German missionary property in the Southern Highlands.

Nyagawa did not give up on his plans. He resolved to be independent, even in the educational field. He appointed five bright young men and sent them to Kinampanda for further education. His vision was to prepare teachers who would take responsibility for the education system of the Church. The students were Lunogelo Vuhahula, Lwiyo Wikedzi, Amele Makweta, Martin Mgenzi and Ananidze Msigwa. Later most of these held important positions in the church as leaders. They all qualified and became teachers. Vuhahula later became the head teacher of Ilembula School, then, was promoted to school supervisor, pastor, district pastor, tutor of Makumira Lutheran Theological College, vice-president of the Southern synod, president of the Ulanga Kilombero Synod and bishop of the Southern diocese. Ananidze Msigwa, after teaching for many years in Ilula, became a pastor, while Wikedzi was for many years the education secretary of the Lutheran

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., p. 211.

church of the Southern Synod.⁴⁸² These were the fruits of Nyagawa's creative ideas.

In order to have development in the church, trained pastors were essential. Nyagawa recruited five people whom he planned to send for theological training at the Usambara Synod in Lushoto. Prior to sending them for theological training, Nyagawa started teaching them the duties of a pastor, using the knowledge which he had been taught. This move attracted great attention by the Mission Church Federation, who watched the Southern church maintain its independence, and became skeptical of the practicality and wisdom of it. For the Europeans, it was essential for all Lutheran churches in the territory to be supervised by one or more white missionaries for "church discipline, educational and medical work, and last but not least the question of finance".⁴⁸³

Richard Reusch, the agent of larger Lutheran concerns, arrived in the Southern Highlands in July 1940 to stop Nyagawa's plans for far-reaching independence. According to Reusch, Nyagawa was very influenced by the ideas of Archbishop Alexander of the African Orthodox Church, who had given ordination to members of separatist churches in Uganda and Kenya. This argument is weak because there is no evidence as to whether Nyagawa had ever met Archbishop Alexander personally or not, but he may have had access to the information about the movement and used it to consolidate his position as head of the church. It was alleged that his strategy hinged upon the ordination of elders as pastors in sufficient numbers to dominate the Synods, whereupon he could be elected Bishop for life. In a correspondence between Reusch and Marcia Wright on 12 June 1966 it is said that

⁴⁸² Sakafu in Iliffe, *Modern Tanzanians*, p. 202.

⁴⁸³ Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika*, p. 212.

Nyagawa had already started a "training course" for some of these candidates.⁴⁸⁴

The idea of separatism was not favoured either by the existing pastors or the Provincial Commissioner. The former argued that they would not be able to hold out against sectarian movements and the Provincial Commissioner stated that the government would not recognize them. But the convincing argument for orthodoxy was the access it gave to outside money, which everyone realized was important for the church.

Nyagawa refuted the allegations and he assured the church leadership that the training was a pre-seminary course and that he had no intention of ordaining on his own authority. Nyagawa's creative and daring initiatives as a church leader made the missionaries become worried. One asks: If the Berlin missionaries conducted a theological course and ordained indigenous pastors without the consent of the Lutheran Federation, why were they worried by Nyagawa's pre-seminary course? After interfering with Nyagawa's development plans, Reuch took more steps to limit his financial powers as treasurer and appointed Nordfeldt to receive and dispense all external funds. Like their secular compatriots, missionaries showed the obvious superiority of the West hence they took power, possession, and esteem. The Western missionary dominated the Africans and lived in a condition of affluence amidst the poverty stricken Africans. This resulted into economic chasm, mistrust and even hostility.⁴⁸⁵ Nyagawa's leadership weakened further when he was faced with other charges from the pastors, who acted as moral prefects of the community.⁴⁸⁶ He was suspected in certain areas. All church collection went to him as

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ For a detailed discussion on money and mission see Jonathan J. Bonk, *Missions and Money: Affluence as a Western Missionary Problem* (New York: Orbis Books Maryknoll, 1991).

treasurer, but it seemed, to some churchmen, that no disbursements were made. Volunteer work by evangelists and teachers during the 1930s had been tolerated because the missionaries were also impoverished and generally shared authority in return for self-support. Criticisms were inevitable when the superintendent built a new house, while the rest of the staff went unpaid.⁴⁸⁷

At a church conference in November 1940, the process to divest Nyagawa of his powers began. Backed by Nordfeldt, the delegates dismissed him as treasurer, while the Konde delegates refused to recognise his superintendence, and this caused a split within the church. The precedent of withdrawing recognition was followed in July 1941 in the Bena Synod, which dismissed Nyagawa as superintendent and transferred him to Pommern in remote Udzungwa.⁴⁸⁸

The Swedish missionary wrote letters to organizations which were concerned with the running of the church in the Southern Synod. The organisations sent a man to investigate the issue and the report was given at a meeting at Kinampanda in Singida. Representatives from various synods in the territory attended. This was the best chance for Nyagawa's rivals, to mention all his faults and not his strengths. Although Nyagawa was demoted to an ordinary pastor, tension within the church prevailed.⁴⁸⁹

Many pastors believe that the British Government played a key role in the downfall of Nyagawa. When the Government officials failed to trap him through a series of interviews, they tried to use pastors, but Rev. Ananidze Chungu, who made sure that no wrong or bad information

⁴⁸⁶ Marcia Wright, *Geman Missions in Tanganyika*, p. 213.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ Sakafu in Iliffe, p. 203.

about Nyagawa was delivered to the Government officials, soon discovered the plot. In addition, it is believed that the British officials backed up Nordfeldt in the Nyagawa affair, because they suspected that the Germans gave financial support to Nyagawa.⁴⁹⁰ New Swedish missionaries came into the country to take over the position left behind by the Germans, and the hope of an African-controlled church faded away quickly. It is the view of the author that the problem of leadership in 1940 had to do with failure in the Berlin Mission training.

6.1.5 Nyagawa: The pastor of Uhehe

After his demotion as superintendent, Nyagawa was transferred to the Pommern parish from 1941 to 1950. He served as a pastor in the Udzungwa area, being the first indigenous pastor to serve among the Hehe. It was not easy in the beginning for Nyagawa to be accepted by the Hehe just like other Bena Christians who had accompanied the early missionaries. In addition, having had their own history of war with the Germans, the Hehe were not disposed to accept a church with German affiliations, especially as World War II was going on. The missionaries and the Bena were viewed as responsible for the disruption of peace in the Uhehe area and that explained why the German missionaries had to be sent home by the British Government. One day Nyagawa in his mission work at Muhanga was almost beaten by the natives for the reason that there was war because of the missionaries who started the mission work, which now was carried on by the people from Ubena.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁹¹ Donald N.Kiwanga, *Kuingia na Kuenea kwa Ulutheri katika eneo la Pommern 1912-1989* Andiko la Cheti, Arusha: Makumira Chuo cha Kilutheri cha Theologia, (*The Coming and Spread of Lutheranism in Pommern area 1912-1989*, Thesis for a Certificate in Theology, Lutheran Theological College Makumira) 1992.

In the Southern Highlands of Tanganyika, missionaries had been regarded as government agents. There is a reference to Muhanga, one of the mission stations, near which a tax post had been established.

On 1 August 1900 news arrived that all adult males were to go to the district office in Iringa to work in lieu of tax. That stirred the Muhanga mountain to life. The last reserves of maize were pounded into meal for the journey. Sweet potatoes were uprooted and bound in bundles. Young and old were busy with preparations for the travel.... On the morning of 3 August everyone who could walk assembled before dawn in front of our chapel in Muhanga. A colorful scene: women with their husbands' provisions on their heads and children with their fathers' walking sticks or their indispensable rolls of tobacco in their hands.... On 31 August the people returned home gaily from Iringa....⁴⁹²

From such experiences, Pastor Nyagawa may have been seen as a representative of the missionaries who not only preached the Word of word of God but also acted as government agent.

Nyagawa had a remarkable quality of moral and spiritual discipline, which he also instilled in the lives of the Christians in his church. He was strongly influenced by the German missionaries. He had a strong missionary heart and a zeal for evangelism. Nyagawa initiated missionary work independently from European supervision. As a result, he opened many mission stations, which later grew into congregations. In each mission station he recruited *walimu* (teachers). To some degree, Nyagawa was able to detach himself from the African culture and managed to have the outlook of the German missionaries. Nyagawa reflected the typical colonial attitudes or practices of the missionaries and was strict in enforcing church discipline on the members of the church. On one occasion in Udzungwa, he closed the church with thorns because people came late to the service. People had

high respect for him and he was known for his sternness in giving orders and observing church discipline.⁴⁹³ This might have been the secret of his success in mission work.

During this time of the war, Nyagawa was at the forefront, encouraging Christians to work towards self-reliance in the proclamation and spreading of the Gospel. Likewise, teachers and evangelists were asked to exercise patience. They were urged to serve the church on a voluntary basis, without expecting payment, for there was no money. Nyagawa himself became interested in farming because his salary of thirty shillings per month could not meet the needs of school fees and dowries for his children who were growing up. Through farming he managed to buy nine oxen and two ploughs, and established a farm, for he did not want his family to be looked down upon.⁴⁹⁴

A new crisis developed in the church in 1947. The Swedish missionaries developed some insecurity and became uncertain as to whether the African pastors were satisfied to work with them or longed for the return of the German missionaries. The African leaders had been used to working with the German missionaries rather than the new Swedish missionaries, who had their own style of administration. Therefore, in 1947, a meeting of pastors and missionaries was convened at Ilembula. The African pastors were asked whether they wanted the German missionaries or not. Each pastor was given a piece of paper to write "no" or "yes" in response to the question. All except four wanted the German missionaries to return and work hand in hand with SEM. This resulted in great anger among the Swedish missionaries generally and the women missionaries threw their clothes, which they were sewing, in

⁴⁹² Report by Neuberger, Case 1900, Tanzania National Archives G 9/11/73 Dar es Salaam.

⁴⁹³ Interview with Joctan S. Makongwa, 22nd December 2000, Dar es Salaam.

⁴⁹⁴ Sakafu in Iliffe, *Modern Tanzanians*, p. 203.

anger. News reached the superintendent who, in turn, called another meeting at Kidugala to express his disappointment.⁴⁹⁵

The reaction of the African pastors at the meeting revealed that they favoured being under the German missionaries, who had been the pioneers of mission work. The SEM leaders felt that the pastors did not appreciate their work. Nyagawa responded that, before God, all were brothers and sisters. So there was no reason why the Germans should not come back to work together with the SEM.⁴⁹⁶ Following this challenge, most of the SEM missionaries were not friendly to Nyagawa. Nyagawa's bravery and self-confidence, they felt, had to be the result of his experiences with the Germans in the army and with the German missionaries. Nyagawa used these facts as a tool to defend his rights and resist domination.

In order to keep a close eye on him, Nyagawa was transferred to Ilula at the end of 1948, where he worked under a Swedish missionary. They were never on good terms, because of prejudice. At Ilula, he managed to work closely with the teachers in the various congregations and is remembered for his hard work in mission. He encouraged all teachers to have farms for their congregations to grow crops, which would enable the church to be self-reliant. He introduced the system of farming with ploughs in the area. He was very good at visiting people in their homes and managed to make friends who later joined the church.⁴⁹⁷

At Ilula Nyagawa managed to acquire land. He borrowed capital from the local chief and invested it in agriculture. He managed to get a good harvest that enabled him to pay back the debt and, with the remainder,

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 204.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 205.

⁴⁹⁷ Interview with Mathayo Lubawa on 15 January 2000, Iringa.

he bought a lorry. Buying a property was sometimes used as a safety catch in times of problems.⁴⁹⁸ Then, he secured a trading license from the government, a move that was opposed by the Swedish missionary at Ilula. This increased the enmity that existed between the two. Nyagawa's case of having a trade license was discussed in a meeting and it was decided that churches or congregations and church workers were not allowed to run businesses. So he was asked to sell the lorry, but he refused. The decision was meant to suppress Nyagawa, so he went on with his business. From Nyagawa's point of view owning a lorry and doing business was his right as he wanted to be self-reliant. In 1954, there was a synod meeting at Pommern and the delegates were stranded for lack of a vehicle. Although Nyagawa offered his lorry to transport the delegates, the missionaries refused the offer and instead hired another lorry, but the missionaries traveled with their cars. They refused Nyagawa's offer to avoid him being influential on his colleagues.⁴⁹⁹

6.1.6 Nyagawa's excommunication

Pastor Nyagawa was excommunicated in January 1957. While at Ihemi parish, his lorry was involved in an accident and, after the repairs, Nyagawa could not pay the costs. Nyagawa wrote to all Christians explaining his debt, asking them for help if they wished. When the missionary who stayed at Pommern heard about the debt, he reported the matter to the superintendent.⁵⁰⁰ At Ihemi it was also discovered that the clerk of the church had bought a bag of cement to repair a guest room in the pastor's house, which was used by the missionaries.

⁴⁹⁸ A similar story on buying a property happened to Julius Mbele one of the four Catholic clergy in South Africa, who had bought a farm near Ixopo but was asked by Bishop Fletcher to sell it, but refused. See George Mukuka, *The Establishment of the black Catholic Clergy in South Africa 1887-1957* (PhD Thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 2000), p. 187.

⁴⁹⁹ Interview with Emmanuel Mwachan'ga, 12 November 2000, Iringa.

⁵⁰⁰ Sakafu in Iliffe, *Modern Tanzanians* p. 205.

This was taken as a misuse of funds of the church. The superintendent convened a meeting of missionaries and pastors to discuss the Nyagawa issue. Nyagawa was accused of three things: firstly of having a debt; secondly, of misusing the church's funds; and thirdly of asking for help from the Christians. The meeting demoted him to an evangelist. Nyagawa responded that he would rather remain an ordinary Christian because of the ill-treatment he received. This reaction made the superintendent angry and he declared immediately that Nyagawa was excommunicated.⁵⁰¹ On the same day, they made Nyagawa vacate the church's house. Nyagawa was sheltered by a non-Christian.

The public condemned this act and those who excommunicated him were criticized, both within the country and abroad. Nyagawa had done so much for the church, and none of the things that they accused him of was serious enough to deserve such humiliation. This was an act of repression after Nyagawa had contested and contradicted the decision. Nyagawa refused to sell the lorry until later. Nyagawa was under the wrath of his superiors just like what happened to Julius Mbhele one of the four black Catholic clergy in South Africa after refusing to sell his farm near Ixopo. Mbhele was suspended from saying the mass.⁵⁰² However, Nyagawa had supporters, both in the church and abroad. Nyagawa decided to go to Mlowa area, where he opened a farm. While at Mlowa, Nyagawa never stopped preaching despite being excommunicated. He opened a number of congregations and built a stone church at Nyamahana.⁵⁰³

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² George Mukuka, *The Establishment of the Black Clergy in South Africa from 1887-1957* (PhD Thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 2000), p. 187-214.

⁵⁰³ Interview with Oswald Ndelwa, 24 September 2000, Pietermaritzburg.

As a result of the on-going criticism within the church, the superintendent and a bible school teacher paid a visit to Nyagawa's farm and asked him to return to his work. The decision to reinstate him was discussed at the synod meeting in 1958. They first reinstated him as a full member of the Lutheran church, then, he worked as an evangelist, before being restored as a pastor in 1962. He was transferred to Pommern again.⁵⁰⁴

The Swedish missionaries never got tired of nagging him. In 1962, some missionaries suspected that he spent more time on his farm than serving the church. Nyagawa explained the matter to the superintendent: that it was necessary for him to maintain his farm and it did not harm his service or his family's Christian position. A commission was appointed to probe into the matter, but it showed that the Christians had nothing against the pastor. Nyagawa was very shrewd in defending his position, because he did not want to jeopardise his family. He made sure that his wife managed the farm while he served the church. Later on, he asked the superintendent to be given an assignment near his farm, a request which was granted.⁵⁰⁵

In 1964 he was transferred to Tungamalenga, leaving his family at the farm where he opened a new parish. Later, he was transferred to Malangali and, then, to Ismani. His retirement on pension took place on 15 December 1968, due to old age. Nyagawa's retirement did not stop him from preaching. He became a visiting pastor to many parishes, sometimes spending weeks moving from one village to another proclaiming the Gospel. People were moved by his message and liked to hear him. His special emphasis was on repentance from sin and strong faith in Jesus Christ.⁵⁰⁶ Mzee Marko Maluli who had

⁵⁰⁴ Sakafu in Iliffe, *Modern Tanzanians*, p. 205.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.* p. 207.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.* p. 208.

served as a congregation youth director commented that youths from Iringa were discouraged from joining the ministry because of the way Nyagawa was mistreated by the Swedish missionaries.⁵⁰⁷

Nyagawa loved to sing. He had a vibrant, strong voice. His favorite tunes were the great hymns of German Lutheranism, translated into the Kibena language. Battle hymns and hymns of passion were the ones he most enjoyed. Nyagawa died in 1970. He visited Dar es Salaam shortly before his death, in the hope of a cure, but it was too late. His funeral was an occasion of mourning.⁵⁰⁸ He had travelled and preached in every part of Uheheland for more than fifty years. When he was young the time was not yet ripe for the church to be under indigenous leadership, which he had looked forward to as early as 1939. But he lived to see the vision come to reality at last.

One can conclude that Nyagawa died as an exemplary leader. He grew up in a humble home and had an ordinary but moving history. He had moments of doubt, like the time when he left the ministry to seek greener pastures. But he was a person of principles, who suffered domination and humiliation at the hands of the Swedish missionaries, but was strong in faith and stood firm. He never left to start his own church and this is not due to his minimal theological education, but to his commitment. He played an important and formidable role with regard to the expansion of Lutheran work among the Hehe in Iringa, Tanzania.

6.2 Lutangilo Mdegela: The Singing Pastor

The boy Sambilole, who was to become Pastor Lutangilo Mdegela, was born in 1910 in a village called Kafumbe in the present Idete parish.

⁵⁰⁷ Interview with Marko Maluli 3 January 2000, Iringa.

⁵⁰⁸ Interview with Marko Maluli, 3 January 2000, Iringa.

He was the last of four children. His father was a soldier and was killed during World War I. Their mother died when the children were still at their young age.⁵⁰⁹ As a young man, he was one of the first people to join a bush school which gave both catechetical instruction and the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic. He was educated from 1926-1928 and, during that time, he was also introduced to Christian instruction and encountered the Good News of Jesus Christ. He married Tulasela Kadinda in 1933. Following the Christian instruction, on 5 December 1939 at Fikano village, Sambilole was baptised by Pastor Hermann Neuberg and his name was changed to Lutangilo, which meant to be helped.⁵¹⁰

After baptism in 1939, Lutangilo Mdegela was qualified to spread the word of God to his fellow villagers. He converted to Christianity out of a desire for education. The Bena evangelists who had answered some questions, which had bothered him impressed him. These included the problems of creation and the ultimate end of man. The new religion seemed to promise peace and freedom in the place of fear. Also, it promised Mdegela life after death.⁵¹¹ Mdegela was convinced by the evangelists' teachings and was determined to pass them on to others. This was also the purpose which the missionaries had in mind. They were fond of quoting the passage from Mathew's Gospel: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you". This was the commission given to Lutangilo and his companions: they were to teach their fellow Africans in the villages, by word and deed, the things, which they had themselves learned at the mission. Meanwhile, the Berlin and Swedish

⁵⁰⁹ Interview with Hamerton Mdegela, 22nd February 2001, Iringa

⁵¹⁰ O.A. Kasumba, in Personal File of Lutangilo Mdegela, 4-2-1978, at Iringa diocese headquarters (typed report).

⁵¹¹ Interview with Judith Mwitula, 20 January 2001, Iringa.

missionaries most of the time remained at the major mission stations, waiting to get reports on the progress of evangelism carried out by the indigenous teachers.⁵¹² At the mission station Mdegela was encouraged to abandon certain customs, which had been practised by his people for many years. Some of these were the veneration of trees and mountains, sacrifice to the *mizimu* (spirits), and local dances, which the missionaries regarded as ungodly. They only allowed the Bena dance that had been introduced by the Bena Christians because any other Hehe dance was regarded unchristian.⁵¹³ In so doing, they imposed a different and new tradition on the Hehe community. This disregard for local customs, created some opposition to the acceptance of Christianity in many areas in Uhehe.

Mdegela and other converts were alerted to the job ahead of them. It required loyalty, obedience, and dedication to God. It was not going to be an easy task; it demanded abandonment, not only of certain customs and beliefs but also at times of one's family. They were being detached from their usual African customs and attached to European missionaries who would introduce to them new ways of life as a Christian. It was under these solemn conditions that Mdegela was posted to Kilanzi village as a teacher. He taught reading, writing, and Christian instruction.

After three years he was promoted to *mwaliimu wa jimbo* (in-charge of other teachers in the sub-district) at Lukani, a function he fulfilled until 1949, when he was selected to pursue theological training at Lwandai. Later he was transferred to Makumira. He was ordained in 1953 at Ilula by Pastor Martin Nordfeldt, who was the superintendent of the Lutheran church in the Southern Highlands of Tanganyika.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹² Interview with Judith Mwitula, 20 January 2001, Iringa.

⁵¹³ Interview with Judith Mwitula, 20 January 2001, Iringa.

⁵¹⁴ Personal File of Lutangilo Mdegela at Iringa Diocese headquartes, Iringa.

6.2.1 His service as a pastor

After his ordination, Mdegela's first station was the Idete parish. Pastor Yohana Nyagawa, who served at the Pommern mission station, officially installed him to start his pastoral duties in 1953. The parish had ten congregations: Ulavega, Idunda, Masisiwe, Kipanga, Kiwalamo, Itonya, Itimbo, Idegenda, Ilutila and Idete.⁵¹⁵ Pastor Mdegela organised the parish into four *majimbo* (sub-districts) because most of the congregations were far apart and there was no other means of transport except walking. The plan facilitated the delivery of pastoral services because in each *jimbo* (sub-district) three or four congregations came together for Sunday services.

Among other things, Mdegela opened special programmes to teach Christians who would lead new congregations, which had no leaders. He taught them reading, writing and Christian instruction. He also started Women's groups, and parish farms to grow maize, and beans and plant trees. He promoted bush schools, which Pastor Nyagawa had opened, and began a system of church elders in each congregation. Some of the congregation leaders and church elders who assisted him were Tulanukila Mgoba, Zakaria Mwaduma, Hebel Chalale, Hosea Magelanga, Atwanuche Magelanga and Zakaria Kivelege. In each congregation there was a teacher, who taught a bush school. At Idete congregation, Levi Ngahatilwa, in cooperation with Amian Mdegela, started a bush school.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹⁵ Parish files at Idete 1952, Iringa.

⁵¹⁶ A report of the Head teacher of Idete Primary School 1958 at Idete Congregation, Iringa.

Through the educational programme, many people joined the church and were baptised. Mdegela served the Idete congregation until 1959, when he was transferred to Ilula. At the time of his service, many people were baptised and he officiated at their marriages. Students in the confirmation classes increased to 1,100 per year and their instruction was conducted for one year. Records show that a total number of 280 marriages took place between 1952-1959 and between 1967-1972, 453 marriages were held.⁵¹⁷

Pastor Mdegela was devoted to the service of God and he was a committed Christian. He always wanted to preach about Jesus Christ. In most cases, when he wrote letters, he liked to quote relevant verses from the Bible, even when the letters were official. In one of his letters, which he wrote to the General Secretary of the Southern Synod on 31 December 1972 requesting to retire he said:

Nilianza kazi 1939, nilifanya kazi kama mwalimu wa Kijiji miaka 7; kama mwalimu wa Jimbo miaka 8; na kama nitakubaliwa kustaafu mwishoni mwa 1973 nitakuwa nimefanya kazi ya Uchungaji miaka 21, jumla ni miaka 36. Katika miaka hii, nimepanda milima, na Yesu alinitumia kama chombo chake akiingia Yerusalemu ya IDETE; Matt. 21:1-9.

I started working in 1939, as a congregation teacher for 7 years, as a district teacher for 8 years; and if I am allowed to retire at the end of 1973, I will have served as a pastor for 21 years, bringing a total of 36 years of hard work in the service of the church. In all these years, I have climbed mountains, and Jesus has used me as His vessel as he entered Jerusalem of IDETE. Matt. 21:1-9. (*translation mine and italics mine*)⁵¹⁸

At the end of 1973, the Executive Council of the Southern Synod requested Pastor Mdegela to continue serving the church until 1974 because there was a shortage of pastors. Pastor Mdegela responded and said.

⁵¹⁷ Parish File at Idete located at Pommern District Office, Iringa.

⁵¹⁸ Personal File of Lutangilo Mdegela at Iringa Diocese headquarters, Iringa.

Bora mmeifahamu shida yangu inayonisumbua kila mwaka. Nimeomba nipate nafuu ugonjwa wangu nikashindwa 2Kor. 12:7-9. Tena ukweli, siku zangu za mwisho hizi natamani sana kuwahubiria mataifa kwa sababu ni wajibu wetu mkuu kwa amri ya Matt. 28: 18-20 kuihubiri Injili kwa kila kiumbe lakini nashindwa kwa ajili ya udahifu wangu. Mniombe nimalize mwaka wangu wa mwisho. Wenu Mzee L. Mdegela.

It is good that you have been informed of my problem that has troubled me each year. I have prayed so that I can get better from my illness, but in vain (2Cor.12:7-9). Moreover in truth, in my last days I wish to preach to the non Christians because it is our big obligation according to the commission of Matt. 28: 28-20 to preach the Gospel to every person but I fail because of my illness. Pray for me so that I can finish my last year. Yours, Elder L. Mdegela.⁵¹⁹ (*translation mine*)

For Mdegela, to be used by God was to serve Him. He was ready to be used by God as his instrument. He was ready to answer the call and humbly serve. He took seriously the commission of God. He was a dedicated messenger of God. We find in Mdegela an endearing balance of tenderness and toughness. He possessed warmth of spirit that was very sensitive to people's needs; his commitment to the service of God was marked by his willingness to lay himself bare in total honesty and tirelessly serve the Church.

The high regard in which the Hehe held Mdegela was not simply because of his exemplary spiritual life, eloquence in speech and his illustrative sermons but also because he was talented in leading the congregation in singing. He loved to sing. Tumwiwukage Maginga has this to say about pastor Mdegela:

When he visited Image, his station was at Kidewa congregation because it was the oldest Swedish station. He usually came on Thursday or Friday and stayed in my house. He walked all the way from Ilula to Image carrying his bag. In the evening many people came here and he taught us songs, and he was very talented. He could sing even the highest note. He spent the day visiting people in their homes and on Sunday many people were baptised and received the Holy Communion. *Ndaala* (Indeed),

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

*with a great smile on her face, Mdegela was a very charming pastor and a person of God.*⁵²⁰

Pastor Mdegela retired in 1975 and died in 1978 due to stomach problems, which Edward Mnyawami noted was a common disease, which most of the first Hehe pastors were affected by. The pastors worked under hard conditions because they travelled on foot for long distances. They stayed for long hours without eating, which resulted in a weakening of their bodies and the development of stomach problems.⁵²¹

Mdegela was one of the pastors who were trained during the colonial period but, unlike Nyagawa, he worked under the Swedish missionaries and later under the Bena leadership. Due to his close association with the missionaries, he imitated European's style of speaking. However, he dedicated himself to the ideals of his profession, though under extremely difficult working conditions.

6. 3 Lazaro Myinga: The Spiritual Father

Pastor Lazaro Myinga was born to a peasant family in 1924 in Balali congregation, which is currently under preparation towards parish status. His parents, like other Africans, were followers of African Traditional Religion. They worshipped their God, *Nguluvi*, through their ancestors. Graham Harvey has explained that for an African, religion is part of culture, and the worship practices create a special pattern of life in relation to God. In other words, religion is part and parcel of life in African culture and tradition.⁵²²

⁵²⁰ Interview with Tumwiwukage Maginga, 18th January 2001, Iringa.

⁵²¹ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 4 January 2000, Iringa.

⁵²² *Graham Harvey: Indigenous Religions: A Companion* (ed.), (London and New York: Cassell, 1975), p. 9.

The Hehe are no different from this: The worship practice of the Hehe is seen especially in sacrificial ceremonies and in prayers. The Hehe have special worship places. These worship places are for special clans in the Hehe tribe.⁵²³ These worship places are respected as special areas where people can forward their needs and believe that God hears them.

Their worship services usually take place when special things happen in their lives, such as drought, floods, pestilence, death and other calamities. They pray God to save them from such evils and, also, thank him for all the good things they have received. God is revealed to them through creation and through human beings. What they worship is part of God's creation and that is how they try to understand God.

