

Relations between the Zulu people of Emperor Mpande and the Christian missionaries, c.1845-c.1871

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Abstract

During Emperor Mpande's reign (1840-1872), following the deposition of his half-brother Dingane in 1840, the Zulu people mostly adhered to traditional norms and values, believing that the spirits of the dead live on. Ancestral veneration and the worship of the Supreme Being called Umvelinqangi were pre-eminent and the education of children was merely informal, based on imitation and observation. This worldview faced new challenges with the advent of Christianity and the arrival of Christian missionaries at Port Natal between 1845 and 1871. The strategy of almost all Christian missionaries was premised on winning the Zulu people en masse to Christianity through Mpande's court. The doctrines preached by the missionaries disputed the fundamental ethical, metaphysical and social ideas of the Zulu people. Mpande, however, earnestly requested that at least one missionary reside in the vicinity of his palace. Nothing could deter Mpande's attempts to use missionary connections to keep Colonial threats of invasion in check. While the Zulu people were devoid of organised religion which might have proved a bulwark against the Christianisation process, Mpande's acceptance of the missionaries could be said to have been mainly strategic. He could not display bellicose tendencies while still at an embryonic stage of consolidating his authority. This paper gives an exposition of the nature and extent of relations between the Christian missionaries and the Zulu empire of Mpande.

Keywords: Christianity, proselytes, missionaries, evangelisation, Zulu empire, Emperor Mpande

Introduction

An *empire* is a geographically extensive group of diverse states and peoples (ethnic groups) united and ruled by a central authority, either by a monarch (emperor, empress) or an oligarchy. This is a perfect description of what Mpande ruled over when he assumed power in 1840. The Zulu empire extended along the coast of the Indian Ocean from the Tugela River in the south to the Pongola River in the north (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zulu_Kingdom).

At the height of his power Mpande, unlike his predecessor, welcomed Christian missionaries from the Natal Colony to the Zulu empire. The missionaries were not overtly imperial agents, but acted as informants on affairs within the empire for the benefit of the British colonial establishment in Natal (Webb 1978: 75). It is imperative, however, to note that when Mpande granted the Christian missionaries admission to the empire, the Zulu people had already been in continual contact with European people who had settled in and about Port Natal for nearly three decades. As time went by these Europeans came to populate great parts of the Mpande's land as regular farmers (Hernaes and Simensens 1987: 3-5). Both the Voortrekkers and the British colonists had proved ready to protect their interests in the country by force if necessary. This fact had already sealed the destiny of the Zulu people. Mpande's subjects had also learnt that some of the European people who came into contact with them called themselves missionaries (Krige 1957:228; Lautensclager 1909: 128). The court of Mpande had been exposed to the particular aim of their presence.

The Zulu encounter with Christian missionaries at Port Natal and in Zululand

The encounter between Mpande and Christian missionaries was presaged by sporadic attacks on mission stations by his predecessor Dingane in 1838. After the Retief massacre in 1837, Dingane grew in audacity and hatred of the White people (Gray 1911: 23). He sent his numerous warriors to Port Natal where the American Board Mission was stationed². The Rev. David Lindley, the only one of the Americans remaining, sought refuge on a ship, The Comet, at Port Natal. During this raid every house at the Port was destroyed by fire and all the residents banished or killed, including the missionaries at Umlazi.

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 2. Dingane, half-brother to both Emperor Shaka and Mpande, mounted the Zulu throne after Shaka's assassination on the 24th September 1828.



The American Board Mission station destroyed by Zulu warriors in 1837

On 16 December 1837 the Zulu army in battle array attacked the Dutch 'laagers' or defences – the first at Ncome (43 km from Dundee, 24 from Nquthu and 72 km from Vryheid) and subsequently at Weenen (situated on the banks of the Bushman River) and Blaauwkrantz (between the present-day Ladysmith and Estcourt). The Dutch were the victors and, as they had vowed that if they gained victory they would build a house to the Lord, the Dutch Reformed Church in Pietermaritzburg was eventually erected in fulfilment of this vow (Kotze 1958: 203-259). It is now a Voortrekker museum.

The 16th of December was kept as a holy anniversary of a remarkable victory, and was known as Dingaan's Day in South Africa until 1994, when it was renamed Day of Reconciliation. The battle of Ncome (Blood River) on 16 December 1838 enfeebled Zulu power for a whole generation. As the Zulu army receded, the Christian missionaries returned. From one point of view the omens were propitious. As pointed out above, Mpande was not negatively disposed to missionary work. He gave Aldin Grout permission to settle near the royal village of Inkanyezi, but this favour was capricious and short-lived (Brookes 1936: 3).

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions

The early Christianisation of the Zulu people and other Africans (a mixture of Zulu and Xhosa-speaking people) living in Natal, however, may largely be attributed to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, more familiarly known as the American Board. The Board began to look to Africa as a field for missionary work in 1825. At its annual meeting in 1826 the American Board passed a resolution authorising the Prudential Committee to:

Admit dependants of Africa into the Foreign Mission School with a view to their preparation for missionary labours on the coast of Africa (Taylor 1971: 17; Whisson and West 1975:165-170).

At the same meeting recommendations were made for the establishment of a mission school with the object of educating African youth in order that they might qualify to become useful missionaries, physicians, schoolmasters, surgeons, or interpreters. They were also to communicate to the non-believers, the so-called 'heathen', such knowledge of agriculture and the arts as might prove the means of promoting Christianity and Western civilisation. This recommendation did not materialise, because experience showed that it was impossible to attempt such education away from the African environment. The school was therefore short-lived.

Missionary proliferation and the evangelisation process

By the close of 1848, however, the Christian missions numbered eight stations, i.e. Umlazi, or rather Amanzimtoti, Umvoti, Inanda, Imfume, Umsunduze, AmaHlongwa, Ifafa, and Umkhambathi (Table Mountain). There were similarly eight ordained missionaries, i.e. Rev. Dr. Newton Adams, Aldin Grout, Daniel Lindley, Alfred Bryant, Lewis Grout, Martin Kinney, James Rood and Samuel Marsh (Du Plessis 1965:78). The missionaries were subsequently increased by the addition of Rev. John Ireland in February 1849 and Messrs. Abraham, Tyler and Wilder in July of the same year. Abraham was appointed to a new station at Maphumulo. Mr. Wilder was charged with running the printing press at Umbilo in Durban.

In September 1850, however, he took charge of a new station at Umthwalume, about 120, 75 km southwest of Port Natal. The spread of Christianity at that time had the full blessing of Mpande and the council of Zulu amakhosi (potentates). It must be mentioned that not all missionaries necessarily obtained Mpande's approval. Mpande hoped to make them a buffer between his empire and the Colonial establishments in Natal.

As early as 1836, Rufus Anderson of the American Board, along with Henry Venn of the Anglican Church Missionary Society, had enunciated a motto of a mission policy, the three-self theory: 'Self-support; self-government; self-propagation' (Grout 1968:219).

Although the desire and attempts by the European missionaries to convert the Zulu people to Christianity *en masse* did produce some converts, on the whole the three-self theory was a failure. This became apparent in the annual report of the American Board's mission for 1860. Mr. Bridgeman reported:

Though we had no success, that would not diminish our obligation, or relieve us of our duty, to preach the gospel. Though there had been no converts, though our discouragements were increased a