Christianity was introduced to Balali village in 1943. Pastor Lazaro Myinga attended a bush school under a Bena teacher from Njombe, Kidugala, called Yerima Mlagala who, later, after theological education, was ordained. Myinga was always accompanied by youths whenever he went to church. His parents were not happy to see their son go to church. They always asked him to remain at home and take care of the cattle. The parents, also, wanted their sons to get married early, instead of joining the church. They knew that once he became a Christian, he would not be able to have more than one wife. Myinga's parents wanted him to follow their tradition of getting married to more than one wife.⁵²⁴

⁵²³ Bryson Mbogo, *Mafundisho ya Ukristo na mawazo ya Wahehe juu ya Mungu* Andiko C IV (*The Teaching of Christianity and the Hehe thought on God*, Certificate Thesis (Lutheran Theological College Makumira 1993), p. 11.

⁵²⁴ Patson Lubava, *Huduma ya Mchungaji Lazaro Myinga (The Service of Pastor Lazaro Myinga*, Certificate Thesis Lutheran Theological College, Makumira) Andiko C IV 1996 (Chuo cha Kilutheri cha Theologia Makumira), p. 6.

The Hehe believed that for any person who had a sound intellect, the most important thing was to find a fiancé and get married.⁵²⁵ It was the parents' expectation that their children would follow their tradition and faith. However, Myinga was not interested in the faith of his parents. He, instead, continued to attend his school and catechism classes.⁵²⁶

6.3.1 His education

Lazaro Myinga started the bush school at Balali village in 1943 and completed it in 1945 at Balali village. In the Ilula area, the Swedish Evangelical Mission Society (SEM), through its missionaries, started bush schools. Pastor Martin Nordfeldt led these missionaries. Evangelisation was the main goal of starting these schools. The school day started with morning devotions. The teachers were responsible for reading the Word of God and leading the prayers. The school session ended with prayers. The school and its environment made people who attended convert to Christianity because they were attracted by the progress of those who were attending schools.⁵²⁷

In an effort to expand the mission field, Pastor Martin Nordfeldt decided to open more bush schools in the area. In each station there was a *mwaliimu* (teacher) who was given the responsibility to preach the gospel and to teach students reading, writing and Christian instruction. In 1940 Pastor Nordfeldt opened a mission station with a bush school at Kidewa. Tulawona Mtulo, a Bena *mwaliimu* (teacher)

⁵²⁵ Fulgens F. A. Malangalila, *Mwamuyinga Mtawala wa Wahehe (Mwamuyinga the Ruler of the Hehe)* (Peramiho: Benedictine Publication Ndanda, 1987), 19.

⁵²⁶ Patson, p. 6.

⁵²⁷ Patrick Kikoti, *Kuingia na Kuenea kwa Ukristo katika eneo la Ilula (The Coming and Spread of Christianity in Ilula area)*, Certificate Thesis Lutheran Theological College Makumira) Andiko C IV (Chuo cha Kilutheri cha Theologia Makumira, 1992) p. 8

from the Ilembula mission was assigned to Kidewa village to preach the Word of God and to teach students. In 1943, three years later, the Balali bush school was opened, and another Bena (*mwalimu*) Yeremia Mlagala taught and preached the gospel there. It was at the feet of evangelist Yeremia Mlagala that Lazaro Myinga received his Christian instruction and education.⁵²⁸

After two years of school, Lazaro Myinga was able to read and write. After attaining this level of education, he was baptised in 1945 and in 1946 he joined Ilembula Bible School for evangelistic training from 1946-1947 and graduated as a trained evangelist.⁵²⁹

6.3.2 From a cattle herder to a minister

It is said that when Myinga was asked about his call, he opened Mathew 28: 19-20. He said that it was Jesus who called him and it was God's command as is found in Mathew. He felt that the words in Mathew spoke directly to him and he was obliged to preach the word of God in accordance to the commission. For Myinga, the opportunity to join Kidugala Bible School and, later, Makumira Lutheran Theological College was God's plan for him. After completing his course at Ilembula Bible School in 1948, Myinga married Juliana Sendale. Pastor Yohana Nyagawa officiated at their wedding at Ilula parish.

6.3.3 Myinga as an evangelist

Myinga's first assignment after his course as an evangelist was at the Kidewa congregation. As an evangelist he proclaimed the Gospel and assisted Joel Mhoka, a Bena teacher, to teach at the bush school. It was not easy to get people to join the church because they were active

⁵²⁸ Patrick Kikoti, *Kuingia na Kuenea Ukristo Ilula*, p. 16.

⁵²⁹ Patson, *Huduma ya Lazaro Myinga*, p. 8.

followers of the African Traditional Religion. As a result, Christianity was not accepted easily in this area.⁵³⁰

It was difficult for people to accept changes in their faith, because they viewed Christianity as something new and alien. They had great belief in witchcraft and there was a great difference between Christianity and their traditional beliefs. Those who embraced Christianity encountered resistance from their relatives. Parents never allowed their children to attend baptism and confirmation classes. There were cases where parents would even go into the church and scold their children and tell them to go home. They were expected to inherit their parent's beliefs and shepherd herds of cattle for the whole day. The Hehe people did not accept Christianity easily because they saw it as a religion of the Bena, who came from Njombe to preach the Word of God.⁵³¹ In addition, there was resistance to the missionary's presentation of Christianity, which portrayed western civilisation.

Due to this, Myinga was forbidden to preach the Word of God. However, he did not lose heart and gradually people accepted him, with the help of Mathayo Lubawa who was the first Christian convert in the area. Myinga was hosted in the house of Mathayo Lubawa, as he served as an evangelist in the Kidewa congregation.⁵³²

As he went on evangelistic mission, he was accompanied by youths. He visited people in their homes and preached the Word of God. As he visited their homes he prayed for the sick. The youths were helpful because they received the Word through the school and by going to church. The youths were asked to beat the drums as they gathered for evangelism with the evangelist. The Kidewa congregation had other

⁵³⁰ Interview with Elia Mbangwa, 21 August 2000, Iringa.

⁵³¹ Interview with Twidike Kitamogwa, 20 August 2000, Iringa.

⁵³² Interview with Elia Mbangwa, 21 August 2000, Iringa.

out-stations to evangelise such as Ngela, Fita, Kilala, Kilumbwa and Madibila. These stations were an average distance of two to three kilometres from Myinga's workstation.⁵³³

Key issues, which Myinga covered, were the right teaching of the Word of God, and living faith in Jesus Christ. He emphasised believing in the triune God, who revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. In his preaching he asked people to have faith in Jesus Christ and do away with their former faiths. In spite of the failure to relate the Gospel positively to African culture, Christianity was accepted by some African converts, who made their own interpretations of what they saw, read and heard in the process of missionary activity. The process of defining and articulating this positive African response to Christianity had already begun, and some of the emerging themes of African Christian theological reflection will be elaborated on the following chapter.

Apart from teaching and preaching, Myinga established congregation farms on which they grew food crops and cash crops. He started sugar cane gardens, which still operate today in the Kisata valley. In one of his sermons in the church he once said that it was important for every Christian to have a house, a farm and clothes.⁵³⁴ It is true that people with food problems, no clothes and without shelter may find that their faith in Christ is shaky. The Christian life deals with the whole person, with both physical and spiritual welfare.

Myinga served the Kidewa congregation for two years only, from 1948 to 1949. He was, then, transferred to his home congregation, Balali, where he served from 1950 to 1954. After serving for six years as an evangelist, he was elected to pursue theological training at the

⁵³³ Interview with Twidike Kitamogwa, 20 August 2000, Iringa.

⁵³⁴ Interview with Twidike Kitamogwa, 20 August 2000, Iringa.

Makumira Lutheran Theological College, something which he did not easily accept. He had the opinion that he did not deserve it and wished another person could take his place.⁵³⁵ In most cases, it is not easy for a person to know what one is capable of until one is ready to face the challenge. This became evident in the case of Myinga, because as we shall see later, he became a very instrumental person in the life of the church in the Iringa Diocese. In 1955 Myinga joined Makumira College for theological training, graduated and was ordained in 1957.

6.3.4 Myinga: A spiritual father

Myinga is one of those pastors who were transferred from time to time. Soon after his ordination, he was assigned to serve at Ilula parish (1958-1959). He served only for a year before he was transferred to Idete (1960-1961) where he served for another year. Ilula parish had three congregations, namely, Ilula, Image and Mbuyuni. This parish had a big geographical area and had been served by a missionary from Sweden, called Ahden, before he left in 1955. The parish remained without a pastor for five years.⁵³⁶

During his stay at Ilula, Myinga taught and offered pastoral services. He advised his parishioners and congregation leaders to plant trees for timber and firewood, in order to boost the economy of the parish in later years. He, also, advised them to plant fruit trees to enable them to get fruit and money for their families. Members of the parish were urged to grow enough food crops. He aimed at raising the economy of individual members of the church, as well as the economy of the parish.⁵³⁷

⁵³⁵ Patson, *Huduma ya Lazaro Myyinga*, p. 15.

⁵³⁶ Interview with Mama Nguvila Mkocha, 12 August 2001, Iringa.

⁵³⁷ Interview with Mama Nguvila Mkocha 12 August 2001, Iringa.

Myinga developed a habit of meeting with the teachers of the congregations, whereby he received development reports and reports on the problems of every congregation. He encouraged the building of permanent church buildings and houses for the evangelists. Since the parish was big, it became necessary to have leaders who could assist him to deliver services in the area. This was a problem because during his time a number of congregations were without teachers. He solved the problem by asking some church elders to lead the congregation.⁵³⁸

Later on he divided the parish into sub-districts (*majimbo*) and in each sub-district there was a *mwaliimu wa jimbo* (head of other teachers in the sub-district). This plan helped the pastor to deliver his pastoral services more effectively and easily. The *walimu wa majimbo* assisted the pastor in solving the problems of the parish from time to time and to evaluate the development of the parish. Lazaro Myinga, besides other pastoral services, was famous for pastoral care, especially in handling people's personal spiritual problems. Often, Myinga was heard:

Spiritual care is a very sensitive and important part in the service of a pastor, especially in dealing with issues where people have no peace in their hearts. People's confessions, whether secret or public, need to be handled with great wisdom and care.⁵³⁹

In the Iringa diocese, Myinga was commonly known as a spiritual pastor and father because he always liked people to reconcile with each other and live in peace. In a number of executive meetings at the parish level, district level and diocese level, Myinga was always an advocate of peace and never wanted members to end up in conflict. Members of the executive meetings gave him special respect and his

⁵³⁸ Interview with Mama Nguvula Mkocho, 12 August 2001, Iringa.

⁵³⁹ Interview with Miriam Chaula, 15 August 2001, Iringa.

presence was felt. Most of the people commented that it seemed the subject of pastoral care and counselling found a special place in his heart because he liked to live in harmony with all people, and was moved to visit and console the sick and the bereaved.⁵⁴⁰

Myinga put special emphasis on the Holy Communion when he visited his parishioners for spiritual nurture. He urged his members to give special respect to the sacraments in accordance with the traditions of the Lutheran church. He insisted that a person with spiritual problems had to be helped in a special way and that a good counsellor needed to take care of all the secrets of his people and, in so doing, would be able to help many people and invite people to true repentance.⁵⁴¹

After serving the Ilula parish for two years, he was transferred to the Idete parish. This is a parish which is fifty kilometers east of Iringa town, situated along the Udzungwa Mountains. Idete became a parish in 1952 under the leadership of Pastor Lutangilo Mdegela. Myinga took over from Mdegela, who was transferred to Ilula. Myinga divided the parish into subdistricts, as he had done in Ilula, and in each subdistrict he put a *mwalimu wa jimbo*. He worked closely with a team of *walimu wa majimbo*, such as Andrea Mwaduma, Isaya Kivelege and Samwel Makongwa. He, also, strengthened the bush school and encouraged Christians to grow food crops and cash crops.⁵⁴²

As a result of the District Executive meeting that took place in Idete, Myinga was transferred to Masisiwe, which was one of the parishes of Idete, to open a new parish. By then Masisiwe had only three congregations: Masisiwe, Kipanga and Kisutumbi. Since the parish was new, Myinga had to plan how to promote the wellbeing of the new

⁵⁴⁰ Interview with Esther Chusi, 10 August 2001, Iringa.

⁵⁴¹ Patson, *Huduma ya Lazaro Myinga*, p. 19.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

parish and its members. He encouraged the parishioners to grow cash crops to improve their economy. He emphasised the planting of trees for timber and firewood because Masisiwe climate is suitable for pine and other timber species. However, Myinga never stayed long before he was transferred to Malangali, where he served only for one year before being sent back to Ilula, where he served for three years.⁵⁴³

In 1971, he was transferred to the Ihemi parish, where he served until 1984. Ihemi was a big parish with the following congregations: Ihemi, Ifunda, Kitasengwa, Muwimbi, Utulo, Masimike, Ilandutwa, Lupembelwasenga, Tanangozi, Sadani, Luhu, Isupilo, Masumbu, Itengulinyi, Gangidung'u, Rungemba and Ibumila. Due to the size of the parish and for good delivery of pastoral services, it was divided into two subdistricts: Ihemi, led by Israel Mbembe; and Mibikimitali, under the leadership of L. Simangwa.⁵⁴⁴

While at Ihemi, Myinga spent a lot of his time teaching his parishioners the disadvantages of drinking alcohol, since Ihemi was famous for a local brew called *ulanzi*. He stressed that alcohol was not food but just a drink that refreshed people and that if used excessively, had negative effects. He warned that users of alcohol were prone to financial problems and even failed to be responsible parents. Besides, they had the risk of getting into immoral behaviour. In a parish executive meeting of 2 June 1979, Myinga challenged the evangelists and the church elders to refrain from alcohol. Myinga's approach to solving the problem of alcoholism in his parish revealed his ability in pastoral care and counselling. He was blessed with great wisdom and his approach helped a lot of people to change their way of life.⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴³ Ibid. , p. 21.

⁵⁴⁴ Interview with Juliana Myinga, 23 November 2000, Iringa.

⁵⁴⁵ Interview with Juliana Myinga, 23 November 2000, Iringa.

After serving for twenty-six years as a pastor, Myinga wrote a letter of retirement. But due to the shortage of pastors in the diocese, the Executive Council of the diocese requested him to extend his service for two more years. After serving for two years, from 1987 to 1989 the General Secretary of the diocese wrote him a letter about retirement. However, although he had retired, he was asked to assist in the administration of the sacrament and be one of the advisors in the diocese.⁵⁴⁶ Throughout these years of service, it would be no exaggeration to say that Pastor Lazaro Myinga made a great contribution to the development of the Iringa diocese. He never missed important meetings at the parish, district and diocese levels. This is because he took church work very seriously and never wanted issues to be hurriedly discussed. He played his role as an advisor with great wisdom, especially in instances where the meetings seemed difficult. His advisory and spiritual role was well felt during the preparation of Iringa district to become a diocese.

Pastor Lazaro Myinga was the fourth indigenous pastor in Iringa diocese. He was instrumental in the development of the diocese. He did splendid work in evangelising his own people and his life was an inspiration to many people. Oswald Ndelwa described him as "a simple, earnest, modest, prayerful and, very polite"⁵⁴⁷. His daughter, Janeth Maginga in 2001, described her father as a humble man (*ee mulele*) who did not put himself above the people he worked with; he was like their servant. He loved people (*aliwapenda watu*) loved the Church (*alilipenda Kanisa*) and loved the work (*aliipenda kazi*).⁵⁴⁸

His wife, Juliana Myinga in 2000, described her husband as:

⁵⁴⁶ Letter of General Secretary to pastor Lazaro Myinga, 13/10/1989.

⁵⁴⁷ Interview with Oswald Ndelwa, 12 August 2001, Iringa.

⁵⁴⁸ Interview with Janeth Myinga, 12 August 2001, Iringa.

A very polite pastor who rarely spoke out his heart (*ee mkatufu*). Even when he was not happy with something, it took him a lot of time to speak or he would just remain silent. I think that is why we were always transferred from time to time from one place to another. We never stayed in one station for long at least we did stay at Ihemi. This was very hard for the family. Sometimes being too polite is not good⁵⁴⁹.

She, however, commended her late husband in that he served the church under extremely hard conditions. He had to travel long distances while making visits to the congregations in all the parishes, which he served as a pastor. However, she said that the worst experience was when he served in Idete because its terrain is mountainous.⁵⁵⁰ Even during his retirement period, Myinga made himself available to labour tirelessly in God's vineyard to bring the Gospel to his own people. Myinga died in 1997 at Ilula after suffering from stomach pains for about two months.

6.4 Nicholas Mwachusi – The man

In the midst of the flat plains of Kitapilimwa Nicholas Mwachusi was born in 1946 in the Ulongambi village. While still young, he looked after his father's herds of cattle. He joined the Ulongambi bush school in 1957, where he was introduced to reading, writing and Christian instruction. Most of the learning was by reciting. After six months of school he was baptised on 9 July 1957 by a Bena pastor, Naboth Chaula from Njombe. He completed his bush school education in 1960 and, due to his active involvement in the church he began to work as a *mwaliimu* (teacher) for Ulongambi and Mgela from 1960 to 1961.⁵⁵¹

He taught Sunday school, youth and catechumen classes and, as a leader of the congregation, he led morning and evening devotions and

⁵⁴⁹ Interview with Juliana Myinga, 10 August, 2000, Iringa.

⁵⁵⁰ Interview with Juliana Myinga, 10 August, 2000, Iringa.

⁵⁵¹ Nicholas Mwachusi Personal File in the Iringa diocese church archive.

preached on Sundays. He catechised women and children in the open air. In addition, his teaching responsibilities, frequent visits to families and preaching on Sundays and to people in their homes gave him a good reputation, which led him to join Kidugala Bible School from 1963-1964. Describing Mwachusi as a student at Kidugala his colleague Elia Mbangwa said, "Nicholas was the youngest in the class. He was a very charming person, liked jokes (*alikuwa na hali ya utundu utundu na ujanja ulio mzuri*), and was loved by his fellow students and even by his teachers. He had a good character and was a leader of one of the dormitories."⁵⁵²

After coming out of Kidugala Bible School as an evangelist, he served as a preacher and teacher in the Iringa Town parish. Later in 1966-1968 he was transferred to the nearby congregation which was part of the Iringa Town parish. During this time his desire to improve his education grew as time passed by. In 1969 he was promoted to a deacon and was ordained on 21 December 1969 at Pommern by the head of the Synod, Rev. Juda B. Kiwovele.

After his ordination he was transferred to Ifwagi in the Ubena area in 1970 and his basic salary was 120 Tanzanian shillings per month (equivalent to one Rand). In 1971 he served Pommern shortly before being transferred to Brandt in the Uwanji-Usangu district. In a confidential letter of 3 December 1971 the General Secretary of the Southern Synod urged Mwachusi to be diligent in his service, humble and meek, so that the parishioners could accept his service.⁵⁵³ The content of the letter raises some questions. Why did he ask Mwachusi to be "diligent... humble and meek"? It is important to note that Mwachusi was still a young man, and he was being given a big

⁵⁵² Interview with Elia Mbangwa, 14 December 2000, Iringa.

⁵⁵³ Confidential letter, General Secretary to Nicholas Mwachusi BB/79 of 3-12-1971.

responsibility as a leader of an old parish which most likely had members who had been Christians since the time of the early German missionaries, and which had been served by many pastors. Therefore, it was appropriate for the leadership to caution him before problems arose. There was a tendency in old parishes especially, which had been served by missionaries, not to accommodate changes or even to accept young pastors. However, it is possible, also, to speculate that since Mwachusi was a Hehe pastor who was not short of typical Hehe pride, the idea of being humble and meek as a minister was important in order to get some credibility amidst the Bena who had never had a Hehe pastor before. However, instead of sending him to Brandt, he was sent to Chimala a congregation mainly composed of the Sangu and Wanji people.

Since Mwachusi realized that his lack of English was a handicap and that he faced a problem in communication, especially when foreign people confronted him, he strove to improve his English proficiency. This is shown in his correspondence with the General Secretary, where he expressed his desire to improve his education by studying English and Kiswahili, and asked for financial assistance.⁵⁵⁴ Mwachusi "had a big hunger for education and struggled for it."⁵⁵⁵ Through his personal initiatives he struggled until he was able to communicate in English with little problem. In the struggle for education he managed to get a chance to travel to Great Britain and, on his return, his English proficiency had greatly improved.⁵⁵⁶ He liked to read widely, especially if one considers his limited education and he was a person to be greatly admired.

⁵⁵⁴ Mwachusi to General Secretary 17-3-1972 in the Personal File of Nicholas Mwachusi at Iringa diocese.

⁵⁵⁵ Interview with Prof. Joshua S. Madumulla, 17 August 2000, University of Dar es Salaam.

⁵⁵⁶ Interview with Prof. Joshua S. Madumulla 17 August 2000, University of Dar es Salaam.

As a person, he was very sociable and easily exchanged ideas with others. When one listened to him talking one noticed a hidden fountain of wisdom. He carefully picked his words, weighed them and uttered them. He was ready to seek advice from others, was also ready to learn from others, regardless of age difference. What was important to him was to get something that added to his knowledge.

6.4.1 Mwachusi: The leader

Professor Joshua Madumulla of the University of Dar es Salaam, who was a close friend of the late Mwachusi, had this to say, "He was gifted with an ability to lead others. Some people could say he was charismatic. He had his own ways of drawing people to himself through convincing arguments."⁵⁵⁷ Playing a role as a pastor, he administered the parish well by making sure that Christian teaching in the church was in accordance with the Lutheran faith and tradition. The parish was nurtured in a spiritual way and evangelism was given a high priority, which resulted in four new parishes (Ipogoro, Mlandege, Mkwawa and Pawaga) emerging from the Iringa Town parish. In each parish and congregation, he recruited strong leadership, both evangelists and church elders. He supervised the parishes by using the Word of God.

As a result of his ability to lead, he was given another responsibility. He was chosen as the Iringa district pastor in 1981. He was capable of chairing and leading meetings at both parish and district levels. He

⁵⁵⁷ Interview with Prof. Joshua S. Madumulla, 17 August 2000, University of Dar es Salaam.

cherished unity and harmony in the church and good relationships with other churches. He was known as a pastor of pastors.⁵⁵⁸

In the history of the Iringa diocese, he is the cornerstone. One cannot say that he fought single handedly, but his contribution was immense and visible, especially if one takes into consideration the historical time of events. The struggle for the Iringa diocese appeared during the time when strong personalities, such as Rev. Dr. Juda B. Kiwovele, were in the leadership.⁵⁵⁹ So, to confront such people it required equally strong counter forces. Mwachusi used to say that *Mhehe hapigwi mkuki mgongoni* (A Hehe is never stabbed by a spear in the back). The Hehe are warriors, and will fight up to the last breath without retreating.⁵⁶⁰ He put forward a very mature argument and held a very strong position on why Iringa had to have its own diocese. His argument presented a clear vision of what he fought for against the Bena.

The high regard in which Christians held Mwachusi was not simply due to his work as a pastor of the people. In the period of his service before his untimely death in 1999, Mwachusi worked steadily on a number of fronts, which built up his reputation among his fellow leaders and among the Hehe Christians. One of the spectacular and perhaps most important fronts was the pastoral front. He spent a lot of time travelling between the congregations of the various parishes, visiting them and chatting to them, as well as consoling them in times of sickness and death.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁸ Interview with Venance Chaula, 22 November 2000, Iringa.

⁵⁵⁹ Interview with Prof. Joshua S. Madumulla, 17 August 2000, University of Dar es Salaam.

⁵⁶⁰ Interview with Elia Mbangwa, 14 December 2000, Iringa.

⁵⁶¹ Interview with Venance Chaula, 2 November 2000, Iringa.

As a leader, he encouraged full participation of all people, from congregational level up to diocese level, on issues affecting the Church. Christians were comfortable to work with him as a team. He managed to have good working relationships with mission societies in the Church. He was an excellent bridge between the church and the Government. He had a high reputation as an advisor on education issues in the region and chaired the Board of Directors of two of the government secondary schools in the town of Iringa and a teacher's training college. He was a key person in settling conflicts in schools, both at regional and national levels. He did not want to improve his own education only but encouraged other people to study through special educational programmes such as Theological Education by Extension (TEE). He knew the importance of education in the leadership of the Church. He used to challenge the Iringa diocese pastors that if they did not improve the education, their influence was going to be within the boundaries of the Iringa diocese. He motivated and challenged other people to show and exercise their gifts and talents in the church. It was Mwachusi who recruited the present bishop of the diocese to come and work in Iringa. He was behind the first programme of the TEE in Iringa, something not known by many.⁵⁶² After serving in the diocese as a training officer of the Iringa diocese, Dorothy Mtae described Mwachusi as a very wise individual and a very organised person who wanted to follow procedures.⁵⁶³

Mwachusi had a reputation for being a hard-working individual. Besides his leadership duties, he managed to visit various places in the diocese. He laid a good foundation for the leadership of the diocese. He was the key person in the making of the constitution of the Iringa Diocese. Mwachusi was a good advocate of unity within the diocese

⁵⁶² Ibid. See also Gabriel Mgeyeka, *The Historical Development of TEE*, Masters Thesis.

⁵⁶³ Interview with Dorothy Mtae, 15 November 2000, Iringa.

and, when differences emerged between people that could lead to splitting, he was always strong to challenge such a move. In order to strengthen the diocese, he convinced experienced government workers to work with the diocese. In so doing he welcomed talents from outside the church to bring their leadership contribution to the young diocese.⁵⁶⁴

Mwachusi was a man of the people (*mtu wa watu*). He allowed the Gospel to be proclaimed everywhere. He emphasised spiritual growth to his parishioners. The growth of the church is a result of the solid foundation laid by him from the congregation level, to the parish level, to the district level, and up to the diocese level. Despite his low education, Mwachusi was talented in leadership. He knew how to lead and come up with strategies on how to administer the parishes. Mwachusi was a self-reliant individual in his faith and he strictly followed the guidelines according to the Word of God.⁵⁶⁵

As a leader, Mwachusi took great care in making decisions. He took time to weigh, balance and study the situation before jumping to conclusions. Most of the meetings presided over by Mwachusi were objectively guided and were calmly conducted. He used great wisdom in his speech and many people relied on his advice both spiritually and socially. He never wanted to promise something which he was not sure of implementing. Mwachusi was very strict in deliberating and sometimes resisted until the decision was passed by way of casting a vote. For example, in the 1994 Synod meeting he objected to the idea of starting the Ipalamwa district. After voting, he accepted the idea not because he liked the idea but to respect the majority.⁵⁶⁶ He was also a discreet person.

⁵⁶⁴ Interview with Venance Chaula, November 2000, Iringa.

⁵⁶⁵ Interview with Elia Mbangwa, 14 December 2000, Iringa.

⁵⁶⁶ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 27 December 2000, Iringa

His influence both in the church and in the government was revealed to many during his funeral in 1999, when various speeches were made about him. The Vice-Chairman of the ruling party of Tanzania *Chama Cha Mapindizi* (CCM), Mr. John Samuel Malecela, had this to say about Mwachusi:

A person is recognised according to what he does and not how long a person has lived. Mwachusi did not live long enough but he was well known because he did many outstanding things in the Church, in the *Chama Cha Mapinduzi* (CCM) party and in the Government. He was a person who preached about peace in the country which is a great contribution.⁵⁶⁷

In other words, Mwachusi as a leader of the church knew that the Church was in a country that was led by the people; therefore, it was important for him to work hand in hand with the Government. The Assistant to the Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church said about Mwachusi:

. . . if you meet Mwachusi you realise that now I have come across a pastor of pastors (*mchungaji wa wachungaji*) and even if there was a problem which made me restless, a person who could sort it out and feel contented, it was Mwachusi.⁵⁶⁸

On behalf of the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, the delegates sympathised with the Iringa diocese. "Mwachusi was known as one of the Wahehe, who was hard-working, who had a passion for the Gospel and in his death, we face a big loss."⁵⁶⁹

Elia Mbangwa, on the other hand, was critical of Mwachusi. Mbangwa described Mwachusi as a man with two distinctive sides. He was a very conservative individual. Once he had an opinion on something, it was

⁵⁶⁷ Speech of Samuel Malecela, 29 May 1999, Iringa kept in Iringa diocese church archive in Iringa.

⁵⁶⁸ Interview with Venance Chaula, 2nd November 2000, Iringa.

⁵⁶⁹ Interview with Venance Chaula, 2nd November 2000, Iringa.

almost impossible for anybody to advise him to change his stand. He had a very strong personality, which he sometimes used as a weapon to marginalise others. He easily absconded, especially if decisions were made against his opinion. He was a discreet person and wanted to get his respect as a leader. Mwachusi had his own group of people whom he felt comfortable with and they always kept company with him. This attitude was more conspicuous during the elections in 1986. Mbangwa observes that the relationship between Pastor Owdenburg Mdegella and Mwachusi deteriorated gradually after the elections. Mwachusi had high hopes of being elected Bishop of the diocese. He was very disappointed by the results of the elections. Mwachusi was able to forgive and cope as a result of counsel and advice given to him by other people.⁵⁷⁰

Other people were of the opinion that had he been the first bishop of Iringa Diocese, he would have fulfilled the vision and mission of the Diocese rather differently from how than it is today. His life experience in the church had seasoned him in the ways of the church and, as an elderly person, he could have led the diocese in a dignified way. They argue that a bishop, besides being a loving person of the people, should be able to create distance between the people in order to give room for the pastors to execute their duties. In other words, the distance allows the subordinates the freedom to play their role. Otherwise, two things can happen: they will not implement their small power or there is a danger of being discredited and disowned. In their opinion, Mwachusi would have allowed that distance for them to perform their duties. Since Mwachusi was a person who wished to share his views and liked to learn from others, he would have taken advantage of various professionals by including them in the different committees.

⁵⁷⁰ Interview with Venance Chaula, 2nd November 2000, Iringa.

6.5 Phoebe Msigomba: The teacher

Phoebe Msigomba was born on 28 June 1942, in Ilula village in Iringa region, to Lutangilo Sakafu, a farmer and later nurse attendant and Mponela Msola, a farmer. She was the first baby to be baptised in Ilula area by Martin Nordfeldt together with her father Lutangilo, her uncle Jeremia Msola and Marko Maluli. Her mother refused to be baptized until three years later because she did not want to abandon her traditional faith. Phoebe had eight brothers and four sisters.

As the first born, Phoebe stayed with her mother and farmed, took care of the cattle, and went to fetch water and firewood. Her father was one of the first students in the bush school which was opened by the Swedish Evangelical Mission (SEM) at Itunda, Ilula. Though her father's education was very minimal, he wanted his children to go to school. Her mother, Mponela, had been deeply involved in raising her family, as Phoebe reported:

On the whole, my mother brought us up, looking after the family. My life growing up was just like any other Hehe girl's life at that time. You go to primary school and from primary school to middle school and then, if you are lucky, you go to secondary school.⁵⁷¹

From 1950 to 1953, Phoebe went to primary school in her village which was run by the Lutheran church. Her main teacher was Jeremia Msola, her uncle, who taught her how read and write. She continued on to middle school in Kidugala from 1954 to 1957. As she put it regarding her education, "I was one of the lucky people at that particular time, may be because my father had joined the church."⁵⁷²

⁵⁷¹ Interview with Phoebe Msigomba, 25 August 2000, Iringa.

⁵⁷² Interview with Phoebe Msigomba, 25 August, 2000, Iringa.

After completing middle school, her only option was to attend a teacher training course. Phoebe then returned to Iringa, preferring to go home rather than any other place in the country. She started teaching at Ilula primary school in 1960 until in the middle of 1961 when she married a teacher called John Msigomba. John had just finished his teacher's course at Kinampanda and taught at Ihimbo primary school in Iringa. After her marriage, she was transferred to Ihimbo primary school where she taught together with her husband.

We were only two teachers in the whole school, myself and my husband who was the head of the school. Since we taught church schools, we were also responsible for the morning devotion services before classes began. We also led worship services on Sundays. We taught Christian education and evangelised our students because most of the pupils were not Christians.⁵⁷³

As a teacher, she was among several young women who were active in the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) during the struggle for independence. She was one of the staunch activists in the Iringa area and was instrumental in making arrangements for meetings, providing food and collecting money for petrol needed for cars donated by TANU for local trips in the region.⁵⁷⁴

From 1968 to 1969 Phoebe attended upgrading courses in education at Tabora and Korogwe teacher's training colleges. In 1970, she was transferred from Ihimbo and was sent to Irindi primary school where she taught for six years. During her time at Irindi Phoebe served in the church as a church elder, a Sunday school teacher, and confirmation class teacher. She was also leader of the parish women's league.

⁵⁷³ Interview with Phoebe Msigomba, 25 August 2000, Iringa.

⁵⁷⁴ Interview with John Msigomba, 12 August 1999, Iringa.

In addition to all of these tasks, Phoebe and John were asked to assist in the building of a new church. They also initiated mission in the neighbouring villages of Mahenge, Mtandika, Mbuyuni and Nyanzwa out of which two of them were given the status of a parish in 1988.⁵⁷⁵

From 1975 to 1976, Phoebe returned to Marangu Teacher's College for another course. At the end of that year, she and her husband moved to Ismani primary school where they taught for three years. Although this school had been nationalized in 1970, Phoebe continued to teach Christian education and was a church elder in the Ismani parish. In addition, she and John evangelized in neighbouring villages of Ilambilole, Uhominyi, Mkungugu, Kigasi and Matembo.

In 1970, they were transferred to Iwawa primary school. This was the beginning of Phoebe's administrative work as she was appointed head of the school. From 1981 to 1987 Phoebe served as the school inspector. Phoebe had this to say about her change in career.

I never wanted to quit teaching. I enjoyed being with my students although sometimes they were troublesome. I feel so good meeting with my former students some of them have good positions in the government and in the church. It is indeed very rewarding.⁵⁷⁶

6.5.1 Phoebe Msigomba: Church leader

In 1987, the newly formed Iringa diocese elected Phoebe as its first diocesan Women's Secretary. Because of her love for the church, Phoebe accepted this position and retired from the teaching profession to join the church. Prior to that, she had been a member in the

⁵⁷⁵ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 23 November 2000, Iringa.

⁵⁷⁶ Interview with Phoebe Msigomba, 25 August 2000, Iringa.

Southern diocese Executive Council since 1985 and represented Iringa district in its meetings. With respect to her new role as Women's Secretary of the diocese, she gave the following remarks: "I took it as a challenge but at the same time as an opportunity not only to serve the church but to fight for women's right in the church."⁵⁷⁷

Phoebe represented the diocese in a variety of meetings at the diocese level, national level and international level. Her ability to communicate in both Kiswahili and English gave her a significant advantage. She is eloquent in speech with strong arguments especially when it comes to women's rights. Phoebe was one of the activists for women's ordination in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. She argued,

Women are not to be left behind in the independence struggle. Women should not be left behind in the leadership of the church. We believe that the constitution of the church was drafted in such a way that women have the right to speak out and address any issues that concerned them in particular and the church at large. Besides, women are the majority in the church. Women should be given equal opportunities to lead the church.⁵⁷⁸

In her position as the diocesan Women Secretary, she was very mobile. She had to visit parishes and organise workshops and seminars for women groups. She mobilised women in the diocese and formed an evangelism team travelling to mission areas like Pawaga and Mtera villages. One of the outcomes of these evangelistic trips was the opening of new congregations at Mbigili, Irole and Viwengi. In addition, there was a programme whereby all women's groups in the parishes of the diocese met together at a selected location each year. They performed activities such as choir competitions, hand craft exhibitions and evangelism training. Such gatherings provided opportunities for women from various parishes all over the diocese to know each other,

⁵⁷⁷ Interview with Phoebe Msigomba, 25 August, 2000, Iringa.

⁵⁷⁸ Interview with Phoebe Msigomba, 25 August 2000, Iringa.

interact and learn from one another. Credit must also be given to her husband, John Msigomba, for giving her the needed support in her ministry to the church. Phoebe used to travel for days and weeks, and he was not annoyed. He looked after the children and took care of the house during her absence.

6.5.3 Phoebe Msigomba: The administrator

Phoebe's last assignment in the church was as an administrator. From 1992 to 1993, she went for further studies to the United Kingdom and pursued a Diploma in Church Management. When she returned to the Iringa diocese she was appointed to be the Assistant General Secretary of the diocese. She was also the Education Secretary. She dealt with all the training of personnel, administered all church schools and kindergartens in the diocese. She attended school board meetings and advised the heads of the church schools in the Iringa diocese. Edward Mnyawami, the first General Secretary of the Iringa diocese, said this about Phoebe: "She was a good administrator. She combined well her teaching experience and administration. She was very good in recording whatever was discussed in meetings."⁵⁷⁹

In addition of all these responsibilities, she was a member of the ELCT's women's committee a member of the Executive Council and the Synod Assembly of the ELCT. She has been a church elder at Kihesa parish for six years, a singer in the church choir and a committee member of Christian education and youth in the parish.

Although Pheobe Msigomba was never ordained, she exemplifies the life of ministry within the church. As an African woman she is an extraordinary role model. It would have been impossible for her to

⁵⁷⁹ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 23 November 2000, Iringa.

teach, evangelise, lead serve and travel without the commitment of her husband John. Together they raised eight children together they worked tirelessly for the church. In all her endeavours, she was supported by her husband.

Phoebe's voice for women, her continued quest for learning, her leadership at the diocese, national and international level put her in the forefront as one to speak out on behalf of women.

This biography of Phoebe Msigomba "is documented to reveal" that women were and are still among the main contributors in the development of the mission work in the Iringa diocese. Examples of Phoebe's calibre need to be brought into light so that their voices can be heard after being denied for years. Thanks be to God for the ministry of Phoebe Msigomba.

6.6 Mathayo Mkomiganga Lihinda

The man who later became popularly known as Mathayo Lihinda was born in 1929 in Kideva village Kideva in the Image area. His father Lihinda moved from Kalenga together with his two brothers, Gahele and Nzumba to Image in search of better agricultural land. They belonged to the Mwalubava family. Lihinda settled at Kideva while Gahele and Nzumba chose to live at Ibanavanu village. However, later on Gahele being more interested in hunting, left his two brothers and settled at Mtandika village. Lihinda had five wives and Mathayo's mother Ngomiyigila was the third one.

6.6.1. Mkomiganga is christened

Once the SEM missionaries established a mission station at Ilula, they opened a bush school at Kideva. The missionaries asked the local chief to help them find students for the school. The chiefs asked the *jumbes* (sub-chiefs) to go from house to house registering students for the school. Mkomiganga was sent to school not because his father preferred him but because he was critical of his half brother Pasipang'ombe who was given the leadership of all the Lihinda family. In order to get rid of him Mkomiganga presented himself to the teacher called Tulawona Mtulo from Ilembula, Njombe.

At the bush school, students were taught how to write, read, arithmetic and religious studies, the Ten Commandments, the Catechism, and singing Christian songs. Mkomiganga showed great interest in music and managed to read and write well. After being able to read and write and to recite the Ten Commandments he presented himself for baptism. It was a condition people to know how to read and write before they were baptized. He was baptized and christened Mathayo on 25 December 1944 at Ilula. He was the first convert in the whole of Image to Christianity. He remained under probation for one year before his confirmation on 25 December 1945.

After his baptism, Mathayo left Image and went to Dodoma where he was employed as a clerk in a milk factory. He worked there for two years before he returned to Image to work in another milk factory until 1948.

6. 6.2 Mathayo Lihinda: The preacher

In 1949 Mathayo began teaching at Kideva the bush school. He conducted morning devotions during the week days and led worship services on Sundays. He also taught how to read, write, arithmetic and religion. In 1949 he married Tumwiwukage, the first woman to be converted into Christianity in Image area. Mathayo then moved away from his father's home and built his own house near Kideva mission station.

Mathayo had a reputation of being a very strict *mwaliimu*. "He never wanted his students to miss classes. If you missed a class, you were sure that in the evening you would be visited."⁵⁸⁰ He convinced the parents to send their children to school. Although he was a strict *mwaliimu*, he was also a very understanding and kind person especially to students who had problems with their parents. "His home was a refuge for most of us. When our parents realized that we wanted to be baptized, they punished us and sometimes chased us, so the only place to go was to *mwaliimu* Mathayo."⁵⁸¹ It was the practice of the missionaries and the *waliimu* like Mathayo to require pupils admitted to their schools to undergo instruction in Christian doctrine which would eventually lead to baptism and admission to communicant membership of the church. This system was applied although it was not possible to assess the initial measure of personal commitment to the new religion that had come through people like Mathayo.

In 1953 Mathayo became the head of all preachers in the Image area. This meant travelling from one village to another to visit preachers. He was also responsible for opening new mission fields.

⁵⁸⁰ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 23 November, 2000, Iringa.

⁵⁸¹ Interview with Petro Mpalanzi, 23 September 1999, Image.

Local testimony confirms that Mathayo carried out his work with vigour and dedication.

He traveled on foot and spent days and weeks spreading the Word of God. He opened new mission fields and schools and sent preachers to Mwino, Mahenge, Nyanzwa, Kipaduka, Muwimbi, Ilambo, Isaka and Udekwa stations.⁵⁸²

As Mathayo trained a band of preachers and *walimu* to open and to run the village schools and churches, these people became the local leaders of the church. Generally they met once a month with their leaders for a "refresher course" organised by a missionary pastor at the main station. Occasionally the missionary pastor from Ilula came to Kidewa and conducted seminars for a day, returning in the evening.

I remember one missionary pastor (I don't remember his name now) used to eat food here which was cooked with firewood and I remember one day he went straight to the kitchen to see how my wife prepared *ugali* (stiff porridge).⁵⁸³

Mathayo was very talented in music. He was so interested that he bought a music hymnal called *Sacred Songs and Solos*. Since he was good at singing, he taught his students how to read music and taught them Christian songs. Since they were busy with other activities during the day, people gathered at his house every evening to rehearse and learn new songs. Songs attracted all the people who passed by especially youth. Among the youth who later decided to be baptised as a result of music were many of Mathayo's relatives: Philipo Lihinda, Amon Lihinda, Levi Lihinda, Petro Mpalanzi, Eliezer Lihinda, Philipo Lutitu, Zakaria Lubawa and Jacob Lubawa. His family and all members who stayed in his house formed a choir which sang on Sundays. "

⁵⁸² Interview with Tumwuwukage Maginga, 15 August 2000, Image.

⁵⁸³ Interview with Mathayo Lihinda, 15 January 2000, Image.

Some of us learned how to read and write through learning music at the feet of our brother Mathayo".⁵⁸⁴

6.6.3 Mathayo Lihinda and politics

After Tanganyika attained independence in 1961, many people became involved in politics as the power of the chiefs came to an end. Educated people had the opportunity to join leadership in the government at the village and district level. Most of the people who worked in the church were more enlightened than others. Mathayo was motivated to join politics by his close friend Nelson Enock Mkocho who had worked as *mwaliimu* of the church and then crossed over to politics to become a District Executive Officer.⁵⁸⁵

In 1962 Mathayo was elected the Village Development Officer of the Image area which consisted of eight villages. Since most of his time was spent in the government, he stopped being active as a church leader but remained an elder for the Kideva congregation, a position he held until 1995.

As a government leader Mathayo motivated people to build more schools in the area and maintain the roads. In 1967 Lyasa primary school, one of the first church schools in Iringa, added to its buildings so students could study up to Standard Seven. Likewise, Uhominyi school reached the same level in 1970. Meanwhile new schools were built in the following villages, Kipaduka, Namba Nane, and Ibumu. In 1974 Mathayo retired from politics and spent more time farming in order to raise more money for his children who needed school fees.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸⁴ Interview with Petro Mpalanzi, 23 September 1999, Image.

⁵⁸⁵ Interview with Petro Mpalanzi, 23 September, 1999, Image.

⁵⁸⁶ Interview with Mathayo Lubawa, 15 January 2000, Image.

One of his major contributions during his leadership both in the church and in the government was to encourage parents to send their children to school. He used to tell our parents that the best inheritance you can give your child was education.⁵⁸⁷ All those who followed his advice had well educated children with good leadership positions. Mathayo still plays an advisory role in his church at Kideva.

Mathayo's life gives insight into the roles, of indigenous Christians as they strove to spread Christianity to other people in the country. Indeed, these local allies of the missionaries were crucial to whatever successes the foreign evangelising agents were able to accomplish. The leadership roles of local allies like Mathayo need to be given more attention in the literature and hopefully more stories of African Christians will be written demonstrating their significant contributions in the development of the church.

This research has demonstrated the importance of oral documentation. It is only through this method that we can recover the rich history of our past in the lives of so many Africans. Without oral research we will lose much of our heritage. Therefore, I highly recommend this methodology to other church historians.

6.7 Conclusion

One of the songs sung during the consecration of the first bishop of the Iringa diocese, Bishop Owdenburg Mdegella summarized very precisely the role played the first pastors:

*...Wako wapi, wavunaji wapi, waingie waitende huduma takatifu
ya Mungu kuwaita wenye dhambi waje kwake wapate uzima ...
Baba zetu walipokea neno la Mungu hawakulala, walitembea*

⁵⁸⁷ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 23 November. 2000, Iringa.

kila mahali wakihubiri bila kuchoka, vituo vya mwanzo: Idete Pomerini, Ihemi, Ilula, Iringa, hawa: Nyagawa, Mdegela, Kiwope, Luvinga, Muyinga pia ... walizingatia wito wao...

Where are the labourers, who can play a role in the holy mission of God, calling the sinners to come to Him and be given life ... Our fathers who received the Word of God *from the missionaries* never slept, they went every where on foot proclaiming *the word of God* tirelessly, the first mission stations *being: Idete, Pommern, Ihemi, Ilula, Iringa and the pioneers* were: Nyagawa, Mdegela, Kiwope, Luvinga, Muyinga also ... they were committed to their call *to evangelise their fellow Africans*.⁵⁸⁸ (*translation and italics mine*)

In this chapter, we have looked at the biographies of four indigenous pastors: Yohana Nyagawa, Lutangilo Mdegela, Lazaro Myinga and Nicholas Mwachusi, in the Iringa diocese who were the key to the mission work in Uhehe. Yohana Nyagawa was one of the first pastors to be ordained in the Southern Highlands in 1934. Before joining the ministry he had worked as a soldier under the German colonial rule, a tax collector, and an evangelist. After four months of theological training, he served in various places as a pastor before being elevated to a Superintendent of the church in the Southern Highlands following the interment of the German missionaries as a result of World War II.

Nyagawa's leadership as the first indigenous Superintendent came to an end in 1941 following allegations on the misuse of church finance. The Mission Church Federation, which had been given responsibility to oversee the whole Lutheran church in Tanganyika elected Martin Nordfeldt to lead the church.

It is clear from Nyagawa's reminiscences that, the relationship between the indigenous clergy and the missionaries was marked by an uneasy ambivalence which brought about considerable friction. It is

⁵⁸⁸ A song composed by Obed Mella and Owdenburg Mdegella, in 1987 for the consecration occasion of the first bishop in Iringa Diocese.

true that the missionaries were the commanding officers, but the key players were the local pastors and were indispensably in the process of conversion. Despite some bright opportunities that were available for people like Nyagawa, they remained strong-willed and proud of their own history and culture and they did not have to leave the church that had nurtured them.

Harold von Sicard in his report about the contribution of the African pastors in the mission work in Tanganyika wrote:

... One cannot hasten to add that one cannot but admire the work done by the African pastors and the responsibility they take upon themselves. It is mainly to their achievement that the Lutheran Churches in Tanganyika have not only survived, but have taken the lead among the indigenous African Churches. There are outstanding personalities among them who are not only the leaders of their congregations, but of whole districts and, to a certain extent, even of the Church. *Yohana Nyagawa* became a recognized leader of the Church in Uhehe. The leaders are humble they know their congregations and their needs. They don't work for money, some of them get a salary of 12 or 15 shillings a month.⁵⁸⁹

The experiences of the four pastors as highlighted by Edward Mnyawami, the first General Secretary of the Iringa diocese can enrich the young generation of pastors, particularly in the manner of pasturing to people. They were pastors who worked under difficult conditions but were really dedicated to the service of God. A close study of their life stories will help them to compare with today's pastors when at least even the evangelists have bicycles to use in their work. Some of the young we ordain today would have failed to work in such difficult circumstances.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁹ Harld von Sicard, A Report about his visit to Tanganyika 25 May –24 August 1944 in Niwagila Wilson, *From the Catacomb*, p. 267.

⁵⁹⁰ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 12 January 2001, Iringa.

Chapter Seven

Towards Africanisation of Christianity

7. Introduction

The message of the gospel that God has reconciled himself to the world through Jesus Christ has a culture of its own, complete with its own worldview, thought patterns, descriptions, and language. This means that the Good News of salvation, which was received in a specific culture, was translated to bring meaning to the people who heard the Word of God in their own language. This spiritual message embedded in a variety of cultures, in order to be believed and included into one's life, must be communicated in ways that can be understood. Every recipient culture, whether it be first-century Palestinian, sixteenth-century German, twentieth-century secularist, or twenty-first century African, each needs to find ways in which it can relate to the gospel, understand it, and embrace it.

Africanisation is the way the church in Africa relates the Christian faith to the African situation. It is the affirmation that the God of the ancestors, who has been acknowledged throughout the continent, has now come to his people through Christ Jesus, His Son. It is also the affirmation of the historical reality of the African cultural context, which shapes the African voice to answer the call of Christ. In other words, the Africanisation of the Christian faith is a crucial factor in the proclamation of the gospel in Africa and in Iringa among the Hehe people. It means a new approval of African culture and religion. It involves worship in which church architecture, music, liturgy, and art are genuine expressions of the African religious experience. It means using African images and idioms in preaching about Christ in which the Hehe people can understand the message of Jesus Christ.

Africanisation means contextualisation of the Christian faith for Africa.⁵⁹¹

Aylward Shorter, African theologian, and Joseph Healey, Tanzanian missionary, speak of three stages in the Africanisation process of the gospel in Africa: translation, adaptation, and incarnation.⁵⁹² This chapter aims to explore towards the Africanisation of Christianity by looking at the translation of the Bible, worship practices and music and Christian stewardship as it has been done in Iringa diocese.

7.1 Inculturation of Christianity in the Hehe communities

Inculturation is a diverse process, which operates at both individual and social levels. African converts to Christianity found ways to embrace the new faith with new opportunities for advancement. Converts and, perhaps, second and generation Christians built churches. The churches became a link between individual believers and communities. At the same time, the churches operated as powerful bureaucracies within the colonial and national environments. The Christian faith was slowly inculturated, to the extent that Christians internalised their beliefs and even introduced changes in their social practices to accommodate the new beliefs.

Christianity has both an international element and an indigenous local memory. Two elements have to be stressed. Inculturation is the encounter of the gospel with a culture and "seeks to internalize

⁵⁹¹ John Wesley Z. Kurewa, *The Church in Mission* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p. 171.

⁵⁹² Aylward Shorter, "Liturgical Creativity in East Africa," *African Ecclesiastical Review* (October 1977), pp.258-267; and Joseph G. Healey, "Inculturation of Liturgy and Worship in Africa," *Worship* 60 (1986), pp. 412-423.

Christianity in the entire culture of the people."⁵⁹³ It means Christ in the Hehe social, political, and economic engagements, Christ in Hehe worship, art, music, marriages, in their births and in their deaths. Inculturation also means liberation from a type of Christianity imposed from outside which does not relate itself to the environments of Africans. African life can no longer be run "from outside in the name of absolute knowledge and dominant mission"⁵⁹⁴ because the gospel does not authorize religious imperialism or spiritual dependence.⁵⁹⁵ Though missions through missionaries provided the initial impetus, in Uhehe as in many other places, discourses about Christianity gradually became part of the local intellectual and cultural milieu. However, this process was never absolute because mission Christianity, with its outside origins, created a tension within communities and individuals. There was a sense of hegemony. In a penetrating analysis of the encounter between missionaries and the Tswana people the Comaroffs have made this clear.

In the long conversation (between colonizers and colonized)- a conversation full of arguments of words and images-many of the signifiers of the colonizing culture became fixed. They were seized by the Africans and, sometimes refashioned, put to symbolic and practical ends previously unforeseen, certainly unintended. Conversely, some of the ways of the Africans interpolated themselves, again detached and transformed, into the habitus of the missionaries. Here, then was a process in which the signifiers were set afloat, fought over, and recaptured on both sides of the colonial encounter.⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹³ Joseph B. Amissah, *Inculturation and the Mission of the Church in Africa: Proceedings of the Third Theology Week of the Catholic Institute of West Africa*, (Port Harcourt, Nigeria, May 4th-8th, 1992), 27.

⁵⁹⁴ Ezekiel Mphahlele, quoted by Ebouss Boulaga; "The African Christian in Search of Identity," in *The Churches of Africa: Future Prospects*, (eds.), Claude Geffre and Bertrand Luneau, (New York: Seabury Press, 1977, p. 30.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid. , p. 30.

⁵⁹⁶ Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 1991 p. 18.

In his article on "Modernity and the African experience", Tony Balcomb remarked:

From the day that the colonists set foot in Africa there was recognition on the part of the Africans that a new and extraordinary power had arrived. A profoundly ambiguous relationship developed between the African people and their colonial invaders. A relationship in which Africans, aware that they were in danger of losing their traditional way of life, attempted to gain conceptual mastery over a changing world.⁵⁹⁷

"Early on in the colonizing process", say the Comaroffs, "the assault on local societies and cultures is the subject of neither 'consciousness' nor 'unconsciousness' on the part of the victim but of recognition that occurs with varying degrees of inchoateness and clarity."⁵⁹⁸ Inculturation, also, meant institution building and the situation of these institutions within a social order. Churches became power centers within local communities to which not everyone had access. There was a link: local communities were linked with broader groups, which competed for power both within local communities and within broader colonial and national contexts.⁵⁹⁹

African Christians see themselves as part of "a world community in which the parts, in living tension with the aggregate whole, contextualize the universal truth of our equal, not to say mutual, proximity to one another and to God."⁶⁰⁰ However, what is the universal truth? This is a critical component. There is an old debate among theologians over inculturation of the Christian message. While the Bible and the body of orthodox practice might seem self evident as sources of that truth, the process of translation becomes one also of

⁵⁹⁷ Tony Balcomb, "Modernity and the African Experience," in *Bulletin for contextual theology in Southern Africa & Africa*, Volume Three, Number Two. June 1996.

⁵⁹⁸ Comaroffs, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 1991, p. 31.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁰ Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message* (Marynoll, 1989), 201-203.

interpretation. In the last several decades a debate has arisen among theologians on the extent to which the revelation should be “inculturated” into societies, that is, stripped of cultural baggage, and to which God’s message should become contextual. Inculturation means “getting beyond the interpretations brought by missionaries to interpretations developed within particular African contexts.”⁶⁰¹

Nevertheless, the spread of Christianity is not just the amplification of culture. Though emphasizing the process of inculturation within individual Africans and African communities, it does not mean ignoring the historical truth that Christianity began to spread in Tanzania after the colonial rule had been established. Despite the efforts of missionaries from the 1850s on, Africans did not convert to Christianity in large numbers until after the beginning of colonial rule. A degree of instrumentality guided the process of conversion. Likewise, while any if not most missionaries saw themselves as practising the religious equivalent of indirect rule, they proscribed important elements of African culture and practices, interpreting them as anti-religious rather than as expressions of the search for the godly, so that becoming Christian always meant, in part, setting oneself off from inheritances of the past. Whatever the motivations of any individual, Africans did not just follow European examples but, also, challenged Europeans for the control of their faith. In fact, as we have seen, Africans carried out most evangelization from the very earliest days.

Mission in Africa was politically the “handmaiden” of colonialism and often reinforced obedience to the new colonial order. In 1904 for example, Rev. A. Northwood in his sermon, preached a colonial message to a conference of African teachers for the CMS in Mvumi in

⁶⁰¹ John Parrat, *Reinventing Christianity* (Grand Rapids, 1995), 25 –54.

central Dodoma where he stressed the role of Jesus, similar to the Master, the overseer, as teacher, the leader, the despot and the owner.⁶⁰²

In Tanzania- the situation was different, in Uganda and Madagascar for example, conversion not only followed the flag, but the intensity of conversion varied directly with the political and economic changes of the colonial era. In Tanzania, given the near monopoly of education by the missions throughout the whole of the colonial era, conversion became the path to social mobility and dominated the initial intellectual encounter with the West.

As Africans moved to indigenise Christianity, they found in it, the intellectual means to attack the chains of mission paternalism.

Africans began earnestly to inquire into the Christian Scriptures, which missionaries had placed in their hands, to see where they had misunderstood the gospel. What they learned convinced them that mission as European cultural hegemony was a catastrophic departure from the Bible. They met the original irony with one of their own: they went on to claim the gospel, as the missionaries wished them to, but in turn insisted that missionary attitudes should continue to be scrutinised in its revealing light.⁶⁰³

Certainly, the spread of Christianity came simultaneously with profound cultural changes within African communities. Yet, as Christianity became domesticated, Africans sought to define for themselves the balance between local continuity and global universality. Laurent Magesa puts it this way: "The Christian theologian will, when necessitated by his faith in Christ, choose to be the odd man out, to swim against the current of accepted cultural

⁶⁰² Gregory H. Maddox, *East African Expressions of Christianity*, p. 153

⁶⁰³ Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, p. 163.

norms, when and if (and I mean literally only 'when and if') these clash headlong with his faith in Christ."⁶⁰⁴

This definition is like a sword which cuts both ways. African Christians, also, sought to mark their space clearly within their communities. They often sought outward and visible signs of their difference from their fellow Africans and from their past. The inculturation of Christianity in Tanzania opened new worlds and connected the African believers to a universal narrative.

From the very earliest days of missionary activity, many missionaries questioned the ability of Africans to internalize the message.⁶⁰⁵ They questioned their ability to understand it, and often accused Africans of converting merely for material reasons. For some missionaries the very drive to create rigid divides between converted and non-converted served as proof that Africans had not yet achieved the degree of faith necessary to live a Godly life without guidance. The emphasis on correctness of ritual and connectivity still draws remarks from some observers, although it is misleading in many respects. It reflects a power relationship that includes a strong cultural element.

⁶⁰⁴ Laurent Magesa, 'Authentic African Christianity,' in *African Ecclesiastical Review*, 37/4 (1995), 212.

⁶⁰⁵ Parrat, *Reinventing Christianity* (Grand Rapids, 1995), p. 14.

7.2 Translation of the Bible

The spread of Christianity worldwide went hand in hand with the translation of the Holy Scriptures. African missionary historiography has not adequately recognized the role played by and the place of Africans in the Christianisation of the African continent and in the whole enterprise of the translation of the Bible.

The period of the 19th and 20th centuries is not only unique in the expansion of Christianity at world level, but also in the concomitant wave of Bible translation into African languages as well. Bible translation inevitably accompanied the Christianisation of African communities and peoples as part of the logic of Christianity itself. At the heart of Christian teaching and practice is the Bible, which is the foundation document for the Christian system. At the heart of the message of the Bible is the idea of incarnation, of God becoming human, experiencing the human condition in all its beauty and bestiality in its zenith as well as its nadir. Incarnation is usually discussed these days in terms of indigenisation, localization, contextualisation, among many others. It is important that such an undertaking must of necessity begin with the everyday life and concrete realities of the receptor culture, expressed in the language and thought forms of that culture. It is, thus, no accident that in the Christianisation of communities and peoples it is necessary to express the message of Christianity in the everyday dialects of these communities. The Gambian, Lamin Sanneh, has given eloquent expression to this process, which in his terms he calls "vernaculization".⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰⁶ See Sanneh 1989 or Stine, ed. 1990.

Sanneh argues on the issue of translation and vernacularization that Christianity has historically advanced in a dual movement, relativising its Judaistic roots and, at the same time, destigmatising gentile culture.⁶⁰⁷ The key point to this is the practice of translation, epitomised in the often-repeated translation of the Scriptures from one language to another. According to Sanneh, translation means more than "the narrow, technical bounds of textual work".⁶⁰⁸ Considering the centrality of language in the more integrated and holistic communities of Africa, when missionaries adopted the vernacular it "was tantamount to adopting indigenous cultural criteria for the message, a piece of radical indigenisation" Sanneh points out. He believes that in the process of translation, the gospel slips between the fingers of the missionaries into the bosoms of vernacular speakers, as it were. This happens as the missionary translator plunges "into the quicksand of indigenous cultural nuances, and this helplessness may lead the translator to turn matters over to indigenous experts..."⁶⁰⁹

The beginning of Bible translation in East Africa preceded with the beginning of European conquest and colonization in East Africa. Johann Ludwig Krapf and Rebmann, who were the first missionaries, preceded the explorers and other imperial agents in East Africa, and the Bible translation being at the top of their agenda. Krapf even started translating almost before mastering the languages. He had the zeal and energy. David Barrett points out that:

The role of vernacular translations of the Christian Scriptures in this growth of organized Christianity has been very marked. The Scriptures have motivated the planting of Christianity in Africa at every stage; they have directly caused its expansion in countless regions; they have produced the strong and mature

⁶⁰⁷ Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message, The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Orbis: Maryknoll, 1989), p. 1.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

churches which we now observe in most parts of the continent, and they have nurtured them throughout.⁶¹⁰

In the early stages of Bible translation in Africa, the missionaries worked mostly in the major languages which were widely spoken and used by the majority of the people as lingua franca or trade languages, hence, the choice of languages such as Swahili or Luganda. Translation was based on the rationale of using a language which would be understood by many.

The work of translation was closely linked to literacy and education. At the pioneer stage, translators developed writing systems, as well as literacy programmes to teach people how to read. It could only be useful if the target audience could read and make use of the Bible in the target language. It is no wonder that the first Christians were called readers, i.e., *asomi*, *basomi*, *wasomi*, *vasomi*, etc.

In the work of Bible translation in Eastern Africa, the names of Krapf and his wife Rosina Dietrich, will always be remembered in any retelling of the work of the first missionaries and Bible translators in Kiswahili language. Krapf's understanding of the centrality and pivotal role of scripture translation or of vernacular scriptures in the missionary enterprise is evident. Krapf's translation work underlined the indispensable need of the missionary to work in the vernacular and to use vernacular scriptures in the fulfillment of the missionary task. Clearly, the description of Krapf as a visionary who had tenacity and boundless courage is evident from a quick look at his activities⁶¹¹. He was a source of inspiration to many generations of missionaries. He, also, cleared the way for those who came after him. However, according to Mojola, his actual work on the ground lacked depth and

⁶¹⁰ David Barrett, *United Bible Society Bulletin*, (No. 128/129, 3rd & 4th Quarters, 1984), p. 6.

his translations were poor, hurried, unnatural, inaccurate, unclear and short lived, although a good start, a promising beginning.⁶¹² Mojola's argument is valid. Krapf landed in Mombasa on May 5, 1844. Ype Schaaf writes that: "By October 1844 Krapf had completed not only a Swahili grammar and dictionary, but also the New Testament and Genesis."⁶¹³ Is this kind of output possible? Is it possible to master a language in that time frame and produce a reliable and acceptable or authoritative work? Can the quality of such work be trusted? W. B. Anderson allows for more time and seems to be closer to the truth. Anderson says: "By 1846 when his colleague Johann Rebmann, arrived, Krapf had translated most of the New Testament into Swahili".⁶¹⁴

Today, with the help of the Bible Society in Kenya and the United Bible Societies, there are more than 40 translations that have been done in Kenya in the last one hundred and fifty years. Some of the translations include Standard Swahili, which was published in 1934, which was the beginning of the so-called "union" translation. Others include Biblia Habari Njema, a translation based on Standard Swahili, Biblia ya Uzima published in 1984. Other translation included: Kisagalla, Kitaita and Kitaveta, Kikamba, Kigikuyu and Kimeru to mention but a few.⁶¹⁵

According to Eugene Nida's observation,

When the United Bible Societies began, fully 90% of Bible translations in the Third World were being made by missionaries with the help of informants or translation helpers. Now in 90% of the projects the

⁶¹¹ See Roland Oliver *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, 1952, 1965, p. 6.

⁶¹² Mojola, *God Speaks in Our Own Languages*, p. 3.

⁶¹³ Ype Schaaf, *On their Way Rejoicing – The History and Role of the Bible in Africa*, (Nairobi: Paternoster Press, 1994), p. 75.

⁶¹⁴ W.B. Anderson, *The Church in East Africa*, p. 2.

⁶¹⁵ Mojola, pp. 5 –55.

translators are nationals, and missionaries have become the resource persons.⁶¹⁶

Assessing Dr. Krapf, on the subject of Bible translation, Bishop Steere quoting F. J. Bedford, says of him: "Bible translation (in Tanzania) like geographical discovery and almost everything else in the recent history of east Africa, owes its beginning to Dr. Krapf".⁶¹⁷ Bishop Steere of the UMCA from the beginning got involved in Bible translation, conducting research and writing a Swahili grammar and lexicon.⁶¹⁸ A complete New Testament appeared in 1883 and was published in London. Besides Abd al Aziz, the Zanzibar sheikh, there were other Africans who worked hand in hand and with the European missionaries during these early years of Bible translation in Tanzania, namely Petro Limo and Cecil Majaliwa.⁶¹⁹

Emile Brutel of the Congregation of the White Fathers spearheaded the first attempt by the Roman Catholic Church at translating the Scriptures into Kiunguja Swahili.⁶²⁰ His translation of the Four Gospels and Acts was published by the Socié'te' des Missionnaires d' Afrique, Algiers in 1929.⁶²¹

The German Lutheran Church, through the Bethel Mission translated the New Testament into Kishambala. Before then, Dr. Karl Roehl had translated the Bible into Swahili. Roehl's New Testament was a revision of an earlier translation of the New Testament by Martin Klamroth of the Berlin Missionary Society. This particular translation was sponsored by German missionary societies who at a meeting in August and October 1914, resolved to give funds for "a new translation

⁶¹⁶ Ibid., p. 56.

⁶¹⁷ F. J. Bedford, *The Bible in East Africa*. (London: BFBS, 1954), p. 19.

⁶¹⁸ Mojola, *God Speaks in Our Own Languages*, p. 66.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid., p. 68.

⁶²⁰ Kiunguja is a special Swahili spoken by the people of Unguja islands in Zanzibar.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

of the scriptures into Swahili suitable for use throughout German east Africa” and whose “main object was to purify Swahili as a Bantu language, by eliminating the majority of the Zanzibar Arabic words, which are either not used, or only imperfectly understood, by the natives on the coast, and are quite unintelligible to those in the interior”.⁶²² Thus Roehl’s version of the New Testament in Swahili was finally published in 1930 and a complete Bible in 1937. Pastor Martin Nganisya and Mwalimu Andrea Ndekeja of Uzaramo closely assisted Roehl in the translation work.

Biblia Habari Njema was the major translation in the development of Bible translation, which the east African people were fully involved in and responsible for as translators at one stage or another, during the translation process. Among those who participated in the process were: Peter Renju (Roman Catholic), Cosma Haule (Roman Catholic), Jared Mwanjalla (Anglican), Amon Mahava (Lutheran), Amon Oendo (SDA), Douglas Waruta (Baptist), David Mhina (Anglican) and Leonidas Kalugila (Lutheran). The group released the first translation of the Gospel of Luke in 1975, followed by the New Testament after three years, in 1977 and, then, the New Testament with Psalms published in 1987. The official public launching and dedication of the new *Habari Njema Bible* took place at the same time in Nairobi, Kenya, and in Manyoni, Tanzania, on 24 March 1996. The version was enthusiastically received.⁶²³

A series of other translations have taken place in Tanzania. The *Cigogo* Bible translation stalled for some years but later was picked up by Oliver Timothy Cordell who was assisted by natives: Samwel Makanyaga, Mika Muloli, Pawulo Musoloka and Filemoni Chidosa. This

⁶²² Ibid.

⁶²³ Ibid., p. 74.

team published book 1 and 2 of Samuel in 1952 in Sydney, while a complete Bible was published in 1962 in London.

In a move to retranslate the *Cigogo* Bible into the accurate, meaningful, natural and common vernacular language in current idiom, Bishop Yohana Madinda of the Anglican church, sought the Bible Society's assistance in initiating a new translation of the Bible in today's *Cigogo*, translated by the Wagogo themselves. His successor, Bishop Godfrey Mdimi Mhogolo has proved to be a strong supporter and promoter of this project of translating the Scriptures into the local vernacular.⁶²⁴

On the other hand, Bruno Gutmann of the Lutheran Church in the northern part of Tanzania, delved deeply into the life, values and traditions of the Chagga people and mastered the local language, well including idioms, proverbs, folktales, riddles and thought patterns. Gutmann was even more motivated by his pioneering espousal of the inculturation and contextualisation of the Gospel into the life and culture of the people.⁶²⁵

However, Gutmann, together with his missionary colleague Robert Fassman of the Leipzig Mission, is best remembered for the translation of the New Testament into Chagga. This work would not have been successful without the help of Africans, even though their names are not mentioned in the missionary annals. A number of Chagga speakers took an active part in this achievement: among them are Rev. Ndesanjo Kitange (the father of Seth Kitange, the General Secretary of the ELCT, Northern diocese), Filipino Njau, and Rev. Imanuel Mkony.

⁶²⁴ Ibid., p. 80.

⁶²⁵ Ibid., p. 84.

This translation was the second attempt, since the Gospel of Mathew had already been published in Kichagga by 1892.

Later on, the growing church in the Chagga speaking area, encouraged by the strong support given to vernacular Scriptures by Rev. Albert Mongi, the General Secretary of the Bible of Tanzania, took up the challenge to review Gutmann's New Testament. Two indigenous people were chosen for this task: Pastor Sebastian Mrema and Pastor Boanerge Moshi. A team of reviewers assisted these pastors. The work started in 1993 and, after scrutiny, it was ready for publication in 1997, while the Old Testament translation into Chagga is still in progress.⁶²⁶ Many Bible translations into different languages⁶²⁷ have been done in Tanzania but, for now, this research focuses on Bible Translation in the Iringa diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

7.3 The Bible translation project in the Iringa diocese

The Berlin Missionaries after spreading their mission field towards the Ukena and Uhehe areas, embarked on the translation of Scriptures. Christian Schumann of the Berlin Mission had translated the New Testament into Kibena by 1914. This important undertaking was interrupted by the outbreak of the 1914–1918 War, which delayed production. Schumann did not do this work of translating the Bible alone: but indigenous speakers including Mzee Mangula of the Lupembe area assisted him. During that time the Wasangu, Wamasagati, Wahehe and the Wabena used the Kibena New Testament.⁶²⁸ All these tribes were once under the Southern Synod,

⁶²⁶ Ibid., p. 85.

⁶²⁷ For more information on Bible translations in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda see Aloo Osotsi Mojola's work on *God Speaks in our Own Languages* publication.

⁶²⁸ Mojola, p. 100.

which later was split into five dioceses each reflecting its own ethnic identity.

However, recently, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, the Iringa diocese and the Ruaha diocese of the Anglican church in Tanzania jointly spearheaded efforts in the translating of the Bible into the Kihehe language.⁶²⁹ Kihehe is the language used by the Wahehe, who are a community residing in the Iringa and Mufindi districts, which were once one district. They occupy the northern and eastern parts of the Southern Highlands of Tanzania. They are more than one million in number, speaking one language with more than four dialects. Kihehe is very similar to Kibena, however the major difference is in the writing and in the pronunciation. However, words have more or less the same meaning.

Since the work of Bible translation belongs to the church and the community, the church leaders of the two dioceses have formed a translation planning committee. The Lutheran Bishop, Owdenburg Mdegela, and his assistant, Nicholas Mwachusi, were at the forefront of this endeavour. Likewise, the Anglican Bishop, Donald Mtetemela, has been actively involved in supporting the ongoing project. The translation planning committee has the following functions: to select the translation team and reviewers; to inform churches and the community about the translation activities in the church; to encourage the translation team to carry out its role effectively; to encourage and distribute the scriptures which have already been translated and published; and to choose the colour and decide on the quantity of copies to be produced.⁶³⁰

⁶²⁹ Yohana Mbeho, A report of the Bible translation project into Kihehe 21-25/11/2001, at the Iringa diocesan Archives.

⁶³⁰ Ibid.

The translators work permanently on the project. It is this team which knows the ins and outs of all the problems which face or beset the project of translation. They have the role of consulting the right people in search of help. The chief translators of the Bible into Kihehe are Rev. Lambert Mtatifikolo and Rev. Benjamin Ngede of the Lutheran Church and Canon Yohana Mbeho of the Anglican Church. Lambert Mtatifikolo is the coordinator of the project.⁶³¹

The following qualities in picking the translation team were taken into consideration. A translator should be a spiritual person whose life reflects a spiritual maturity. One should have adequate knowledge of scripture, sound knowledge of the original languages of the Bible and their own language and its culture, a good understanding of English, and be mature in character, a servant of the people, ready to face positive criticism, teachable and a diligent learner.⁶³²

The Kihehe Translation Project was officially launched after a number of meetings between the Bible Society of Tanzania and the Lutheran and Anglican Church leadership in Iringa in 1993. In 1994, the project was officially launched at the Iringa Lutheran church of the ELCT, Iringa diocese. The Lutheran Bishop Mdegela, at the launching of the project, blessed the Kihehe translation team. During the launching of the project, an officer from the Bible Society of Tanzania, Rev. Albert Mongi, who is the General Secretary, was present.

In addition to the translation team, there is a team of reviewers and advisers, whose major task is to look through the work of translators, making corrections and coming up with recommendations, bearing in mind three important points: accuracy, naturalness and clarity. The

⁶³¹ Interview with Lambert Mtatifikolo, 23 November 2001, Iringa.

⁶³² Bible Translation File, Iringa diocese, 1993, Committees in Bible Translation Project handout.

members of the reviewers' team were chosen from the Anglican and Lutheran churches representing four administrative divisions: Mazombe, Kalenga, Ismani and Kilolo. The team comprises of the following: Mwalimu Yerima Msola, Mwalimu Edward Mnyawami, Mwalimu Phoebe Msigomba, Pastor Samson Mkemwa, Pastor Peter Kinyaga and Mwalimu Lazaro Nyamoga.⁶³³ There is one major weakness in this team and that is that there is only one woman and, if one takes into account the Hehe traditions and culture, it will be very difficult for her to make her contribution. There is a need to include some peasants from the villages in the team in order to bring some cultural richness to the team. After the work has passed through the reviewers' team, then it is sent to the advisors. These are persons qualified in Biblical languages, who are employed by the Bible Society of Tanzania. These are linguists and they work closely with the translation team and the reviewers in checking the manuscripts.⁶³⁴ Up to now, most of the New Testament has been translated and will soon be ready for the printers. The Gospel of Mathew was published in 1998 as a test portion.

Commenting on the Kihehe Bible translation project, Mwalimu Edward Mnyawami said:

This project should have started soon after the rise of Iringa diocese, but there were so many things to do. The work of evangelisation of the Uhehe area was done in Kihehe by lay preachers who used the Kibena New Testament and that is why many Wahehe people especially the elders refused to convert to Christianity because they saw it to be a religion of the Wabena.⁶³⁵

On the whole, Christianisation of the Iringa diocese relied on the lay evangelists who, after converting to Christianity, used the Kihehe

⁶³³ Ibid.

⁶³⁴ Interview with Rev. Lambert Mtatifikolo, 23 November 2001, Iringa.

language to spread the Gospel to their neighbours. The message was easily expressed in their own words and thought forms, and expressed in their own native genius. That is why, after the introduction of the TEE programme in the diocese, lay Christians were equipped as evangelists and, by using their language, it was easy to reach others with the Word of God, which led to the growth of the church.

It will be noted from the above that Bible translation is inextricably connected to mission history and church growth. Invariably the first Scripture translations in many of the languages mentioned were done by the pioneer missionaries and their successors or, later, by the local churches, as in the case of the Iringa and Ruaha dioceses. The translation of the Bible is essentially the responsibility of the local church, aiming to provide its members with the Word of God in their mother tongues.

It has also been observed that the early translations of the Bible were almost always credited exclusively to the pioneer missionaries, with hardly a mention of the indigenous speakers' contributions. This gives the impression that these missionaries worked single-handedly, without the collaboration or contribution of the native speakers of the languages concerned. The result is that many of those who collaborated or contributed to such an effort remain anonymous. In cases where they have been mentioned, they are identified merely as informants, helpers or assistants, even though we now know that most of the local participants played significant and indispensable roles in the actual translation process.

Local participants and collaborators were generally not treated as equals and, hence, were not given a decision-making role in such

⁶³⁵ Interview with Edward Mnyawami, 23 November 2001, Iringa.

matters in the presence of white missionaries. This European supremacy explains why Africans were not given their due credit for their great contributions, and why they were not identified or acknowledged as equal partners. For example, the Berlin Mission in the Southern Highlands acknowledges Christian Schumann as the translator, while the native speakers are either not identified or, where they are, are not identified in full. For example, the Berlin Mission identified the helper as Mzee Mangula of Lupembe.⁶³⁶ This is a colonial condition and attitude of ignoring African names.

A similar case is found with the Bethel Mission, where the problem of not recognising indigenous input is also present. Niwagila gives the example of Wilhelm Rascher of the Bethel Mission who, together with four indigenous people, was sent to Bukoba from the Usambara area. The Africans are just identified by their first names as Jona, Neaman, Issac and Thoma. These Africans came from the Usambara Congregation, which was the outcome of the Bethel Mission. In respect to this Niwagila comments, thus:

These four Africans are mentioned by Rascher and the missionaries in Usambara as being helpers. The pride of the missionaries has always prevented them from seeing that the Africans who took part in missionary activities were also missionaries. Without these people, missionary work could not have been successful".⁶³⁷

He adds referring to the use of single names: "The names given are only Christian names, which is also an indication that the African names were very much ignored by the missionaries". He, thus, concludes: "It is my great conviction that these four men were commissioned by God and their congregation to work in Bukoba as

⁶³⁶ Aloo Osotsi Mojola, *God Speaks in Our Own Languages*, p. 100.

⁶³⁷ Wilson Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church*, p. 132. The author could not get the full names of the Africans.

missionaries."⁶³⁸ The same argument applies to the indigenous people who hand in hand laboured with the Europeans in the translation of the Bible.

The current trend in the history of Bible translation is to give native speakers of the language of translation priority and identity in the programme of translating scriptures into the language. In addition to that, local churches, which are the chief implementers of African Christianisation, are often actively involved in the identification and choice of suitable translators, who satisfy the relevant criteria – as in the case of the Iringa diocese. Indigenous speakers, who get technical assistance and resources from Bible Societies, mostly do the on-going Bible translation in Tanzania. Where the translation involves the participation of European missionaries, the native speakers work cooperatively on a basis of partnership and mutual respect, and all contributors are duly acknowledged and fully identified and their full contributions are given their due credit and respect.⁶³⁹

7.4 Worship and Music

In an article entitled "Africanising the Church from Within", Bishop Trevor Huddleston writes:

It is not enough for the Church to be 'Africanised' in terms of leadership. It must be Africanised from within ... worshipping God in a way which is natural to Africa, with a liturgy and with a music that spring from African tradition ... only so can it really contribute anything of theological value to Christendom.⁶⁴⁰

In other words, what Bishop Huddleston is saying is that music, which springs from the hearts and souls of the people lasts and becomes a

⁶³⁸ Ibid.

⁶³⁹ Interview with Rev. Lambert Mtatifikolo, 23rd November 2001, Iringa.

⁶⁴⁰ *Tanzania Standard Paper*, (November 17 1967), 9.

subject of delight and desire from generation to generation. Christianity, expressed in the musical idiom of the people, reinforces the spoken message at the greatest depth.

However, missionary opinion on the subject of indigenous church music and worship is divided. Pastor Idohou, in an article in the Newsletter of the *African Music Society* in 1958 sums up his attitude in very strong terms:

I will never have indigenous music inside my church, where it is out of place but will give in rein without, and will hold "tam-tams" where I will admit pagans ... Let us beware, even with the best of intentions of desecrating the Holy Place by something which is purely spectacular, theatrical and entertaining.⁶⁴¹

While some have a very negative attitude towards indigenous music, as is illustrated in the above quote, on the other hand, we find others in Africa who on reflecting on the subject of African music and Christian outlook, pose the following question: "Why do we pretend that this music's technique will be forever inseparable from indecent customs?"⁶⁴²

Following the Second World War, and particularly during the time of the independence, more attention was given to adapting Christianity to the African culture. In recent years emphasis has been laid upon the use of indigenous music in the singing of Christian hymns in Tanzania. During the 1960's through the endeavour of a few talented individuals working with one another, an altogether different picture of indigenous church music has been brought into focus. They decided to bring indigenous music into Christian worship and, since then,

⁶⁴¹ J. H. Nketia, "The Contribution of African Culture to Christian Worship", *The International Review of Missions* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 266.

indigenous music has been a vital part of the Church's identity.⁶⁴³

Music is part and parcel of African life.⁶⁴⁴ And since it is so important in the life of an African, music takes a great share in worship, and in ceremonies such as births, marriages and even deaths. Music is sung during work, when the priest or priestess is spirit-possessed, and during times of healing and of initiation.

In the African world-view, music is not merely entertainment, but is a form of language used to bring home the message. In music one prophesies, warns, blesses, or curses, pleads for mercy, narrates a story, teaches, comforts and praises. Music is, also, used as psychotherapy for people in deep depression. Music is a very effective political tool used to praise rulers or condemn them. For instance, during the struggle for the independence of African countries, music was widely used as a weapon. Songs of freedom were sung which not only made the colonisers become uncomfortable but also gave courage, hope and motivation for the struggle to continue to the colonised. During apartheid, black South Africans sang moving songs as they buried their relatives and friends, who were killed by the oppressive system and they sang songs like "God bless Africa". Niwagila argues that this singing should not be taken as an African way of life, it is more than that; he argues that the singing is "a cry to God asking Him to set the Africans free from the bondage of the white man."⁶⁴⁵ The former African slaves had the same experience: as they worked on the cotton and sugar plantations, with whips at their backs,

⁶⁴² Ibid.

⁶⁴³ Richard Lubawa, *The Development of Tumshangilie Mungu and the Theological Emphases Emerging in the Hymns*, (Unpublished BD Thesis, Lutheran Theological College Makumira), 1991.

⁶⁴⁴ Cf. Stephen B. G. Mbuga, *Church Law and Bantu Music* (Schoneck-Beckenried, Switzerland, 1963), p. 8.

yokes pressing down on their shoulders and iron chains around their leg-muscles, the singing of songs was never abandoned. They sang songs of freedom, sorrow and praise to God. Such songs put severe judgement on the masters' conscience.⁶⁴⁵ Quoting James Cone, Stephen Mbuga points out that such songs served a number of purposes. Some protested against slavery, some encouraged the slaves to relate their Christianity to their desires for freedom, some affirmed that fighting for freedom was doing the work of God.

Thus, in light of the above, African music which embraces all areas of an African life, needs to be given great attention by the Christian community. In the early 1960s, the independent countries in Africa and, also, the church, received criticism from within and outside for embracing more Western music than indigenous music. Mwalimu Julius Nyerere in his inaugural address in the creation of a new Ministry of Youth and Culture on 10 December 1961 said the following:

I believe that culture is the essence and spirit of any nation. A country, which lacks its own culture is no more than a collection of people without the spirit which makes them a nation. Of all the crimes of colonialism there is none worse than the attempt to make us believe we had no indigenous culture of our own; or that what we did was worthless – something of which we should be ashamed, instead of a source of pride. When we were at school we were taught to sing the songs of the Europeans. How many of us were taught to sing the songs of the Wanyamwezi or the Wahehe? ... It is hard for any man to get much real excitement from dances and music, which are not in his own blood. So, I have set up this new Ministry to help us regain our pride in our own culture. I want it to seek out the best of the traditions and customs of all our tribes and make them a part of our national culture. I hope that everybody will do what he can to help the work of this ministry.⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁵ Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church*, p. 419.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁷ Julius Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity: Uhuru na Umoja*, (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1966), 186 – 7.

Such voices should not be taken for granted, since the Church in Africa has been blessed with a variety of music and Christians need to make use of it in celebrating their new experiences in Jesus Christ.

Hymnology is one field where Africanisation has clearly been seen. In the Roman Catholic Church in Tanzania, outside the church of Karatu, as early as 1938, a Bishop's Conference in Kwirow stressed the importance of indigenous music and arts in the liturgy and in the building of churches.⁶⁴⁸

As a step towards Africanisation, Stephen Mbunga of Peramiho made some proposals for the Roman Catholic Church in Tanzania: the use of Kiswahili as the official liturgical language instead of tribal languages; the judicious introduction of African musical instruments; the use of African melodies and rhythms, in order to create fuller participation; the introduction of new a Swahili Ordinarium Missae; the use of the eight Swahili Kyries which had already been worked out; and, finally' the use of a new Swahili Proprium de Tempore.⁶⁴⁹ Mbunga argues his case for Africanisation thus:

A non-African hymn can be used provided there is a general opinion that it is good, easy, simple and appealing. For God's service such music transcends culture ... Such music can be found among mixed styles. Hence we need neither simply discard all church hymns brought by the missionaries nor indiscriminately receive more foreign melodies, but we must select more carefully ... We need one new Tanzanian hymn-book which comprises African religious popular hymns and well selected, simple favourite foreign hymns from the books already in use today here and there in Tanzania.⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴⁸ Carl -Erick Sahlberg, *From Krapf to Rugambwa* (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1986), p. 153.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁰ Quoted by Sahlberg, *From Krapf to Rugambwa*, p. 153.

Mbunga's pro-African suggestions in the hymnological area, had the church hierarchy's support. First, Vatican II (1962-1965) stressed the need for African music in the Catholic liturgy and so did papal letters such as *Musicae Sacrae Disciplina* (Pius XII, 1955) and *Jucunda Laudatio* (John XXIII).⁶⁵¹

The Kipalapala Seminary within the Tanzanian Catholic mission has worked hard at composing, collecting and contributing new African liturgical music. Stephen Mbunga himself at the St. Augustine's Seminary at Peramiho has directed and coordinated liturgical music for the Catholic Church in Tanzania.⁶⁵²

However, indigenous music did not receive widespread acceptance in the Lutheran Church in Tanzania until late in the 1950s. For many years, the music in Tanzania was dominated by foreign cultures. Worship music on Sundays was a transplanting of denominational hymns from the West. This is an experience which many churches in Tanzania have had at one time, or another. It is well documented that when the early missionaries arrived, many rejected all forms of traditional music in Christian worship, assuming that the music would carry unwanted associations with unchristian understandings and ways of life. Having rejected indigenous forms of music, the missionaries substituted their own. Wherever they established a mission station, they learned the vernacular language and translated hymns and liturgies to be used in worship, but retained the original tunes. Few individuals sought to bring indigenous music into formal worship. The pressure to include indigenous music came as a result of both nationalistic influence and Christian longing for African music during the early 1960s.⁶⁵³

⁶⁵¹ Ibid.

⁶⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁵³ Mdegela, p. 19.

Efforts by some missionaries who worked in Tanganyika to try to indigenise the church took place during the 19th century who worked in Tanganyika. Traugott Bachmann, a missionary of the Moravian Church in the late 1890s, contributed much to the promotion of indigenous music among the Nyakyusa. Due to his work, a hymnal of indigenous hymns was produced in 1903.⁶⁵⁴ In Mbozi, in Southern Tanzania, Bachmann produced a Christian hymnal based on traditional songs in 1905. The hymnal had seventeen short traditional songs, which were mainly found suitable for use in schools and by young people.⁶⁵⁵

In Tanzania, various tribes had hymnals translated into their language and these were used in the congregations; however, very few indigenous songs were available for congregational use. According to Gerhard Jasper, a German missionary in Bukoba, the Haya book had two or three songs all from a composer known as Ernest Kalembo. The rest of the songs in the hymnal were all Western hymns.⁶⁵⁶ In the South, the hymnal in the Bena language had sixteen songs with indigenous tunes by 1914. In addition to that, another hymnal was compiled named "*Hate ja Ndzimbo dza Vakilisiti ava mu-Vubena, mu-Vusangu, mu-Vuhehe, mu-Lulanga na mu-Masagati*" (Hymnal for the Bena, Sangu, Hehe, Lulanga and Masagati languages). By 1931 it comprised a total of 22 indigenous hymns with their ethnic origin of Ukinga, Wanji and Lupembe. None of the indigenous hymns was from the Hehe tribe. In the Kilimanjaro area, by 1931 there was a hymnal in

⁶⁵⁴ Lubawa, *The Development of Tumshangilie Mungu*, p. 7.

⁶⁵⁵ Wolfgang Kornder, *Die Entwicklung der Kirchenmusik in den ehemals deutschen Missionsgebieten in Tanzania*. (Erlangen: Verlag Ev.Luth. Mission, 1990), 319. Translation by Wolfgang Apelt.

⁶⁵⁶ Gerhard Jasper, "Neues Singen in Africa," in *In die Welt für die Welt*. Vol. 3 (Wuppertal: 1967), p. 120 –123. Translation by W. Apelt.

the Chagga language whose texts were written by missionaries and African Christians. The hymnal had 10 indigenous tunes.⁶⁵⁷

According to reports by Jasper, for many African Christians, indigenous music was connected with heathen feelings and expressions.⁶⁵⁸ Werner pushes this point further and says:

... the older generation who were once heathens were very skeptical or sometimes even against the introduction of such new songs. They were afraid that paganism through the music would enter the Church. By becoming Christians they made a complete break from the culture of their own people. They saw that in the African rhythm were elements of heathenism.⁶⁵⁹

The above view shows how the missionaries tended to regard some of the African practices as heathen and seemed to substitute Western ways for African ways and managed to convince the first African Christian converts to view some of African traditions as evil. Even the early African evangelists adopted the missionaries' way of thinking and spoke of their own people as "heathens," as they had been taught by their Christian theology.⁶⁶⁰ This derogatory concept of their own people and their own culture alienated them from their people and culture. Indigenous music for church worship arose actively through taking into consideration African forms and practice in compositions for choirs. A few choir leaders developed interest in pure African tunes. The Lutheran Church in Tanzania, through its theological institution Makumira, from the early 1960s engaged in the field of hymnology. The project was for a number of years under the direction of Pastor Gerhard Jasper, and continued under Dr. Howard Olson. The project

⁶⁵⁷ Wolfgang Kornder, "Die Entwicklung der Kirchenmusik," p. 319.

⁶⁵⁸ Gerhard Jasper, "Neues Singen in Africa," 120-123.

⁶⁵⁹ Werner Both, "Ansätze zur africanischen Kirchenmusik", in *Zwischen Sansibar und Serengeti*, ed. Ernst Jaeschke, (Erlangen: Ev. Luth. Mission, 1968), 256. (Translation by W. Apelt).

⁶⁶⁰ Interview with Mathew Lubawa, Iringa, 21 January 2000.

involved translating indigenous hymns, which were available in the indigenous language, into Swahili. Students from all parts of Tanzania contributed the hymns and were introduced in the chapel prayers. Through the use of indigenous hymns in the chapel-prayers, it was possible to find out whether the songs could be used in worship.

Through this process, the first edition of *Tumshangilie Mungu* came out in 1968. All the songs in the *Tumshangilie Mungu* consist of melodies derived from the indigenous music of over twenty tribes in East Africa. Already a number of them are being used in congregations in Tanzania. Dr. Howard Olson, who compiled and arranged the *Tumshangilie Mungu*, and had a passion for indigenous music, says:

In worship God deserves and expects the total giving of oneself to him. Through the use of African music in worship it will be possible for the Christians with the psalmist to bless His holy name...⁶⁶¹

From the inception of the ELCT Iringa diocese in 1987, indigenous music has formed an integral part in the worship practice in the congregations in the diocese. The music, which accompanies church worship and celebrations, consists of newer African compositions, originally emanating from ethnic groups within Iringa. Usually, there is much enthusiastic communal singing and dancing. This was evident during the inauguration of the Iringa diocese, which was later followed by the consecration of the first bishop of the diocese.

The worship service was dominated by indigenous music, clapping and dancing accompanied by drums and *njuga* (bells). Indigenous songs like the ever-famous Hehe song *Lung'ulye nene lung'ulye, pe ndimwana ndi mudodo lung'ulye nene*, which was sung using different words as *Kizazi hata kizazi* (Generation after generation) to suit the

⁶⁶¹ Sahlberg, *From Krapf to Rugambwa*, 1982, p. 154.

occasion and *Wako wapi, wapi?* (Where are the labourers?), dominated the worship. The crowd of people who gathered at the Samora Machel Stadium sang, clapped and danced wildly with great joy as the new Bishop Owdenburg Moses Mdegela led artistically the indigenous song *Pote atawala nani?* (Who reigns everywhere?). The atmosphere was electric, joy was evident and one could hardly doubt the presence of the Spirit moving people. This is what takes place in the Sunday worship services, where the idiom of the music is very African and usually grips the congregation. The change in the mood shown by the people is not to be taken as a condemnation of the missionaries' original practice but as proof that African Christians have actually internalised Christianity and made it suit the African context. Such an emphasis makes sense in a church which understands reality in holistic terms and sees life in terms of spiritual welfare. In Iringa the diocese of the ELCT, there is an upsurge of African indigenous hymnody and short choruses. Such choruses capture the mood and emphases of African Christianity.

Enthusiasm for indigenous music has been evident as much among adults and the youth as in ecumenical gatherings. Churches, including the Iringa diocese, have been wise to encourage this growing phenomenon. The Iringa diocese, through its music division, has sponsored music workshops, especially where the youth are involved. They have, also, opened satellite stations to teach the basics of music with an emphasis on indigenous music. In each district there is a class and the music director brings music directors from the congregations together for practice and seminars on the promotion of music in the worship services. In each district choir festivals and competitions are held. Choirs are required to learn one song from the Church hymnal, usually with a Western tune, and one indigenous song, composed by the choir and covering a particular theme. For example, in 1999 the

theme for the indigenous songs was the mission work in the Iringa Diocese. A total of 18 new indigenous songs were composed and sung, all with a special emphasis on the mission work in the diocese.

What is more interesting in this respect, however, is that the push from the leaders of the diocese in Iringa gave rise to indigenous music that genuinely portrays the peoples' philosophical and religious views. The traditional African religious world embraces everything and this helps people to understand who they are and where the cultural resources for support and sustenance lie.

However, despite this effort in traditional music, more needs to be done to incorporate indigenous songs actively into the daily worship services. One way of imparting these songs to the people is to give the choir leaders an audience during morning and Sunday services and get them to teach the congregation. Gradually, all songs will be known and actively used. Other suggestions are to write new tunes to old words; to write new lyrics; to use more indigenous folk songs; and to encourage Hehe musicians, like Obed Mella, Bishop Owdenburg Mdegela, Jimson Sanga and others to compose original hymns. The original hymns should cover a wide range of themes and an indigenous hymnal book for the Hehe people in the Iringa diocese should be produced. One advantage of Hehe music is that it easily inspires the mind and the body. The few compositions made by Hehe musicians such as Obed Mella, have spread throughout Tanzania and are widely sung, mainly by choirs.

Bishop Mdegela, being very musical himself, has pioneered the diocese into a worship practice which expresses people's feelings and culture. Sixteen years ago, writing as an undergraduate student at Makumira, Mdegela mourned the loss of traditional music in the church in

Tanzania, stating that such treasure, once lost, is not easily recovered.⁶⁶²

In the Iringa diocese congregations hold morning services every day of the week and Sunday worship services. The daily morning services take place between 5 am and 7am, varying from one location to another. Most of the rural congregations prefer the 5 am devotions so that they have ample time to go to work on their farms or in their gardens. It is the task of the evangelist to lead morning devotions, although they can make a roster of other members in the congregation to lead devotions.

In 1998 the author attended morning devotion at the Ilambilole congregation in the Iringa district. As one comes into the church around 5 am, one hears people singing, clapping and ululating and other people, especially the youth and women, swing their bodies flexibly from one side to the other. The singing is loud and lively. But one does not fail to spot a few elders, especially men, who are either seated or are standing still without much action. This type of singing is mainly dominated by short indigenous choruses, which were once sung during weddings and other traditional ceremonies. Usually the word content is simple and the message is repeated over and over, emphasizing one theological theme, such as "Jesus is Lord or Saviour or Healer". One person leads the singing and the rest respond with vigour. After five to ten minutes of praise, the preacher steps forward and greets the parishioners with *Bwana Asifiwe* (Praise the Lord) and the congregation responds, "Amen".

⁶⁶² O.M. Mdegela, "Traditional Psalmody and Hymnody in ELCT" (BD thesis, Makumira Lutheran Theological College, 1984) p. 18.

After the sermon, which takes about 10 minutes, time for prayers is given. Usually, two or three members are asked to pray. Through prayer people pour out their own-selves before God. They expose their innermost being and concerns in front of God. African prayers reveal what concerns people the most, why they say them and the attitude they hold towards God before and during prayer. Listening to the prayers offered in churches, Christian homes, fellowship groups and women's groups, one notes that items include personal and family needs: Prayers or requests for health and healing, for protection from danger, for safety in journeys, and for success in undertakings like examinations and business. Others express gratitude for answered prayers and other blessings, prayers for members of the parish or congregation, for seasonal and sufficient rains for national welfare and for government leaders, and for peace in the country and within the church. Such prayers, that are not recorded, are a treasure of Christian spirituality in the African context. They are theological utterances, by means of which Christians lift up their own beings towards God, both in private and in public worship. The prayers are based on scriptural passages, promises, insights and people's experiences, while others are based on the riches of African traditional religiosity, where prayer is taken very seriously. The African attitude to prayer is one of great humility and submission. A person is expected to be humble and unpretentious before the Holy God. The common position for prayer is kneeling, with hands placed on the chest and with eyes closed. In prayer, there exists a strong bond of fellowship between the community members, for they intercede for one another.

Then short announcements are made to the congregation then the evangelist invites someone to lead them into a chorus as they march out singing. This is the characteristic worship, which is found in all congregations. The most striking feature in such services is the

difference in the singing between the indigenous songs, which are simplistic in nature and sung with a lot of flexibility, using the whole body swinging, clapping, stamping and dancing and the Western hymns are sung slowly with great rigidity. These Western hymns, which are increasingly losing out to the more simple and short indigenous songs, which are now sung in the language of the people accompanied by instruments such as drums, *njuga*, and *kayamba* to enhance rhythm and spontaneity, thus, striking home the theological message.

A visit was also made to Ihemi congregation, one of the oldest parishes, with its gleaming corrugated iron roof. As we entered and walked through into the interior of the church, we witnessed a scene of fellowship of a caring community. The church was already packed with gathered people who were singing about grace being revealed. The singing was very loud and the dancing very inviting. Meanwhile, the church elders were busy arranging the children to sit properly around the altar.

Following a prelude of congregational singing and clapping, which was accompanied with drums, choirs were given a chance to sing their songs, which were all indigenous songs. There were three choirs: the youth choir, the congregation choir and the women's choir. After the choirs, the liturgy preceded, all in Swahili, which is the national language of Tanzania, but interspersed with songs mainly from the choirs. The scripture was read by one of the church elders on duty, followed by more singing and, finally, by church announcements, before a song was sung to introduce the sermon. At intervals songs interrupted the sermon, either led by the preacher or by one of the members seated in the pews. In response to the sermon, a chorus

from the women's group was sung, as the preacher walked out from the pulpit.

During the time of offerings, the choirs were given chances to sing, while people were invited by the church elders to go forward to give their tithes and thanksgiving to God. The service drew to a close with special prayers of intercession for the sick, church, nation and the dying. After the prayers, a closing hymn was invited or a chorus which is sometimes accompanied by drums and clapping.

One feature is common in all the morning and Sunday services. Women and youth form the majority and are the most active participants in the singing and dancing. On the contrary, men are few and play a passive role in the singing and dancing in the worship services. Most men prefer to abide by the old Western music as introduced by the missionaries. The senior pastors, who feel that Africanisation reduces the reputation of Christianity, share the same view.⁶⁶³

Since worship is a person's experience of God who loves and is kind, it is characterised by spontaneity, free expression and corporate reverence. Local languages are used in worship to enable people freely to express themselves and to encourage unimpeded participation. Thus, the use of local languages has an advantage, particularly with members who are illiterate and form the majority.

In order to reflect the needs of the community, some changes need to take place in the worship practice of the Lutheran Church, particularly in the area of liturgy. Since liturgy is both the proclamation of the gospel and service to the people, two elements are contained which

⁶⁶³ Interview with Pastor Martin Chuma, now retired, 12th November 2001, Ilula.

needs continued interpretation into contemporary idiom.⁶⁶⁴ The first element is theological, which is unchanging, and the second one is cultural. The cultural aspect needs to change, as people express their feelings in worship. On the other hand, the liturgy must reflect not only the unchanging gospel of Jesus Christ, but also a specific moment in history and more importantly, in a given cultural context. The liturgy, which should touch the needs of the worshipping community, should be developed on the basis of a profound theological understanding of the Lutheran church, within the African experience.

In Tanzania the Africanisation of worship, particularly the liturgy began. When the ELCT was formed in 1963, it had a vision of a united liturgy, which could be used by the whole Lutheran church, and even for ecumenical worship in Tanzania. Two liturgies were the outcome of that time: the United Liturgy of East Africa (1966)⁶⁶⁵ and the Liturgy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (1968).⁶⁶⁶ African church leaders of the East African churches put these liturgies together in the Swahili language.

These two liturgies came from the German *Deutsche Messe* and the British *Book of Common Prayer*. The work was beyond simple translation: it attempted to adapt to Tanzanian usage and understanding by mixing elements and orders, so that the outcome was different from the original sources. For instance, the Tanzanian Lutheran liturgy commences with a recital of the Ten Commandments,

⁶⁶⁴ M. Langley & T. Kiggins, *A Serving People* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 183.

⁶⁶⁵ This liturgy was an ecumenical effort on the parts of Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist, Moravian, and Presbyterian Churches in East Africa.

⁶⁶⁶ In Swahili: *Liturgia ya Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania*, (The liturgy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania), first published in *Tumwabudu Mungu Wetu* by the ELCT in 1968.

which is a feature of Anglican worship. It, also, includes an affirmation, in the Lord's Supper which comes from the Church of South India.⁶⁶⁷

In an attempt to Africanise the liturgy, all the music of the liturgy was rewritten to fit the accent and syllabification of the Swahili language. In some cases, indigenous tunes⁶⁶⁸ were used and in other cases being newly composed.⁶⁶⁹ Following these changes, the outcome was a much more pleasing music, with rhythmic integrity and interest.

Yet another effort that reflects the process of Africanisation is an English language liturgy that uses East African melodies. The liturgy was written for the congregation of the Lutheran College at Makumira⁶⁷⁰ for use in its monthly English service. Since the use of a foreign liturgy with foreign melodies was not appropriate, a new liturgy was devised that would be easy to sing and would reflect its location. The new liturgy borrowed African traditional melodies, which shaped the texts and the service as a whole to fit into the African context. The rhythms, drums, and exuberance of these melodies have a clearly African character, and the people have learned them quickly and easily. Deusdedit Nkuruzinza, a Catholic priest from Uganda says:

Liturgical inculturation, therefore, is not merely a question of dancing, drumming, clapping of hands and making various body gestures. First and foremost, it is a search for authentic self-expression in that act of encounter and worship with the living Lord through which the individual and the community are touched by the divine healing hand.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁷ This affirmation is as follows: "His death, Father, we proclaim; His resurrection we affirm; His return we await. Glory be to you, O Lord."

⁶⁶⁸ One indigenous melody is for the *Agnus Dei*, which in this liturgy is from a Maasai song in which the singer cries for help.

⁶⁶⁹ An example is the *Gloria*: "Mungu atukuzwe pekee" (God alone be praised).

⁶⁷⁰ Now changed to Makumira University College, it is the oldest campus of Tumaini University, a private institution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT), and is the primary college for theological studies in the ELCT.

⁶⁷¹ Deusdedit Nkuruzinza, "Liturgy, The Privileged Arena for Inculturation," *African Ecclesiastical Review* (August 1985), pp. 209-215.

Thus the challenge facing the church is that “search for authentic self-expression” in worship that makes a difference in people’s lives that not only builds the church, but also evangelises. As worship moves beyond a merely objective exercise demanded by theological posturing, and as it becomes a simple, subjective quest for God, He answers the hunger of earnest hearts and reveals Himself in personal, transforming and fulfilling ways.

According to Benitho Madembo, one of the pastors and most experienced evangelists in Iringa, we have just started to see the witnessing power of worship:

In the arena of worship, the church is not where it was 20 or even 10 years ago. We are at a new place in God ... old ways of thinking and acting won't help us now.... Change is coming to our public worship service ... (people are giving) their lives to Christ because of the witness of God's convicting presence in the middle of African vibrant worship services.... I believe we will see an increasing number of people converted to the Lord through the witness of wholehearted African Christian worship.⁶⁷²

When the gospel is clearly articulated, understood, and embraced by human culture, then there is real joy in the outcome, to the glory of God.

7.5 Emphasis on Christian Stewardship

“Uhuru na Kazi” (Freedom and Work) was a famous national slogan used by Mwalimu Julius Nyerere during the campaign for independence. Nyerere emphasised: “Independence is not loitering

⁶⁷² Interview with Tuseline Madembo, 23rd January 2000, Iringa.

with a cigarette or the beer calabash in the corner of the mouth. Independence means work, work and again hard work".⁶⁷³

When the former Iringa District of the ELCT Southern Diocese became an independent diocese, it was clear that it had the responsibility to run the Church in the new area. That meant it had to plan its stewardship programme on how to acquire funds to run the diocese. It was a difficult task, which faced the Christians of the new diocese. Iringa district itself, before it became a diocese, had a policy whereby, in order for an area to acquire status of a parish, it had to be economically stable, have a permanent church building and have a permanent house for the pastor. Each prospective parish had to fulfill these mentioned conditions on a self-reliant basis. The Christians built the houses on a self-help basis and, through contributions and projects, they raised money for the building materials. Parishes such as Mlandege, Mkwawa, Kipaduka, Lulanzi, Kitowo, Masimike, Mlowa, Ilambilole, Kimala, Kidabaga and Bomalang'ombe built their houses under such conditions.⁶⁷⁴

It was, also, emphasised that each parish had to have one or more permanent projects, which could generate income for the parish. Parishes such as Kihesa and Iringa Mjini embarked on tree planting for timber. In addition to planting trees, parishes had their own farms which produced good income for the parish. A parish like Kipaduka, through their farm, managed to have a big storage of maize, beans and peas, to the extent of buying their own milling machine and opening a grocery shop. Therefore, when the district became a diocese

⁶⁷³ Julius Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 16.

⁶⁷⁴ Interview with Oswald Ndelwa, 12th January 2000, Iringa.

its congregations already through the parishioners had started to build and run their church on a self-reliant basis.⁶⁷⁵

When the Iringa diocese was established, it adopted the same policy, which was used by the districts. One possible reason is that the same people who had been district leaders became the leaders of the diocese with the exception of a few people. In other words, the running of the congregations, parishes and districts and the diocese was put on the shoulders of the Christians. The Christians received the new diocese knowing that they had a responsibility to support the church. For instance, the Iringa Mjini parish contributed about two million shillings each year towards the income of the diocese. Besides contributing to the running of the diocese, it had other mission work to other places, such as Pawaga and Kitapilimwa, where it paid all the salaries of the evangelists and supported the building of new congregational churches at Mlangali, Kiwere and Kitapilimwa.⁶⁷⁶

The programme of stewardship was emphasised from the grass-root level the congregation, the parish and, finally, the district levels. Taking as an example of Cathedral District, congregations and parishes were asked to make short and long-term plans, which were then presented to the district for discussion. The district office held seminars, which brought together all key players in the district, which included: three church elders from each congregation; all Christian education teachers; all evangelists; and all pastors. All the expenses of the seminar were paid through contributions made by the members of the congregations in the district. The Mission and Evangelism Department sometimes supported such seminars by contributing some money towards the seminar. The major aims of the seminar were: to

⁶⁷⁵ Interview with Oswald Ndelwa, 12th January 2000, Iringa.

⁶⁷⁶ Interview with Oswald Ndelwa, 12th January, 2000, Iringa.

discuss how each leader could be self-reliant at home and to discuss the proposed short-and long-term plans for each parish, and, later, for each congregation.⁶⁷⁷

On returning to their congregations and parishes, the plan was laid before the Christians and, then, it was adopted as the official spiritual and economic plan for the year. Then it was the task of the pastor to follow-up on the implementation of the agreed plan. Seminars were held twice each year. The most important thing here is that the plans originated from the grassroot level and not from the church headquarters. It was a bottom-up approach. In order to impart the responsibility to the Christians, the district leadership conducted special lessons on stewardship, using skilled people on the subject, such as Prof. Festo Bahendwa, Dean Nicholaus Mwachusi, Pastor Oswald Ndelwa, William Malumbo and Luhwano Mwafute. Again, using the Iringa Mjini parish as an example, through such seminars the offerings in the parish went up and reached up to 22 million shillings by the end of 1997.⁶⁷⁸

The secret behind this achievement can be attributed to the role played by the Finance and Planning committee of the parish, which also took the stewardship role. After coming up with the goals and plans for the parish, all members of the parish council met and each was responsible to follow-up with their members living in their respective localities. The Finance and Planning Committee followed up closely on the expenditure of the parish. Audit reports were written, using skilled members in the parish.

⁶⁷⁷ Interview with Oswald Ndelwa, 12th January 2000, Iringa.

⁶⁷⁸ Interview with Oswald Ndelwa, 12th January 2000, Iringa.

While such an organised programme on stewardship existed at the lower levels on stewardship, there was no clear emphasis on the generation of funds at the diocese level. A possible explanation for overlooking such an important element in the existence of the church is the lack of a strong foundation of stewardship in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, as compared to the Roman Catholic Church, which besides the proclamation of the gospel, has reliable projects which generate income for the church.⁶⁷⁹

It is my opinion that, due to the domination of missionaries in the leadership area, when they left there were no people who had been adequately prepared to take over. The dominance of the missionaries, also, caused the problems of dependency and paternalism, which handicapped the emerging church. However, this dependency at diocese level never impeded the gospel momentum because, just like in the time of Paul, the Christians took responsibility and the indigenous leaders surfaced quickly.

Therefore, since the diocese went on receiving support for the running of the office from mission societies and donors, it never came up with a plan early enough on how to generate a stable income in the diocese. In the light of the above, support should not be given for paying salaries because it undermines local giving and responsibility, hence weakening local ministry. It might even create programs which the local church cannot develop and sustain on its own. Instead, it should contribute to indigenous multiplication of resources and ministry, thus, leading to spiritual and economic development. Donor support should stimulate local giving and responsibility.

⁶⁷⁹ Interview with Aira N. E. Mkocho, 15th January 2000, Iringa.

The apostle Paul worked out a powerful alternative, by creating a pattern of lay ministry. He mobilized lay ministry, mobilized the mass of regular, everyday Christians to witness, disciple, and lead. Paul did this by working for a living, in order to incarnate the gospel in people's everyday world. This could, also, be done in the Iringa diocese and this should go hand in hand with the indigenisation which has taken place in leadership. The local people have the potential and the Spirit has the power to transform and energise every Christian to make disciples.

African leadership in the church has seen the importance of translating the Bible into vernaculars in the process of evangelisation. The availability of the Bible in vernacular and of indigenous leaders has greatly facilitated the growth of membership in the churches in the Iringa diocese. However, more African scholars need to be trained to work on the project.

Although music has been used extensively in the Africanisation of Christianity in Iringa, there is a need of encouraging leaders especially the pastors and evangelists to use more African hymns in the worship services.

Chapter Eight

8. Conclusion

The hypothesis of this study stated that indigenous agents were the backbone of the spreading of the gospel to other Africans. The white missionaries could have not achieved much without the Africans however, their contribution has been understated. Therefore, there was a need to write a more balanced and representative history. The books that have been written relied on archival sources for their information, and I argued that, in most cases such information expressed the opinions and interests of the missionaries. The picture of the indigenous agents was obscured. As a remedy to this problem, oral history methodology was used, after discussing and highlighting its advantages and disadvantages. I also looked briefly at the conceptual tools which helped to decipher the two-way interaction between the missionaries and the indigenous agents.

I began by looking at the historical background of the subject of the contribution of indigenous agents to mission work in relation to other churches in South, East, West and Central Africa. It was noted that the success of the missionaries in their work was a result of Africans who yearned to participate in the task of building the church in their respective countries. However, Africans both inside and outside Africa have been exposed almost exclusively to the literature concerning the work of European and American missionaries and, as a result they have been deprived of information about themselves, the leading and most powerful source of the church.

Then I explored the historical background of Tanzania and Iringa. It was established that European explorers and missionaries penetrated

the mainland during the middle and late nineteenth century. They paved the way for Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries. Missionaries also contributed to the massive socioeconomic and political changes that occurred. The German government involved missionaries in colonial politics, and missionaries, especially German Protestants, were encouraged to become agents of occupation. The ruthless exploitation of the country by the Germans provoked rebellion from 1905 to 1907.

Tanzania fell into the hands of the British during the First World War. Both German and British governments perpetuated racial and ethnic divisions, a strategy used also by the missionaries as they established mission fields on ethnic lines. We noted that development of the country was not aimed at benefitting the African population. Africans received very little education. The development of a racially divided education system produced a reaction among the people of Tanzania that fed the peaceful movement for independence under the Tanganyika African Association (TAA). TAA was the most important forerunner of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU). TANU was established in 1954. Its programme was not only directed against British rule but also against African chiefs, who had been integrated into the colonial system through the principle of indirect rule and whose salaries were paid by the colonial administration. The missionaries had adapted to the colonial system.

After exploring the historical background of the country and the area under study, I looked at the advent of the Lutheran Mission Society which responded to the call and came to establish mission stations in Iringa. The Berlin Mission Society established its work in 1899 and, later, the Swedish Evangelical mission joined it in 1938. The study established that the Berlin Mission worked closely with the German

Government. Their value system accommodated the love of the state and the maintenance of the status quo with missionary enthusiasm. District commissioners, such as Von Soden in Iringa, demonstrated this. Therefore, Christianity rode on the back of imperial conquest.

Oral history has revealed that the Lutheran church in Iringa was a result of the initiative of local people, who worked with missionaries at Lupembe. The first mission station was established at Itonya in the Muhanga area where local people, led by their chiefs, attended worship gatherings. The Bena evangelists from Njombe were the key people in the success of the mission work in the beginnings. They spoke Kibena which could easily be understood by the Hehe people. The *walimu* (teachers) were responsible for leading devotions and for teaching catechumens reading, writing, arithmetic and the basic teachings of Christianity. The work of the Bena evangelists bore fruit and the first people were baptized in 1914 at Pommern. It was learnt that more *walimu* were recruited from the baptized group and sent to open new stations.

Following the outbreak of the First World War (1914-1918) the British removed German missionaries from their mission stations. A good number of evangelists and teachers got involved in the war and some were sought and even sent out of the country by the British Government because they were suspected of being supporters of the Germans. The Scottish Mission Society from Malawi took over the mission fields in Uhehe that were formerly under the Germans. During the period between 1919 and 1938 African leadership began to emerge and more out stations were opened and the congregations were grouped into *majimbo*. The German missionaries were allowed to return in 1925.

The SEM joined the Berlin mission in 1938 and opened a series of mission stations and bush schools. The Bena evangelists and a few Hehe teachers were instrumental in the mission work in the area during this time. The outbreak of the Second World War again threatened the mission's progress, but the local situation had improved greatly since the First World War. When the Germans were again deported, there were a number of African pastors and a band of teachers and evangelists who stood firm and carried on with the mission work. This was an opportunity for the local leadership of people like Yohana Nyagawa to exercise church leadership which could not otherwise have been acquired at this time. The war brought a spirit of self-reliance, confidence in leadership, evangelism and financial management.

I went on exploring the emergence of indigenous leadership in the Iringa diocese and the interaction with the missionaries. Indigenous people in Iringa were not in the picture until the end of the First World War. Between 1918-1939 the Hehe never held any prominent positions in the church. They were incorporated at the lowest level of leadership as *walimu* and, later on, as church elders. The *mwalimu* had a few years of bush school education which was offered at the main station and later on passed on what he had learnt to the catechumens. The missionaries offered education not for leadership qualities but to reach the human souls through the Word of God. The *walimu* were indispensable to the success of the mission work carried out by the missionaries.

Further developments took place in 1932 when the Berlin missionaries decided to train experienced evangelists for ordination. Eight evangelists pursued theological training at Kidugala and were ordained in 1934 and, after four years, in 1938 six more people were ordained.

In 1939 Yohana Nyagawa was elected to head the church following the deportation of the Berlin missionaries. It was noted that during Nyagawa's leadership more evangelists and teachers were trained, for theological education and secular education as well. However, his leadership was short-lived following conflict with the SEM missionaries. Martin Nordfedt of SEM replaced Nyagawa in 1941.

Between 1940 and 1965, Hehe teachers and evangelists began to pursue theological training and the first Hehe pastor was ordained in the 1950s. At the same time, the research established that another category of leadership evolved under the leadership of Nyagawa. He introduced the *jimbo*, who was in charge of a number of congregations in a particular geographical area. Usually, the *jimbo* was one of the senior evangelists. From the late 1940s onwards attempts were made to give Africans permanent positions of power. The independence movement had a decisive impact. Although it had been theoretically widely accepted in missionary circles that self-government was the aim and that Africans should lead the churches in Africa, few concrete steps to transfer responsibility and power had been taken. In the south, there was constitutional change as a result of political awareness and more Africans were given leadership opportunities.

By 1965 the present Iringa diocese had three indigenous pastors and some theological students. The Uhehe district got indigenous leaders, although the Bena still dominated leadership positions. Between 1967 and 1987 nine evangelists from the Uhehe area were ordained and became deacons. Between 1989 and 1999 fifty people were ordained and became pastors. African self-confidence was growing, as was the recognition that African Christians were in a better position than European missionaries to represent the interests of Christians in African states. The fact that this visible and representative

Africanisation did not take place at a faster pace is attributable to the scarcity of theologically well-qualified candidates. In this regard, the churches paid for preparing too late for independence. Nevertheless, it can be stated in general that, since the beginning of the 1960s, Africans have taken over more and more representative positions, while foreign missionaries have continued to exercise great influence in the background.

The study explored the rise of the Iringa diocese by tracing its beginnings as one of the districts of the Southern diocese. It was found out that the Iringa diocese broke from the Southern diocese due to ethnic tensions that existed. As a result of those tensions, the leadership of the Southern diocese summoned Iringa district to prepare itself to become a diocese. The preparations began in 1986 and in 1987 Iringa diocese was born with pastor Owdenburg Mdegella being its first bishop.

Following the numerical growth of the church, a shortage of pastors was experienced. Experienced evangelists were recruited and more theological students were sent to Makumira Theological College. Hand in hand with training pastors, Iringa launched a TEE programme to train leadership from the grass-roots level, who would acquire the knowledge and have the spiritual strength to lead the church in various areas. Of the TEE students, some were ordained and are serving as deacons. It was established from the study that Iringa diocese was the first diocese to ordain women in Tanzania and the first woman district pastor is from Iringa. Besides the training programmes and the ordination of women, within the diocese there is the *Umoja wa Wanawake* (Women Union) who form the pillar of the church. The youth in addition form an active part of the church in the diocese.

Then, I went into exploring the biographies of some key Christian documents and captured in recorded form the biographical histories and contributions of distinguished Christians in the context of the Lutheran church in Tanzania, and the Iringa in particular. It was established that writing biographies was one of the important needs of Christianity in Africa because much of what is written is on the work of European missionaries. Information on the efforts of their African counterparts is very scarce.

Yohana Nyagawa was one of the first pastors in the area. Before joining the ministry he served, as a German soldier during the First World War, a tax collector and an evangelist. As a pastor he was elevated to the superintendent position. His leadership came to an end in 1941, after he was suspected in areas of finance, and because he wanted to ordain elders as pastors in sufficient number to dominate the Synod. Although Nyagawa refuted these allegations, the missionaries had already made their decision and a SEM missionary, Martin Nordfeldt, who helped to focus resentment against Nyagawa, replaced him.

From oral history, we have established that the relationship between the indigenous clergy and the missionaries was not of collegiality and that brought about tension from time to time. The missionaries were the commanding officers, but the real players were the local pastors. Looking at their activities in the church, one can conclude that it is mainly due to their achievement that the Lutheran church in Iringa survived. They were outstanding personalities and leaders of their congregations. These pastors and others worked under difficult conditions but remained dedicated to the service of God. They are the heroes of the Lutheran church in Iringa and their voice in this study is heard.

Lastly, I looked at the Africanisation of Christianity in the Iringa diocese. Lamin Sanneh, in his book *Translating the Message*,⁶⁸⁰ has highlighted the importance of African languages in the process of evangelisation. Sanneh shows that the availability of the Bible and of liturgical texts in African languages has greatly facilitated the numerical growth of churches in those parts of Africa where the translations have been published. The study has established that translation was closely linked to literacy and education. Africans from the very beginning of the translation work worked hand in hand with the European missionaries. Berlin missionaries used the Kibena language for both the Hehe and the Bena. Indigenous speakers, together with people like Mzee Mangula of Lupembe area, translated the New Testament into Kibena. They also translated German hymns into Kibena and published them for the first time at Kidugala in 1914, followed by three later editions.

The Bible translation in the Iringa diocese started in 1993, jointly undertaken with the Anglican church of the Ruaha diocese. The people involved in the on-going translation of the Bible into Kihehe are Lambert Mtatifikolo and Yohana Mbeho. In addition to the translation team, there is a review team of eight people.

It has also been established that music has been used in the Africanisation of Christianity in Iringa. Indigenous choruses and songs have been incorporated into the worship services. Choirs and youth groups use indigenous melodies and sometimes sing Kihehe as a vehicle of Christian expression and worship. It has been noted that some of the African songs have found their way into western hymnbooks, sharing African gifts with the rest of the world.

⁶⁸⁰ Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message*.

In conclusion, the study has revealed that Africans have always heard the Gospel principally from other Africans, and that committed men, women and youths, did evangelical work. They carried the work of the Lord on their shoulders and they did it through participation, witnessing, hard work and taking responsibility. During those days there were no bicycles. Leaders travelled with a group of Christians from village to village, evangelizing; yet their achievements have not been fully recognized before now when we have discussed their inherent significance. Their memory remains alive and treasured in Iringa diocese and Tanzania as a whole.

Appendices

1. List of ordained pastors in the Iringa diocese from 1934 to 1999
2. Time line of events since 1899
3. Pastors ordained from 1934 to 1999
4. Short biographies of informants
5. The dioceses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 1998
6. Other illustrations

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2. Israel Kiponda	11 October 1999	Iringa
3. Petro Mpalanzi	23 September 1999	Image
4. Mama Mlagala	20 December 1999	Iringa
5. John Msigomba	12 August 1999	Iringa
6. Emmanuel Mwachang'a	16 August 1999	Iringa
7. Muhuvile Nyanganani	16 August 1999	Iringa
8. Gaspar Magava	11 November 1999	Idete
9. Marko Maluli	3 January 2000	Ilula
10. Mathayo Ngahatilwa	26 June 2000	Idete
11. Edward Mnyawami	4 January 2000	Iringa
	23 November 2000	Iringa
12. Aira N. Mkocho	15 January 2000	Iringa
13. Mathayo Lubawa	15 January 2000	Image
14. Agnes Kulanga	15 August 2000	Iringa
15. Tuluwene Kulanga	16 August 2000	Iringa
16. Mama Luvinga	17 August 2000	Iringa

14. Agnes Kulanga	15 August 2000	Iringa
15. Tuluwene Kulanga	16 August 2000	Iringa
16. Mama Luinga	17 August 2000	Iringa
17. Phoebe Msigomba	25 August 2000	Iringa
18. Tumwiwukage Maginga	15 August 2000	Image
19. Owdenburg Mdegela	11 November 2000	Iringa
20. Sara Mhanga	12 November 2000	Iringa
21. Benitho Madembo	15 November 2000	Iringa
22. Ananidze Msigwa	15 November 2000	Iringa
23. Joshua Madumulla	17 November 2000	DSM
24. 23. Juliana Muyinga	23 November 2000	Ilula
25. Amos Luhwago	15 November 2000	Iringa
26. Jocktan Makongwa	22 December 2000	DSM
27. Elia Mbangwa	10 December 2000	Image
28. Samson Mkemwa	12 December 2000	Iringa
29. Twidike Kitamogwa	20 August 2000	Image
30. Janeth Maginga	12 January 2001	Ilula
31. Elizabeth Msola	13 January 2001	Ilula
32. Oswald Ndelwa	22 July 2001	Iringa
33. Esther Chusi	10 August 2001	Iringa
34. Mama Nguvila Mkocho	12 August 2001	Image
35. Miriam Chaula	12 August 2001	Image
36. Venance Chaula	15 August 2001	Iringa
37. Hammerton Mdegela	6 November 2001	Iringa
38. Dorothy Mtae	15 November 2001	Iringa
39. Lambert Mtatifikolo	23 November 2001	Iringa
40. Martin Chuma	12 November 2001	Iringa
41. Judith Kidibule	20 January 2001	Iringa

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APPENDIX 1

LIST OF PASTORS IN IRINGA DIOCESE FROM 1949 TO 1999

Pastors trained at Lwandai/ Makumira Lutheran Theological now Makumira University College

Name	Ordination	Place	Bishop
1. Joseph Kiwope	1949	Pommern	Martin Nordfeldt
2. Lutangilo Mdegela	1952	Ilula	Martin Nordfeldt
3. Lazaro Myinga	1957	Ilula	J. Nekson
4. Lupumuko Lugala	1/12/1957	Ilembula	J. Nekson
5. Israel Kiponda	26/2/1967	Ihemi	J. M. Kiwovele
6. Japhet Mbwani	16/12/1979	Iringa	L. Vuhahula
7. Owdenburg Mdegela	16/12/1979	Iringa	L. Vuhahula
8. Benjamin Ngede	16/12/1979	Iringa	L. Vuhahula
9. Abel Mtanga	21/12/1981	Iringa	J.M. Kiwovele
10. Gideon Mhenga	5/12/1982	Pommern	J. M. Kiwovele
11. Ernest Mwaluvinga	5/12/1982	Pommern	J. M. Kiwovele
12. Lwinuko Nzogela	1983	Iringa	J. M. Kiwovele
13. Lunodzo Mang'ulisa	24/11/1985	Iringa	J. M. Kiwovele
14. Aleck Mhanga	20/12/1987	Lulanzi	O. M. Mdegela
15. Oswald Ndelwa	26/11/1989	Kihesa	O. M. Mdegela
16. Richard Lubawa	5/1/1992	Image	O. M. Mdegela
17. Wiston Musitapakwe	4/1/1993	Ipalamwa	O. M. Mdegela
18. Bethuel Mponzi	4/1/1993	Ipalamwa	O. M. Mdegela
19. Donald Kiwanga	4/1/1993	Ipalamwa	O. M. Mdegela
20. Patrick Kikoti	4/1/1993	Iringa	O. M. Mdegela
21. B. Mbogo	26/12/1993	Lukani	O. M. Mdegela
22. Lambert Mtatifikolo	31/7/1994	Iringa	O. M. Mdegela
23. Askali Mgeyekwa	22/1/1995	Iringa	O. M. Mdegela
24. Harrison Kisabugo	21/12/1996	Iringa	O. M. Mdegela
25. Bernard Kahwage	21/12/1996	Iringa	O. M. Mdegela
26. Patson Lubava	21/12/1996	Iringa	O. M. Mdegela
27. Aikam Chavala	21/12/1996	Iringa	O. M. Mdegela
28. Laiton Myinga	21/12/1996	Iringa	O. M. Mdegela
29. Gerald Gaifalo	21/12/1996	Iringa	O. M. Mdegela
30. Keneth Comoro	7/12/1997	Ilula	O. M. Mdegela
31. B. Sevetu	20/12/1998	Pommern	O. M. Mdegela
32. Livingstone Akijar	20/12/1998	Pommern	O. M. Mdegela
33. Blaston Gavile	20/12/1998	Pommern	O. M. Mdegela
34. Anta Muro	20/12/1998	Pommern	O. M. Mdegela

Pastors trained at Kidugala Seminary in Njombe

35Yohana Nyagawa	1934	Kidugala	Julius Oelke
35. Martin Chuma	26/11/1974	Iringa	J.M. Kiwovele
36. Nicholas Mwachusi	16/11/1974	Iringa	J. Kiwovele
37. Samson Mkemwa	16/12/1979	Iringa	L. Vuhahula
38. Iskaka Luinga	16/12/1979	Iringa	L. Vuhahula
39. Aidan Muyenze	9/12/1979	Mafinga	L. Vuhahula
40. L. Kimbavala	16/12/1979	Iringa	L. Vuhahula
41. Gabriel Makongwa	16/12/1979	Iringa	L. Vuhahula
42. Damian Ngandango	29/1/1984	Ilula	J. M. Kiwovele
43. Samos Mbangwa	29/1/1984	Ilula	J. M. Kiwovele
44. E. Sawike	29/1/1984	Iringa	J. M. Kiwovele
45. Benitho Madembo	24/11/1985	Iringa	J. M. Kiwovele
46. Tudzeline Madembo	20/11/1991	Kihesa	O. M. Mdegela
47. L. Mbwilo	6/8/1989	Kihesa	O. M. Mdegela
50. Peter Kikoti	6/8/ 1989	Kidamali	O. M. Mdegela

Pastors trained on short course programmes within the Iringa diocese

48. E. Nyadwike	26/11/1989	Kihesa	O. M. Mdegela
49. L. Lufyagila	26/11/1989	Kihesa	O. M. Mdegela
50. L. Nselu	26/11/1989	Kihesa	O. M. Mdegela
51. M. Mwaulila	26/11/1989	Kihesa	O. M. Mdegela
52. R. Mang'ulisa	26/11/1989	Kihesa	O. M. Mdegela
53. A. Sawike	26/11/1989	Kihesa	O. M. Mdegela
54. L. Makombe	26/11/1989	Kihesa	O. M. Mdegela
55. G. Maketa	26/11/1989	Kihesa	O. M. Mdegela
56. R. Mdegela	26/11/1989	Kihesa	O. M. Mdegela
57. L. Matonya	26/11/1989	Kihesa	O. M. Mdegela
58. Hezron Makongwa	26/11/1989	Kihesa	O. M. Mdegela
59. Abel Kikoti	26/11/1989	Kihesa	O. M. Mdegela
60. T. Gavile	26/11/1989	Kihesa	O. M. Mdegela
61. Agnes Kulanga	31/7/1994	Iringa	O. M. Mdegela
62. Esther Hauli	31/7/1994	Iringa	O. M. Mdegela
63. Lena Muyenze	31/7/1994	Iringa	O. M. Mdegela
64. Simon Msula	31/7/1994	Iringa	O. M. Mdegela
65. Yohana Mwachusi	31/7/1994	Iringa	O. M. Mdegela
66. Israel Mbembe	31/7/1994	Iringa	O. M. Mdegela
67. Jocktan Kasuga	31/7/1994	Iringa	O. M. Mdegela
68. Timothy Kimbavala	21/12/1996	Iringa	O. M. Mdegela

Pastors trained at Mbeya Moravian Theological College
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69. P.Kikoti	27/6/1993	Ipalamwa	O. M. Mdegela
70. P. Chaula	27/6/1993	Kipaduka	O. M. Mdegela
71. Beneth Mkemwa	21/12/1996	Iringa	O. M. Mdegela
72. E. Msungu	23/11/1999	Ilula	O. M. Mdegela
73. N. Chaula	23/11/1999	Ilula	O. M. Mdegela
74. Allan Msola	23/11/1999	Ilula	O. M. Mdegela

Pastor trained at Tumaini University at Iringa University College
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75. Amani Kimata	20/12/1998	Pommern	O. M. Mdegela
76. Jenro Kivamba	20/12/1998	Pommern	O. M. Mdegela
77. Adela Kivelege	20/12/1998	Pommern	O. M. Mdegela
78. Goden Mdeke	20/12/1998	Pommern	O. M. Mdegela
79. Himid Saga	20/12/1998	Pommern	O. M. Mdegela
80. Lusungu Msigwa	20/12/1998	Pommern	O. M. Mdegela
81. Yona Kinganga	20/12/1998	Pommern	O. M. Mdegela
82. Alfred Kikoti	20/12/1998	Pommern	O. M. Mdegela
83. Abbas Tagamutwa	20/12/1998	Pommern	O. M. Mdegela
84. Zabron Lubava	20/12/1998	Pommern	O. M. Mdegela
85. Imelda Kisava	20/12/1998	Pommern	O. M. Mdegela
86. Huruma Bimbiga	23/11/1999	Ilula	O. M. Mdegela
87. Enock Mwilafi	23/11/1999	Ilula	O. M. Mdegela
88. Yusto Kinyoa	23/11/1999	Ilula	O. M. Mdegela
89. Yekonia Koko	23/11/1999	Ilula	O. M. Mdegela

APPENDIX 2

Time Line of Events

A brief chronology of key events relating to the history of the Iringa diocese 1899-1999

1899: Inception of the first mission station at Itonya in Udzungwa in the Heheland by a German missionary Wilhem Neuberg (locally known as *Mwambetani*)

1902: Foundation of the Ubena/Hehe Synod

1905-1907: MajiMaji rebellion, during which Tanzanians fought against Germans Colonialism

1910: Establishment of the Ilutila mission station in Udzungwa highlands by a German missionary, Julius Oelke

1912: Julius Oelke transferred Ilutila mission station to Pommern.
- Consecration of the Lutheran church in Iringa by Julius Oelke

1914-1918: First World War and the removal of the German missionaries from Tanganyika by the British government.

1916-1925: Pastor G.N. Anderson of the Scottish mission takes over the German missionary work

1925: German missionaries were allowed to return to Tanganyika

1928: Pastor Herman Neuberg returned to Tanganyika and stayed at Pommern.

1930: Hermann Neuberg became the pastor **in charge** of the whole Bena/Uhehe and Ulanga area and his station was at Pommern.

1932: Julius Oelke became the pastor incharge of the Bena/Uhehe Synod
- Eight senior evangelists begun theological training at Kidugala

1934: Ordination of the first eight indigenous pastors in Bena/Hehe Synod.

1938: Arrival of the Swedish Evangelical Missionaries and establishment of a mission station at Ilula

- Establishment of the Ilula dispensary under sister Greta.

1939-1945: Second World War.

- Deportation of the German missionaries for the second time by the British government.

1940: Yohana Nyagawa was elected head of the Lutheran church in the Southern Highlands and was assisted by Martin Nordfeldt.

- A church was built at Ilula-Itunda
- Kidewa bush school was started under a Bena teacher, Tulawona Mtulo from Ilembula.

1941: Demotion of Yohana Nyagawa as superintendent of the church and was transferred to Pommern.

- Uhominyi bush school was started under a Bena teacher, Luponelo Mgeni.
- Pastor Martin Nordfeldt became the head of the Lutheran church.

1943: Establishment of Balali bush school under a Bena teacher Yeremia Mlagala.

- Ukwega school was started under a teacher called Alexander Nyandzi

1944: Arrival of Pastor Enock Person from Sweden and worked in Uhehe at Pommern.

- Sister Frida Lundstrom from Sweden worked at Ilula dispensary.
- Arrival of Pastor Ahden from Sweden at Ilula mission station.

1945: Establishment of Ibumu bush school under a Bena teacher called Joel Mhoka.

- 1945-1946: Establishment of Irindi and Ikokoto schools by Toplas Nsemwa and Enock Mkocho from Ubena respectively.

1947: Establishment of Ilula-Itunda school.

1953: Establishment of Lyasa school under a Hehe teacher from Ilula.

- Establishment of Pommern Lutheran dispensary under a Bena medical assistant called Luhangano Badi.

- Beginning of Kidugala Bible school and eight Hehe students admitted.

1954: Beginning of Ihimbo primary school under a Bena teacher called Allan Kyambile.

- Opening of Idete primary school under a teacher called Joel Lubazibwa.

1955: Beginning of Kitowo primary school under a Hehe teacher Emmanuel Muyula.

1957: Five congregations had been established: Pommern Ihemi, Ilula, Idete and Iringa town.

1959: Founding of the Evangelical Lutheran church in Southern Tanganyika and Pastor John Nilsson became the president.

1960: Death of Pastor Joseph Kiwope and buried at Pommern.

1961: Beginning of Pommern Upper Primary school under the leadership of a Bena teacher Philemon Kyambile.

1963: Pastor Henrick Smedjebacka elected president of the Southern Synod.

- Founding of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanganyika and Southern synod became a member among the first seven churches.

- Beginning of Bomalang'ombe primary school under a teacher called Abel Chongola.

1964: Opening of Idete Lutheran dispensary.

1965: Edward Mnyawami becomes the first Hehe Assistant Education Secretary in the Southern Synod (dealt with the Hehe area only).

- Pastor Juda Kiwovele elected the first indigenous president of the Southern Synod.

- Pastor Lupumuko Lugala becomes the head of the Iringa/Uhehe district.

1967: Increase in the number of congregations to seven: Idete, Ihemi, Ilula, Isimani, Iringa, Masisiwe, and Pommern.

- Edward Mnyawami becomes the Education Secretary of the Uhehe area.

- Pastor Lunogelo Vuhahula becomes head of the Iringa/Uhehe district.

- Luhangano Magava becomes Secretary of Iringa/Uhehe district.

1969: Death of Pastor Herman Neuberg and was buried at Pommern.

1970: Nationalization of church schools.

- Pastor Allan Kyambile elected head of Iringa/Uhehe district.

1975: Number of congregations increases to 10: Tungamalenga, Pommern, Ipalamwa, Ismani, Ilula, Iringa, Ihimbo, Ihemi, Masisiwe and Idete.

1976: Uhehe I and II district separates into two districts of Iringa and Mufindi respectively.

1977: Foundation of the Iringa district. Pastor Israel Kiponda elected head of the new district.

- Pastor Martin Chuma becomes the assistant head of Iringa district.

1979: Death of Pastor Lutangilo Mdegela and buried at Ilula.

- Increase in number congregations to 11: Tungamalenga, Pommern, Ipalamwa, Ismani, Ilula, Iringa, Ihimbo, Ihemi, Idete, Masisiwe and Kihesa.

- Eighth synod meeting held at Lupembe decided to change the synod leadership into bishopric leadership.

1980: Ninth synod meeting held at Mafinga and read the constitution for the second time and accepted episcopate leadership.

1981: Tenth general meeting (*ad hoc*) met at Makambako in March, to elect the Bishop of the Southern diocese.

- Dr. Juda Kiwovele elected the first bishop of the Southern diocese.

- Pastor Levi Nsemwa becomes the assistant bishop of the Southern diocese.

- Obadia Kasumba elected the secretary general of the Southern diocese.

- Pastor Nicholas Mwachusi becomes head of the Iringa district.

- Pastor Samson Mkemwa becomes assistant head of the Iringa district.

1983: Death of Pastor Iskaka Luvinga and buried in Iringa.

1986: General meeting of the Southern synod was held at Chimala and Iringa district asked to become a diocese.

- Pastor Nicholas Mwachusi becomes head of the future Iringa diocese.

- Constitution for the Iringa diocese completed and accepted by the general meeting of the diocese.

- The Executive Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania endorsed Iringa district to become the Iringa diocese.

- Pastor Owdenburg Mdegela became the bishop of the Iringa diocese.

1987: Iringa diocese begins with five districts and 24 congregations. -
- Bishop Mdegela was consecrated.

1991: Ordination of Tudzeline Kihwele, the first woman theologian in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania was ordained in Iringa.

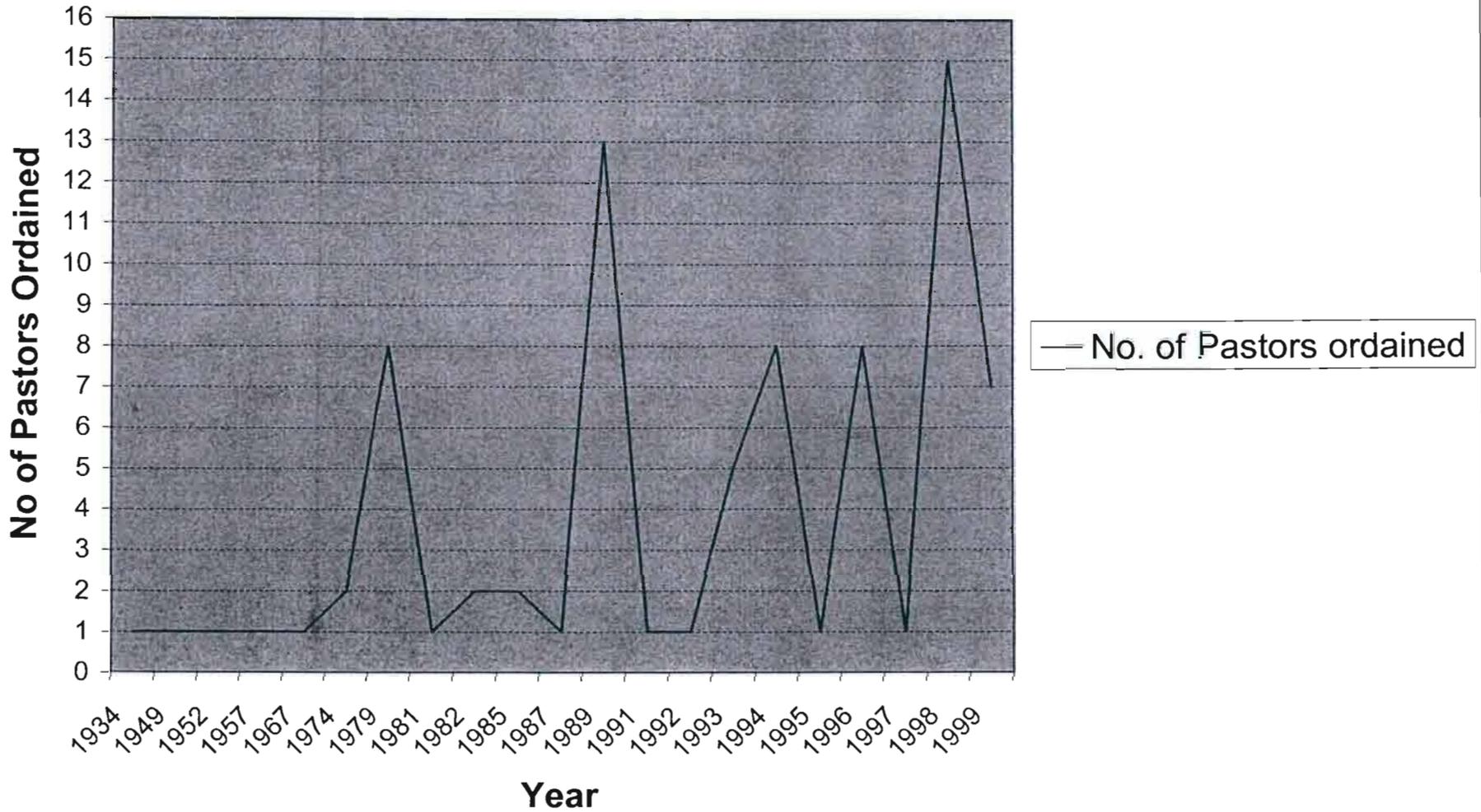
1993: Establishment of the Lutheran College at Iringa.

1995: Lutheran College at Iringa changes to the Tumaini University at Iringa University College.

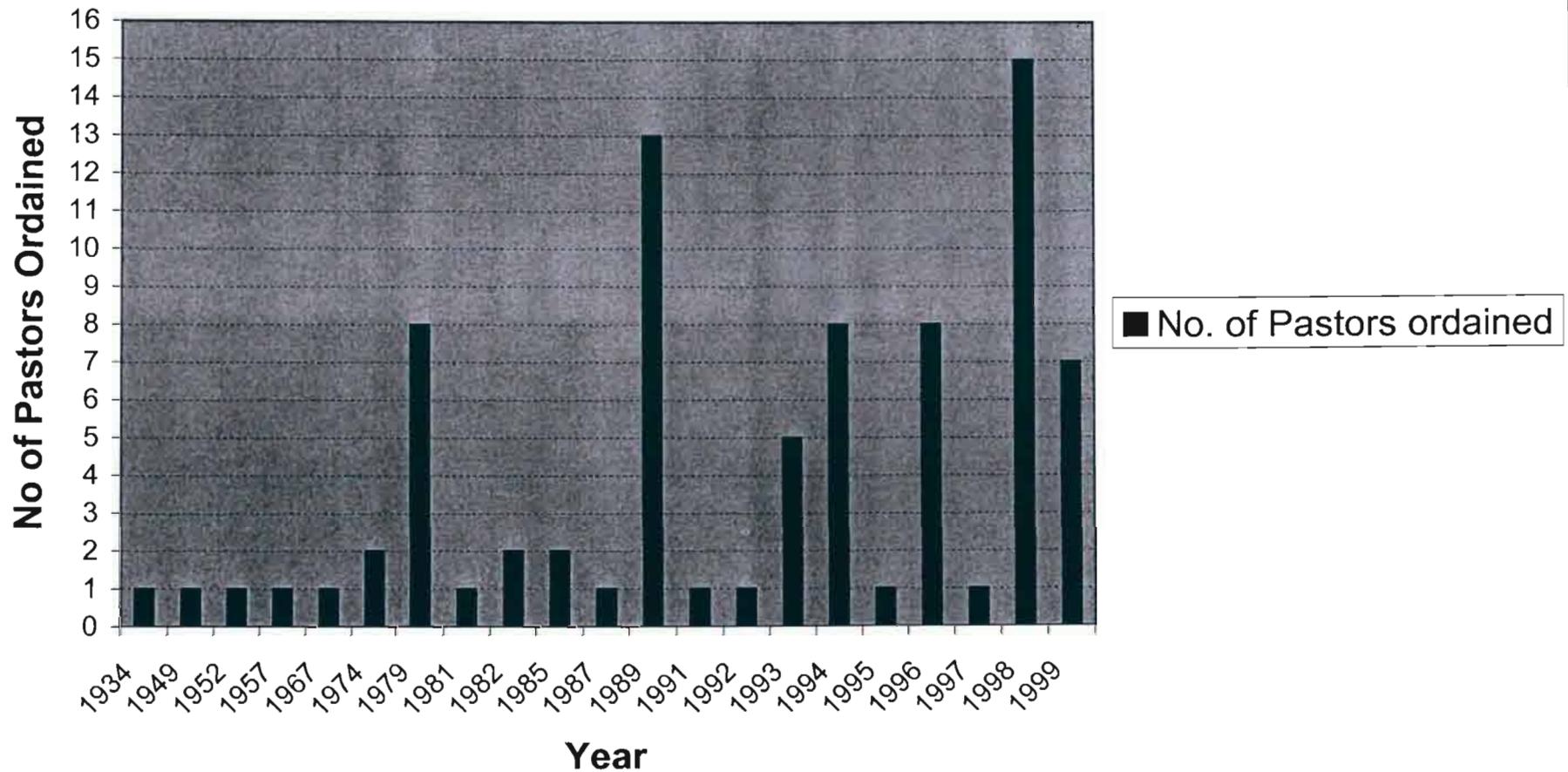
1997: Death of Pastor Lazaro Myinga and buried at Image

1999: Death of Pastor Nicholas Mwachusi and buried at Kihesa church.
- Centenary celebrations of the Iringa diocese held at Pommern.

Pastors ordained from 1934 to 1999



APPENDIX 3 Pastors ordained from 1934 to 1999



APPENDIX 4

SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF INFORMANTS

The following 18 biographies are based on the interviews conducted during my research from 1999 to 2001 in Tanzania. These biographies have been arranged in a chronological order.

1. Muhuvile Nyaganani. (Interviewed on 16 August 1999 in Iringa).

Nyaganani was born in 1927, the daughter of a former missionary cook and, later, an evangelist from Ubena. Her father was assigned to lead a mission station at Muhanga while his colleagues, Silawoneka Kimalila, Thomas Kyando and Iskaka Lvinga - were sent to Kitowo, Ihimbo and Ukwega stations respectively.

She recalled that a missionary by the name of Julius Oelke organised villagers with the help of sub-chiefs to build a mission house by using stones. The building materials were hauled from the forests and people had to walk long distances carrying them to the building site. The house that was built was used as a school. Students were told to sit in the front part of the house which had five long stairs. She recalled a teacher by the name of Lunodzo Kahale, who came from Ilembula to teach them how to read and write. The most important thing, however, was to learn the Small catechism, especially the Ten commandments and what they meant. They were taught in Kibena and the book was also in Kibena.

Later they started to build the church. Its walls were built with mud. Both men and women worked under the supervision of the missionary. They had to travel long distances to fetch thatching grass known as *lusingo*. All the masons were local people. The people were not paid at all. In addition to free labour, they gave their farms to be used for brick making. Men were also porters for the missionaries whenever they travelled to visit mission stations.

During the Second World War the British soldiers sought her father because they suspected him of keeping secrets of the Germans who had stayed in Pommern. (*Long pause*) They had to flee their home and stay in the forest for weeks with their mother. Their father had a separate hiding place. Their mother sang a Christian song for him in Kibena to invite him for lunch. (*Another long pause followed by a sigh*). The food was placed in a special place away from the singing spot and at the end of the song she mentioned the location of the food. Their father responded by singing the same song: *Ve Nguluvi ve mukomi wi yena ve Mutwa ve x2 Eee na Mutwa vee, ve Nguluvi wi Mukomi wi yena*. (You great God you are one oh Lord (x2) Ah yes, Lord, You great God, you are the only great God). Life went on like this until the situation came to normal.

As a teacher, her father spent many days away from home and walked miles and miles from one village to another spreading the gospel. They had no bicycles. Her mother took care of the family at home. Women also had special duties in the church.

They cleaned the church every morning, cooked for people working in the church, sang in the choir and some were church elders. In short the *walimu* of those days worked extremely hard and were really committed to spread the Word of God.

2. Emmanuel Mwachang'a. (Interviewed on 16 august 1999 in Iringa).

Emmanuel Mwachang'a was born in 1929 at Pommern village. He attended a bush school in the village before joining Malangali Middle School. While at Malangali he learned workmanship under the guidance of Asandje Bangu who was also a preacher. He worked with the Iringa District Council as a mason and carpenter and, by then, he was a member of Iringa station.

In 1951 Mwachang'a, together with other Christians, opened a congregation at Kihesa and served as a preacher as well as a church elder. In 1959 they built a small church which still stands today. Using his skills he was asked by the church to build Mlandege Lutheran church building and the Idete Lutheran dispensary. He chaired the Building Department of the Southern diocese from 1985 to 1987. Mwachang'a was a member of the Executive Council of the Southern diocese for a number of years and has continued with the same role in Iringa diocese.

He likes doing evangelism from house to house, through hospital visitation or by giving out his vehicle to be used for evangelism

trips. When asked about his experience with the missionaries, especially at Pommern his home village, he said:

"Julius Oelke was a missionary who worked in Njombe and then was transferred to Pommern. He came with a group of Christians: some of them were his cooks, gardeners, cleaners and teachers. All of them were from the Bena tribe. I remember people like *Mzee* (elder) Elia Kinyamagoha, Daud Nyalusi, Matayo Tengalakwi and Esau Nyanganani, who later became my father-in-law. The missionary used these Benas to teach and preach the Word of God to the people of Pommern and its surrounding villages. The Christians were also asked by their leaders to participate in building the church by going to the forest to fetch building materials. People freely gave their plots to be used for making bricks. However, one of my worst experiences with the missionaries was when they mistreated Pastor Yohana Nyagawa after buying the lorry. They wanted the African pastors to remain poor and always to depend on the missionaries. This made most of the young educated Africans hate becoming a pastor because they equated the ministry with poverty and that their reward was in heaven."

Mwachang'a is still an active member of the church. He is the chairman of the Kiheha Church Council. He is a member of the Executive Council of the Iringa diocese and still very active in the building of church buildings. Since 1993, he has been building the Tumaini University-Iringa campus. As part of his evangelism every day in the morning he visits all the sick people at the Iringa hospital.

3. Ananidze Msigwa (Interviewed on 15 November 1999 at Ilembula in Njombe).

Msigwa was born in 1928 at Ilembula. He studied at a bush school and then middle school, before joining a teachers' training college at Kinampanda. He was one of five students who were sent by Pastor Yohana Nyagawa when he was the church superintendent from 1939 to 1941. He became a grade II teacher and opened Ilula Primary School in 1947. Before then the school was a bush school under the leadership of Justo Mpokoma.

During the Second World War the German missionaries were interned and deported. During this time the church was in the hands of the Africans, under the leadership of Pastor Yohana Nyagawa. The church experienced a shortage of money because it did not have enough sources of money. This showed the need to get some help from the German missionaries. The Germans told one of the pastors, Ananidze Chungu, that there was a Lutheran missionary at Ilula who could provide some leadership support. Martin Nordfeldt replaced Nyagawa.

Nordfeldt carried out the mission work by taking evangelists from Ubena and sending them to evangelise and to open schools in Uhehe. Evangelists like Jeremia Mlagala, who later became a pastor, were assigned to open a school and a mission station at Balali, while Tulawona Mtulo went to Kidewa and Enock Mkocha

went to Ikokoto and later to Uhominyi, and Johoshwa Nyalumbo went to open a station at Ibumu.

These teachers taught the local people reading, writing, arithmetic and the Lutheran Christian faith. The results of their work are people like Mathayo Lubawa, who later, together with other teachers, took over the mission work. At Pommern there were Germans who also used the Bena evangelists to spread the word of God in Uhehe. The Hehe people called Christianity a religion of the Bena because in Uhehe it was brought to them by the Bena.

Most of the students joined Christianity so that they could learn the lessons which were taught and not to convert to Christianity. It was not easy for the local people to accept the new faith because they wanted to stick to their African Traditional beliefs. The Hehe had critical minds and did not want to change their way of life easily. It was not easy for them to abandon their local traditions like drinking beer. Msigwa was one of the prominent teachers who are remembered today in Image and Ilula. He was deeply involved in evangelism.

4. Tumwiwukage Yotimembe Maginga. (Interviewed on 15 August 2000 at Image).

Maginga, one of the daughters of *jumbe* (village sub-chief) Yotimembe Maginga was born in 1930. Her father sent her to school, not because she was loved, but because she was not so

helpful at home because of her small build. She joined the village school at Kidewa in 1939, being the only girl in a class of forty-four students. Although her parents never wanted her to become a Christian, she got baptised on 5 November 1947 and was confirmed on 31 December 1948 at Ilula. She had to walk for eight hours from her home to Ilula mission station for her confirmation.

Tumwuwukage Maginga became the first woman to become a Christian and it was very difficult for her to live with her parents and relatives, who were active in African traditional religion. She got married to a village teacher and in 1949 became the first woman to be a church elder, a position she served until 1995.

As the wife of a teacher, her house was not only a home of visitors, but also a refuge for youths both girls and boys, who were chased away by their parents after converting to Christianity. She cleaned the church three times a week. She received missionaries and pastors and cooked for them. As a church elder most women visited her for counselling and advice. Most women passed by her house as they went to fetch water from the river. They spent some time discussing the new faith.

Since her husband was the *jimbo* and recruited new *walimu* for new mission stations most of them spent nights at her home. They were also given sleeping mats, utensils and even clothes to enable them to get started. In an interview with Maginga, she mentioned a list of preachers who had been through her home: Yakobo Lubawa (stayed with them for four years before taking

his new assignment), Phillipe Lutitu (assisted him with his marriage plans), Phillip Lubawa, Ismael Mnyawami and Lazaro Myinga (who later became an evangelist and then a pastor, stayed in her house for three years). Others were: Levi Lubawa, Amon Lubawa, Andrea Utalo, Yesaya Mkwatwa and Isaack Mkwatwa.

According to Maginga, the following is a list of *walimu* who served at Kidewa mission station while she served as a church elder: Tulawaona Mtulo, 1939-1947, a Bena teacher from Ilembula; Joel Mhoka, 1947-1951, a Bena evangelist trained at Ilembula, Joseph Mpokoma; 1952-1955, a Hehe evangelist; Lazaro Myinga, 1955-1963; Daniel Kimwaga; Nehemia Sakafu; Marko Makombe; Benjamin Mwangwa; Yesaya Mkwatwa; Mathew Lubawa; Philip Lubawa; Daktori Mbangwa; John Chavala; and Nebathi Lubawa.

5. Allan Jonathan Kyambile (Interviewed on 14 November 1999 in Mafinga).

Kyambile was born in Njombe in 1930 and was brought up in a Christian home. His grandfather was a cook for the missionaries and later his father was a clerk for the missionary.

He attended the village school from 1937 to 1939, then joined primary school and was taught by an African teacher. He then joined a teacher's training school for two years and became head teacher at Lupembe mission school in Njombe and then, later, at Ihimbo mission school in Uhehe. While at both Lupembe and

Ihimbo he was used as a preacher. He then joined Makumira Theological College from 1957 to 1959.

He became a parish pastor in Njombe after his ordination. In 1961 he was elected the vice-president of the Southern synod but was asked to go for further education because the president of the Synod, who was a missionary, did not want to work with young educated pastors who pressed for change in the church. He became a district pastor of Uhehe district from 1968 to 1972, then vice president of the Southern diocese from 1977 to 1984. He was also a member of the Executive Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. He also served as an exchange missionary pastor in Germany from 1985 to 1996.

Pastor Kyambile's father Jonathan Kyambile was ordained in 1938, the second group of indigenous pastors in the Southern Highlands. He remembered how his father left home for a month or even more for the mission work. The journey involved walking long distances. Each station sent youths to meet him and escort him throughout his mission journeys. He made house to house visitations during the week and conducted reading, writing and catechism classes. In each station he had to baptise adults and infants, reinstate old members in the congregation, counsel people and teach confirmation classes.

On stipends, Kyambile recalled that there was a big gap between the missionaries' salaries and those of the African pastors. Africans received between 200 and 300 Tanzanian shillings which is equivalent to 2 and 3 South African Rands. This amount was

not reliable because there were months when they stayed without being paid. Pastors were required to serve the church on a life basis and the missionaries' salaries were paid directly from their mission stations. Pastors were not allowed to wear shoes and stole. They just put on a simple alb.

In order to promote evangelism pastors divided the parish into small geographical districts called *majimbo*. In each jimbo there was an evangelist who planned and kept the vision of the work of evangelism in the area. They were able to group areas for mission work and areas that needed normal visitation by the pastor to strengthen people's faith. It was also their duty to observe discipline in the congregation and the pastors and the evangelists used youth groups, women's groups and choirs in their evangelism programmes.

After the country's independence, the church made the same move to indigenise church leadership. They invited the spirit of partnership with them but not as leaders. The church became more conscious of training its own leaders in pastoral ministry and education. After the Arusha declaration, all parishes in the church were taken over by indigenous pastors. More and more evangelists and pastors were trained to lead congregations and parishes as the church grew numerically.

6. Samson Mkemwa (Interviewed on 12 December 2000 in Iringa).

Mkemwa was born in 1933 at Fikano in Ipalamwa area. He was baptised in 1937 by a missionary called Herman Neuberg. He attended bush school at Fikano from 1940 to 1948 and was confirmed on 17 June 1947 at Fikano by Pastor Yohana Nyagawa. He was married to Madelina Kayuwanga on 20 December 1959 and pastor Lazaro Myinga officiated at their marriage.

From 1962 to 1963 he became the Secretary of the youth group in Idete congregation and from 1964 to 1965 attended a Bible school at Kidugala. From 1966 to 1968 he spent his internship year at Idete and went back to Kidugala for his final year in 1969.

From 1969 to 1976 he served as a deacon at Masisiwe parish. From 1976 to 1979 he served at Tungamalenga and in the same year was ordained as a pastor and remained at the same station until 1981, when he was transferred to Ihimbo parish where he served until 1982. He did not stay long at Ihimbo. Within the same year he was transferred to a nearby congregation at Pommern where he served until 1986. During all this time, he was the acting district pastor of Iringa district while Pastor Nicholas Mwachusi was in England. He was one of bishop Yuda Kiwovele's advisers. After Iringa diocese came into existence in 1987, Mkemwa was transferred to Masimike where he served until 1990. He was then transferred to Ipalamwa in 1990 where

he served until he retired in 1999. Between 1990 and 1999, a new district was formed with its headquarters at Ipalamwa. Mkemwa was elected leader of the district. Mkemwa was a member of the executive council and central committee until he retired. When the former assistant bishop passed away in 1999, Mkemwa became the acting assistant bishop for three months before another one was elected.

7. Martin Chuma (Interviewed on 12 November 2001 in Iringa).

Chuma was born in 1934 at Ilamba and was baptised on 30 October 1950 by pastor Yohana Nyagawa. He started school at Mlandege in Iringa in 1947, and stayed there until 1952. He then joined Tosamaganga carpentry school in 1953. He taught at a bush school at Isele from 1954 to 1956. From 1957 he taught at a bush school at Lulanzi and from 1958 to 1964 became the *jimbo*. From 1965 to 1969 Chuma joined Kidugala Bible School, where he was trained to become an evangelist. He became a deacon in December 1967 and in November 1974 was ordained as a pastor by Yuda Kiwovele.

Chuma served in a number of places, both in Iringa and in the Southern diocese. After his ordination as a deacon he served at the following places: Nyanzwa from 1968 to 1969; Ihimbo 1970; Mafinga 1971; Mapanda 1972 to 1973; and as a pastor at Ihimbo from 1975 to 1976; Ilula 1977 to 1981; Pommern 1982; and Ihimbo 1983 to 1994. From 1995 he was transferred to his home parish at Itungi. He has been a member of the Executive

Council of Iringa diocese since its inception. He is fond of speaking in riddles. In November 1999 he retired. In one of his letters he wrote, "*nimehama hadi nikajihurumia*"(I have been transferred until I pitied myself).

8. John M. Msigomba (Interviewed on 12 August 1999 in Iringa).

Msigomba was born in 1936. After completing his primary education he joined the teachers' training college at Kinampanda. He taught at Ilula primary school in 1957 and was transferred to Ihimbo where he taught for nine years before being transferred to Irindi.

Since 1947, Msigomba was active in the church and youths were asked to haul bricks for building the church at Ilula. The missionaries asked the local leaders to tell the people to attend the church. The secretary of the village was the first person to respond to the invitation. Later on, other people joined them. Some of the local people were taken by the missionaries to work for them. Some assisted them in translating Kiswahili into Kihehe.

The missionaries brought teachers from Njombe. People were baptised in December after completing the baptism lessons. The school aimed at converting the students to Christianity.

Msigomba taught religion in his school, besides other subjects. He taught Sunday school, led Bible study, baptism classes and

was the leader of the choir. On Sundays, teachers asked him to go and preach to the surrounding villages. Missionaries used to inspect the sermon outlines of all the teachers who participated in preaching the Gospel.

The situation changed from 1967 when all church schools were nationalised. Some of the teachers did not want morning devotions or the teaching of religion. It was no longer compulsory. However, the pastor was always close to the school and was available for the students who needed baptism. John Msigomba is still one of the church elders at Kihesa congregation.

9. Israel Kiponda (Interviewed on 11 October 1999 in Iringa).

Kiponda was born at Ihimbo in Iringa district in 1939 and was brought up in a Christian family. His father was a church elder and one of the first converts in Ihimbo during the service of a Bena pastor called Lunodzo Kahale.

He attended a bush school in the village from 1943 to 1947. From 1949 to 1951 he pursued primary school education and then joined Ilembula middle school from 1952 to 1953. From 1954 to 1957 he joined Malangali Secondary School. In 1958 Kiponda worked as a clerk for the Tanganyika African National Union and during that time the country was on its way to independence. From 1959 to 1960 he joined Ruaha Research Centre.

In 1961 Kiponda became an evangelist under Pastor Lupumuko Lugala who served at Pommern as a congregation and district pastor. In 1962 he joined Makumira Theological College, having the highest education from Iringa. He was ordained in 1967 and served at Ithemi parish and then was transferred to Ifakara parish and, thereafter, was transferred in December 1969 to Mtwara parish. In 1983 he was elected the Iringa district pastor. Between 1985 and 1986, he was under pastoral discipline and was stopped from performing pastoral duties. It was alleged that he had had an affair which resulted in a child being born out of wedlock. He was reinstated in 1986 as an evangelist and later as a pastor. In 1990 he went to Zaire as a missionary. From 1993 to 1994 he was one of the teachers at Kihesa for the pastor's crash programme. And in 1997 he attended Clinical Pastoral Education at Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre. In 1998 he was a teacher at Ilambilole Bible School for nomadic tribes in Tanzania.

Kiponda remembers that Christians worked hand in hand with the evangelists and pastors in doing evangelism. During every second day of the Christmas season, people did not worship in their normal churches. They took drums and played traditional music which invited everyone. When people gathered, the dance was stopped for some time and the word of God was preached. Through this strategy many people joined the church. They moved from one village to another playing traditional tunes and dances.

There was also a special arrangement for making visitations to people who were too old or sick to attend church services or who could not fetch their own firewood. Christian women organised themselves and sent bundles of firewood to such people and some carried water for them. They also had a habit of eating and drinking together. This practice attracted other people to church, as it brought people together socially and spiritually.

Women's leagues were very active in evangelism through visitations and support. They met for special prayers for the clergy, cleaned the church surroundings decorated the church and cooked for guests of the church. Youths, both male and female, were assigned the task of carrying the pastor's or evangelist's luggage to their respective destinations. They usually arrived in the morning and took the pastor's luggage or bag and then left, leaving the pastor to walk at his own pace. Although after independence and the Arusha Declaration more pastors were trained, the role of lay preachers and teachers remained important in the mission work.

10. Elia Mbangwa (Interviewed on 10 December 2000 at Image).

Mbangwa was born in 1939 at Kidewa village in Image area. He attended a bush school at Kidewa from 1947 under Joel Mhoka, a Bena teacher from Kidegembye village in Njombe. Mhoka was brought, together with others, as an African missionary to the people of Uhehe. The school was thatched with grass and other

teachers who assisted Joel Mhoka were Mathew Lubawa and Benjamin Mwangwa.

The missionaries used the government through the local chiefs to get students to enrol in the school. The main emphasis in school was on religion. Christian teaching was compulsory for everyone. If anyone did not want to be baptised force was not used: it was voluntary. After the bush school one of his relatives who lived at Nyabula wanted to take him there. Nyabula was a strong Roman Catholic Station whose leaders from time to time had feuds with Lutheran German missionaries at Pommern.

When news arrived at the Swedish missionaries, the missionaries went to Mbangwa's parents to advise them to release their son to go to Nyabula. When they agreed, Mbangwa became a teacher after receiving some training on teaching methodology from Jeremia Msola and Myula. He was sent to Irindi where he served for one year before being transferred to Ibumu where he served for thirteen years a teacher and preacher. He was then transferred to Ilambo where he stayed for two years and in 1963 he joined Kidugala Bible School. In 1965 he was placed to serve at Lyasa village, where he stayed until his retirement in 1988 when he became involved in politics.

11. Petro S. Mpalanzi (Interviewed on 23 September 1999 at Image).

Mpalanzi was born in 1940 to a polygamous family. He spent most of his youth pasturing the cattle and goats of his father. He joined bush school and was taught by a Bena evangelist from Njombe called Tulawona Mtulo and then by Joel Mhoka and Mathayo Lubawa. "Each bush school had 45 students. Almost all the students converted to Christianity because we were taught very well the Christian faith and were impressed by the way of Christian life and faith of our teachers. We also learned how to sing Christian songs and some of us even learned to read music – the Tonic Solfa in the evening. We always met at the house of Mathayo Lubawa who lived a few paces from the church. Through music, using the *Sacred Songs and Solos* book, many young people were attracted and joined us. On Sundays we sang in the church as choir and it sounded very nice. The house of Lubawa was always full of youths in the evening. As a result, some of them were invited to live with him. It was a safe place, as well as a learning place...

The teachers made regular home visits to our parents and in doing that they established good relations with our parents. However, our parents never wanted to convert to Christianity: they only wanted us to learn how to read and write so that we could help them by reading or writing their letters. Some came to listen and even tried to sing but never converted because of the strong ties they had with their African traditional religion...

Every Sunday there was a program to evangelise neighbouring villages. The school band played traditional dances to invite people to participate in dancing as a social gathering. After a

reasonable period of time of dancing, the dance was stopped and the evangelist or church elder came forward and proclaimed the Gospel to the crowd of people. A good number of people joined the church through this method. Kidewa had a big catchment area to be evangelised. It included six villages. Each Sunday the evangelist had walk long distances to these villages and sometimes he spent nights there. A church elder always accompanied the evangelist and it involved person-to-person conversation. Sometimes the whole family was brought together and addressed.

Teachers were given opportunities to address and proclaim the Gospel at funerals. This proved to be a very effective way of evangelising. The teacher spent time in homes praying for people and in the evening Christians met at the bereaved family's home and sang Christian songs to comfort them. Early converts were encouraged to live in the mission village and they built houses around the station. They participated in cleaning the surroundings of the church. People changed their life styles to suit the teachings of the Christian faith. They were encouraged to work hard in their homes to improve their standard of living. Recreation was introduced during the evening for all, especially for the youths who played football and girls who played netball. Thursday was set aside for singing and Bible study.

The missionaries gave the teachers some second hand clothes, especially during Christmas and at times all people who attended church that day would get bread. However, due to the lack of respect for people's culture, some missionaries found themselves

in conflict with some strong willed indigenous *walimu*, who were not ready to be abused.”

Mpalanzi completed standard six at Ilula Middle School. He was then employed by the Kalenga primary court as a clerk and then transferred to Mufindi primary court. In 1967 he was chosen by Image area and became the *jumbe* (sub-chief). In 1970 he joined the teachers’ training college in Musoma and graduated in 1972. He taught at a number of primary schools before being appointed as head of Kilala-Kidewa Primary School, until he stepped down in order to pursue further studies in education in 1998.

12. Tuluwene Kulanga (Interviewed on 16 August 2000 in Iringa).

Kulanga was born in Idete in 1942 and went to school at Ilutila primary school up to standard four. Then he joined Mlandege primary school for two years, before going to Dar es Salaam in 1959. While working he joined evening school to further his education. He worked in the church as a custodian then joined the Tanzania Telecommunication Company in 1962 as a Stores Assistant. He then went to Kenya and attended a six months course on store keeping. He studied on his own and managed to attain an Ordinary level certificate in 1970. He went for another course in stores management for two years. As he worked for the company, he was also actively involved in the church as the chairman of the youth league in Dar es Salaam district. He also

worked as an evangelist in Buguruni congregation in Dar es Salaam.

In 1964 he was selected to join Mwika Bible School, together with his colleague who is now a bishop in Dodoma diocese, but he refused. He married Agnes Mkemwa in 1970. This was after pastor Lutangilo Mdegela asked him to go back to Iringa and get married. Although he had another fiancée, Kulanga had to agree and he got married to Agnes. They stayed in Dar es Salaam for ten years before going back to Iringa after some of the church officials of the Southern Synod had requested him to come back to Iringa and become the manager of the Lutheran Centre.

While in Iringa he introduced Bible study and revival meetings, as was taking place in Dar es Salaam. The East African Revival Movement, which started in Uganda, had found its way into Tanzania, especially in Dar es Salaam. Kulanga was an active member of the movement. Revivalism in Iringa was new and when Kulanga went for evangelism in the villages and organised open-air meetings it caused some problems with his church leaders. They called him to Njombe for questioning.

In 1982 a Swedish missionary working with the Southern Diocese showed great interest in evangelism and he motivated Kulanga to go on with revivalism. Many people got interested but this caused another problem because many Christians who joined the revival movement decided to move away from the Lutheran Church to Charismatic churches, such as the Assembly of God and Pentecostal churches. Later on, the idea of

establishing Theological Education by Extension was brought forward and many people showed great interest in that. Its aim was to train people about the Word of God.

From 1985 until 1986, Kulanga was actively involved in establishing the new diocese and he was asked to take the position of secretary general. He refused because he was convinced that he would not become a leader. They were happy to get Edward Mnyawami, the former Education Secretary of Uhehe district and the area commissioner of Mufindi before he was elevated to regional commissioner of Rukwa region. Kulanga continued to serve as an evangelist, hand in hand with Stefan Holmstrom.

After the birth of the Iringa diocese Kulanga continued to work as an evangelist in the new diocese with Stefan Holmstrom. In 1988 he became the Youth Secretary of the diocese but, after a year, he again became secretary of the Mission and evangelism department. He did not stay in the office but was sent to Zaire for one year to study evangelism. After his course he became the assistant general secretary of the diocese until 1995, when he voluntarily requested a change of responsibility because he could not get along with his General Secretary.

In 1996 a new programme was introduced in the diocese called *Sinema Leo*. It was meant to give spiritual service to the nomadic tribes in Iringa diocese. Kulanga became the head of the programme and served all the nomadic tribes in the Southern zone which comprises nine dioceses. He worked hand

in hand with the Danish Lutheran Mission whose major aim was to preach the Word of God by showing films which were borrowed from Kenya.

Before he started the programme Kulanga had to approach the traditional leaders in their respective locations and ask for permission. Following the meeting with the traditional leaders at Kilosa, another meeting was organised which required all Maasai people in the zone to gather at Ilambilole and a Maasai evangelist from Kenya addressed them. The Maasai agreed to welcome the evangelists and decided Ilambilole would be their centre. The programme has yielded good results because a good number of Maasai have converted into Christianity.

Commenting on the role of lay Christians and the clergy in the mission work Kulanga said: "Although there was no money at the diocese, we asked the leaders to allow us to go to work. Christians contributed money for fuel and made the evangelists travel to various places for evangelism. The Christians were asked to contribute food and money and since the work of evangelism yielded good fruits, people got motivated and gave more commitment towards spreading the Word of God. Christians took the responsibility of reaching other people who needed the gospel by giving whatever could support the mission work."

Kulanga gave a summary of the achievements of evangelism as follows: In Pommern district, a number of new parishes have been opened as a direct outcome of evangelism: Mwatasi,

Idegenda, Ng'ang'ange, Kitowo and Lukani. Kilolo congregation is on its way to becoming a parish. In Idete district Idunda was an outcome of evangelism. While in Ipalamwa district, new parishes such as Kising'a, Makungu, Mlafu and Ifuwa are a direct result of evangelism. In Iringa district, Ipogoro parish was strengthened by evangelism and house visitations, which made the parish, grow numerically. Other new parishes that grew as a result of evangelism include Mkimbizi and Mtwivila. Usolanga and Mtera grew as a result of evangelism. Kitapilimwa and Pawaga parishes are a result of the commitment of Iringa Lutheran Church Christians, who for years supported the mission work in those areas.

13. Agnes Kulanga (Interviewed on 15 August 2000 in Iringa).

Kulanga was born in 1946 at Ipalamwa and her father worked as a cook to the German missionaries. She went to the village school at Fikano. She became actively involved in the youth group and later; in 1963 she was elected to lead the youth group at Idete parish. While in that position she attended several seminars on youth leadership. In the same year she was elected to lead the Women's League in Idete parish. In both positions she had to travel miles and miles visiting congregations, conducting seminars and attending meetings. In 1964 she was once again elected to lead the Uhehe District Women's League. This position was even more challenging because she had to visit all parishes in the district and attend meetings at the Synod

level. As a girl it was not easy to be accepted by married women as their leader who could guide, lead and teach them.

In 1965 Kulanga together with two men, wrote a Bible School entry examination and all of them passed. However, the Synod decided to take the two men. It was a bitter experience for her. Fortunately, a missionary who knew her well as a bright young lady decided to pay for her studies, giving her equal opportunity as the two men. She was one of the first women from Uhehe area to join the Bible School. She proved to be very capable at the School and many wished that she could pursue a theological education but her level of education would not allow her. In 1966 she worked as an evangelist until 1968 when she was elected the District Women's League Secretary. Besides working as the Women's League Secretary of the district she still had to teach Christian education in primary schools, lead morning devotions in the congregation, lead the youth group and be involved in evangelism. It was a busy moment in her life although she enjoyed it. By virtue of being the district women's league's secretary, she was automatically a member of the Synod Executive Council and the Synod meeting. She worked under the supervision of Herman Neuberg, a German missionary whose main station was at Pommern.

She got married to Tuluwene Kulanga and lived in Dar es Salaam, working as a parish worker at Kariakoo congregation before they came back to Iringa in 1986. She chaired the Women's league in the district for three years and then was an evangelist, teaching Christian education in primary schools in

Iringa district. She was a member of the Executive Council of the Iringa district and of the Synod.

In 1992 she joined a special pastor's class for two years. She was ordained in 1994 and became the first female pastor of Ipogoro congregation. In 1999 Kulanga was elected to be one of the district pastors in Iringa diocese. She heads the Iringa district which comprises seven parishes. She is worried about the training programme of pastors. More training is needed to upgrade the knowledge of the present pastors so that they can face the growing challenges in society and in the ministry.

Lupituko Mkemwa, Agnes's father, learned how to read and write while working as a cook for a missionary at Pommern. They were baptised a few days before the missionaries were deported. After coming back from Dar es Salaam, he called his relatives, especially his brothers, and told them about Jesus Christ. He taught them how to read and write. He was a very good singer and eloquent preacher. He was brave enough to preach the Gospel even when faced with criticism from local preachers. He liked to use local dances to attract listeners before he preached. He travelled from one village to another preaching the Gospel. He led an exemplary Christian life and others followed his example.

14. Owdenburg Mdegela (Interviewed on 11 November 2000 in Iringa).

Mdegela was born at Fikano village in the midst of Udzungwa ranges in the Lwego Mountains in 1951. His parents, Moses Mdegela and Elizabeth Mkemwa, were both practicing Christians.

Bishop Mdegela is the ninth out of fourteen children. He was baptised in 1951 at Ipalamwa by pastor Joseph Kiwope. He was confirmed at Bomalang'ombe in 1965 under pastor Lupumuko Lugala. While still young, before he started formal schooling, he was a herd boy, herding sheep and other animals which belonged to his father, not knowing that he would one day have the responsibility to herd the sheep of his heavenly Father in Iringa diocese.

In 1961 he started formal schooling at Fikano and was enrolled in standard one. While in that school, one day during games he broke his left leg. So he left school until 1963. In 1964 he accompanied his brother, who was a teacher and had been sent to teach at Bomalang'ombe School. In 1965, while at Bomalang'ombe School, Mdegela proved to have great ability academically and so the teachers decided to promote him from standard two to four.

At the end of 1965 Mdegela passed the standard five-entrance examination very well and was selected to go to Pommern Upper Primary School with effect from 1966. He completed primary education in 1968 and all the time his performance in class was good. He joined Mkwawa Secondary School in Iringa in 1969, where he studied from form one to form six in 1974.

From his previous involvement in church activities, such as being an active member in the Tanzania Students Christian Fellowship and choir activities, he fulfilled his wish to accept the call to become a pastor. From September 1978 he studied for a diploma in theology which was offered by the Makerere University College through Makumira Theological College. On completion of his diploma, Mdegela was ordained and became a pastor in Iringa in December 1979. Pastor Lunogelo Vuhahula ordained him. On 30 September 1978 Mdegela was married to Sara Godfrey Lyamuya from the eastern slopes of Kilimanjaro Mountain.

In 1979 Mdegela was placed to teach at Kidugala Bible School, Njombe. He taught at Kidugala up to 1981. While teaching at Kidugala Bible School, Mdegela was also a private student in Industrial and Urban Psychology. He also studied music to further his musical talent.

From 1982 to June 1984 Pastor Mdegela went back to Makumira Lutheran Theological College to pursue his first-degree course in theology, leading to a Bachelor of Theology (BD). After completing his degree he was placed as a parish pastor at Ihemi, serving nineteen parishes, namely: Ihemi, Tanangozi, Ibumila, Mgama, Lupembe Iwa Senga, Masimike, Ilandutwa, Utulo, Ifunda, Ulete, Kitasengwa, Rungemba, Masumbo, Isupilo, Itengulinyi, Kiponzelo, Igangidung'u, Sadani and Kihanga.

In 1986 while still at Ihemi he was elected the Assistant of the Head to the Iringa diocese in the making, as well as the head of

Ihemi district. In a general meeting of Iringa diocese in the making which was held on 8 October 1986, pastor Mdegela became the first Bishop-elect of Iringa and started working formally on 1 January 1987. By then pastor Mdegela was the youngest ever bishop of the Lutheran denomination in the world.

15. Dorothy Mtae (Interviewed on 15 November 2001 in Iringa).

Mtae was born in 1954 in Vudee village in Same district, Kilimanjaro region. She is the twelfth child of the late pastor Paulo Mtae. She attended primary school at Vudee and joined Machame Girls Secondary from 1969 to 1972 and then Jangwani High School from 1973 to 1974. While in secondary school she was an active member of the Tanzania Students Christian Fellowship. She held leadership positions in the students' organisation, first as regional treasurer and then as the regional secretary of the Eastern and Coastal region.

From 1975 to 1976 she attended compulsory national military service at Oljoro camp. In the middle of 1976 she was called to join Chang'ombe teachers' training college where she attained her diploma in education in 1977. She taught at Musoma Secondary School from 1978 to 1979. While at Musoma she was a church elder in the Musoma Lutheran Church. Then she was transferred to Morogoro Secondary School where she taught until 1982 when she got married and joined her husband who worked at Kibaha regional office. She taught at Kibaha

secondary school from 1982 to 1989. During her stay at Kibaha she was one of the church elders and she was the chairlady of the Women's group of the parish for two years. She was also the chairlady of the Sunday school programme at Kibaha Lutheran Church.

At the end of 1989 she once again joined her husband at Makumira Lutheran Theological College who was studying theology. While at Makumira she taught at Makumira Secondary School until 1991 when the whole family moved to Iringa. In Iringa she taught at Pommern Secondary School from 1991 to 1993 and then was transferred to the Iringa diocese, where she served as the training and education secretary.

While serving as the education secretary, she was also the chairlady of the youth and Christian education committee of the diocese. In 1997 she joined Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary for a year's training in Christian education. She served in that capacity for five years until 1999, when she joined Iringa Girls Secondary School. Besides being a teacher she is often used by the church to teach and conduct seminars for women and for the youth. She is also a mother of four children, one girl and three boys: Debora, Amos, Paul and Mathias.

16. Oswald Ndelwa (Interviewed on 22 July 2001 in Iringa).

Ndelwa born in 1957 in Makete district. He attended primary school at Lupila from 1967 to 1973. After school he worked with the Kiwele Cooperative Union as a clerk. At the same time he was the chairman of the Ulongambi, Mwini and Kiwele (UMK) youth group. Since he was actively involved with the church he became known by the church leaders, especially Patrick Mgalilwa and L. Nselu, who served as evangelists in Kiwele area and Iringa parish. Pastor Bennet Myinga and evangelist Mahava encouraged him to join the Bible School. In 1977 the Women's group of Iringa Lutheran Church, under the leadership of mama Mwakatundu, volunteered to meet all the expenses for his studies at Kidugala Bible School. In 1979 Ndelwa came back for his internship year to Iringa Lutheran Church where he served as a parish clerk and an evangelist to Ipogoro congregation.

In 1980 he went back to Kidugala for his final year and, at the end of the year, he was sent to Tosamaganga to serve as an evangelist. He served a community of primary and secondary school teachers and students. One of his challenges at Tosamaganga was to build a Lutheran church in a Roman Catholic dominated area. With the help of the head of the Tosamaganga head of school, he managed to get a plot within the school compound and built the church with the support of the secondary school students who formed the majority in his congregation. Every Saturday early in the morning, Ndelwa went with the students to collect stones on the hill and hauled the stones to the site with a lorry. The church was finished and is one of the best-built churches in Iringa. He had the task of re-establishing the church in the Kalenga area with the help of

Tosamaganga students such as George Fupe and Andendekisye Ngogo.

While serving as an evangelist at Tosamaganga, he was also the secretary of the district executive council and the central committee of the district. He was also the chairman of the district youth group and chairman of the Iringa youth group.

In April 1985 Ndelwa was chosen by the Iringa district to join Makumira Lutheran Theological College for a certificate in theology. In 1988 he served his internship year at Kidamali congregation. He graduated in 1989 and was ordained on 26 November 1989, together with 10 evangelists who had been trained under a special crash programme. He was assigned to serve at Iringa Lutheran Church in the town of Iringa. In 1992 he became the Cathedral district pastor and also wrote his national form four secondary examination. He was actively involved with mission work and evangelism in his parish and in other areas which needed support, such as Pawaga and Kidamali. These two congregations were established because of the mission work of the Iringa Lutheran Church Christians. He had a very organised system of doing evangelism and visitations in his parish and the church grew from one to three worship services. Besides serving as a parish and district pastor, Ndelwa held the following positions in the Iringa diocese: Chairman of the community development committee; member of the evangelism and mission committee; member of the Christian education committee; member of the Huruma centre; member of the Executive council and central committee; member of the

medical board; and member of the Pommern Secondary School board. In 1996, he wrote his national form six examination and in 1998 he joined the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg for further education.

19. Tudzeline Madembo (Interviewed on 23 January 2000 in Iringa).

Madembo was born in 1957 and attended primary school at Ilula. Madembo became very active in the youth group and became the youth secretary of Ilula congregation.

In 1979 she joined Kidugala Bible School. She served her internship year at Ilula in 1981 before completing her course in 1982. She then served as an evangelist at Ihemi congregation where she taught Christian education. She then served at Ugesa and Bomalang'ombe respectively until 1991, when she was transferred to Mlandege congregation in Iringa town.

Following the decision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania to ordain women, Madembo became the first woman theologian in Tanzania to be ordained in 1991. She served at Mlandege as the congregation pastor before being transferred to Kihasa congregation.

In 1993 she was transferred to Iringa Lutheran church and became an associate pastor. Her main responsibility while at Iringa Lutheran church was to teach Christian education in

primary schools and secondary schools. She was also active in the evangelism programmes of the congregation.

In 1995 she attended the St. Paul Area Synod Assembly in St. Paul, Minnesota, in the United States of America. She was also became the acting secretary of the Women's group of the diocese.

In 1997 she attended a leadership and English course at Mindolu Leadership Training Institute in Zambia for nine months. Shortly after coming back from her studies she became an associate pastor of the Iringa Lutheran church. During this time she also served as the student pastor for the Tanzania Students Christian Union in the Iringa diocese. She held this position until 2002 when she died.

20. **Lambert E. Mtatifikolo** (Interviewed on 23 November 2001 in Iringa).

Mtatifikolo was born in 1960 in Balali village in Iringa rural district. He pursued primary school education from 1972 to 1979 at Image Primary School. In 1980 he joined the Adult Education Institute and later in the same year joined Kidugala Junior Seminary to pursue secondary school education. He completed his secondary school education in 1985 and in 1986 joined Morogoro Lutheran Junior Seminary for a leader's training course. However, Mtatifikolo never finished the course. Instead, he joined the Lutheran Junior Seminary for advanced secondary education which took him two years.

From 1988 to 1989 he went to Finland where he studied youth work and international relations at the diploma level. From 1989 to 1994 he studied at the Lutheran Theological College, Makumira, where he graduated with a Bachelor degree in Divinity. He was ordained in 1994 at Iringa Lutheran Church. After his ordination he started working at the diocese headquarters on the translation of the Bible into Kihehe.

In 1997 while translating the Bible he also served as an associate pastor at Iringa Lutheran Church. In 1998 he became the District pastor of the Cathedral district. In 1999 he joined Stavanger University in Norway and graduated in 2001 with a Masters in Philosophy.

The Dioceses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 1998

Diocese in Mara Region (DMR)

Musoma

Bishop: Rt. Rev. Bartholomayo Yonatan
Christians: 10,781
Pastors: 10

Pare Diocese (PD)

Same

Bishop: Rev. Stephan Msangi
Christians: 85,757
Pastors: 58

East of Lake Victoria Diocese

Mwanza (ELVD)

Bishop: Rt. Rev. Manasse Yona
Christians: 33,412
Pastors: 15

Mbulu Diocese (MD)

Mbulu

Bishop: Rt. Rev. Yoram Girgis
Christians: 36,047
Pastors: 29

North-Eastern Diocese (NED)

Lushoto

Bishop: Rev. Joseph Jali
Christians: 92,884
Pastors: 77

Diocese in Arusha Region (DAR)

Arusha

Bishop: Rt. Rev. Thomas Laiser
Christians: 382,534
Pastors: 67

Dodoma Diocese (DOD)

Dodoma

Bishop: Dr. Peter Mwamasika
Christians: 14,584
Pastors: 27

Diocese of Meru (DME)

Usa River

Bishop: Rev. Paulo Akyoo
Christians: 63,587
Pastors: 49

Northern Diocese (ND)

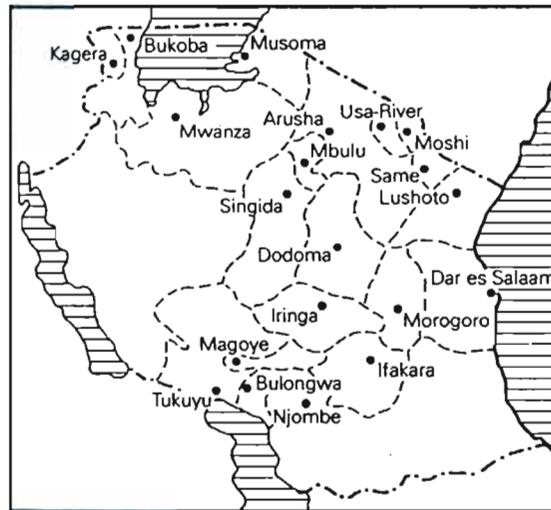
Moshi

Bishop: Dr. Erasto Kweka
Christians: 304,976
Pastors: 194

North-Western Diocese

Bukoba

Bishop: Dr. Samson Mushemba
Christians: 135,656
Pastors: 194



Karagwe Diocese (KAD)

Karagwe

Bishop: Rt. Rev. Nelson Kazoba
Christians: 64,738
Pastors: 40

Eastern and Coastal Diocese (ECD)

Dar es Salaam

Bishop: Rev. Elinaza Sendoro
Christians: 51,276
Pastors: 62

Central Diocese (CD)

Singida

Bishop: Dr. Amos Gimbi
Christians: 84,635
Pastors: 56

Southern Diocese (SD)

Njombe

Bishop: Rev. Zephania Mgeyekwa
Christians: 197,520
Pastors: 112

South-Western Diocese (SWD)

Magoye

Bishop: Rev. Job. Titos Mbwilo
Christians: 27,698
Pastors: 22

Morogoro Diocese (MGD)

Morogoro

Bishop: Rev. Richard Kitale
Christians: 19,057
Pastors: 27

Iringa Diocese (IRD)

Iringa

Bishop: Rev. Owdenburg Mdegella
Christians: 59,036
Pastors: 61

South-Central Diocese (SCD)

Bulongwa

Bishop: Rev. Solomon Swallo
Christians: 42,296
Pastors: 51

Ulanga Kilombero Diocese (UKD)

Ifakara

Bishop: Rev. Abel Mwambungu
Christians: 23,178
Pastors: 22

Konde Diocese (KOD)

Tukuyu

Bishop: Rt. Rev. Amon Mwakisunga
Christians: 67,765
Pastors: 74

Common Work (CW)

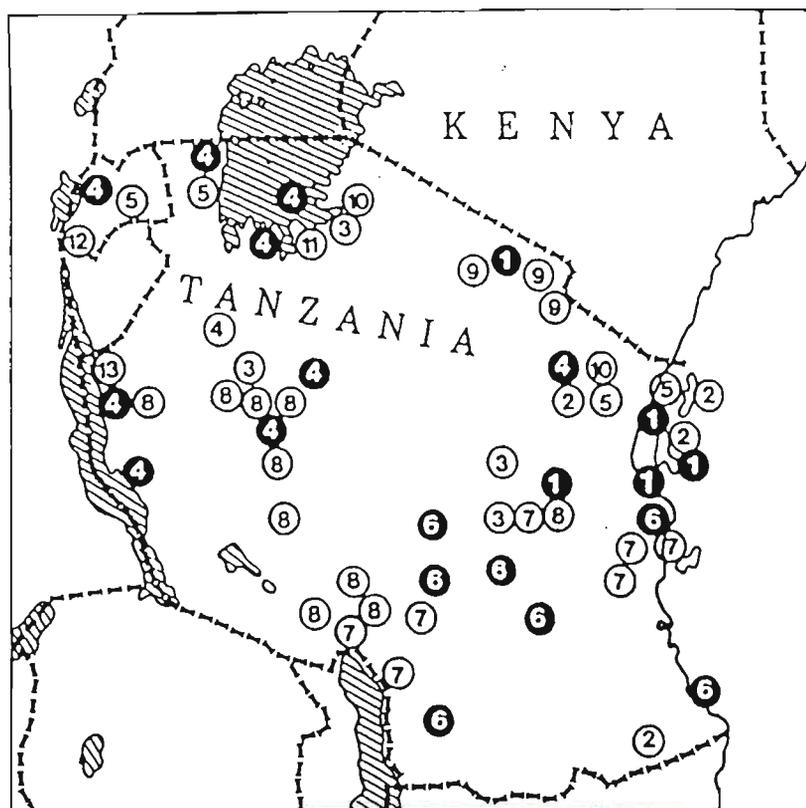
Central Office in Arusha

Presiding Bishop: Dr Samson Mushemba
Secretary General: Mr Amani Mwenegoha
4 Departments
5 Institutions
20 Dioceses

Source: Bayrisches Missionswerk, Neuendettelsau (1998)

MAPS

Areas of Missionary Influence before 1914



Scale: 1 : 10 000 000

The missions are numbered chronologically, according to the date when they started work on the mainland of German East Africa:

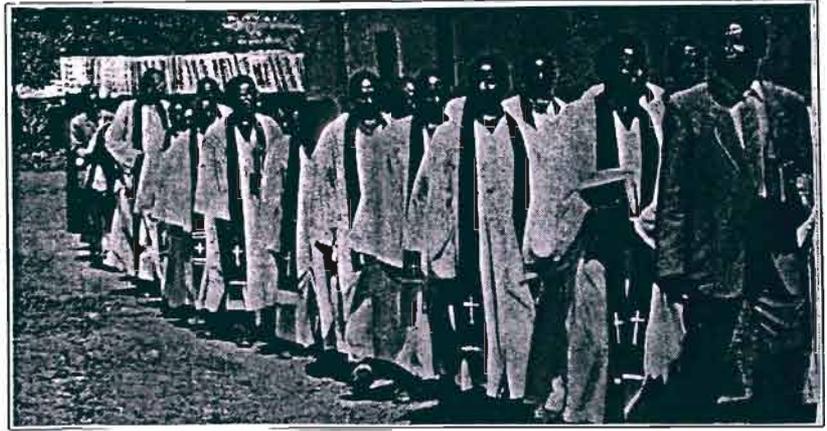
Catholic missions

- 1. Holy Ghost Fathers 1868
- 4. White Fathers 1878 (+ Trappists 1898)
- 6. Benedictines 1889

Protestant missions

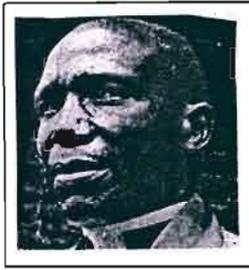
- 2. Universities' Mission to C. Afrika 1871
- 3. Church Missionary Society 1876
- 5. Berlin III 1887 (+ Afrika Verein 1896)
- 7. Berlin I 1891
- 8. Moravians 1891
- 9. Leipzig Lutherans 1893
- 10. 7th Day Adventists 1903
- 11. American Inland Mission 1910
- 12. Neukirchen 1911
- 13. Brecklumer 1912

Source: Anne Brumfit, "The Rise and Development of a Language Policy in German East Africa", *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika* (2/1980), p. 285.



Pastors in procession during the ordination ceremony in Iringa diocese

ishop Mdegela blessing the first woman to be ordained, Tudzeline adembo.



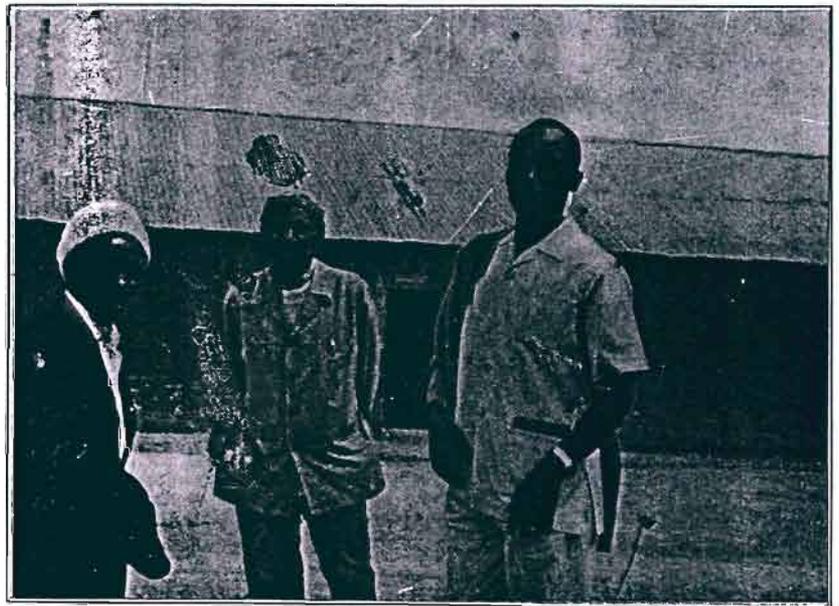
The late Pastor Lutangilo Mdegela, the second Hehe pastor to be ordained in 1952.



Teachers who taught church schools in the Uhehe and Ubena area.



The Iringa Regional Commissioner during the dedication of Tumaini University -Iringa in 1995.



Some of the senior pastors in the Iringa diocese, Iskaka Luvinga, Samson Mkemwa and Martin Chuma.



Pastor Lazaro Myinga

Source: *Dira*, Iringa diocese magazine of 1999.



Bishop O.M. Mdegela in traditional Hehe dress

Pommern Lutheran church, built by indigenous agents under the supervision of the German missionaries in 1902. It is the heart of the mission work in the Iringa diocese.

(Picture by Al Peterson in 2000).

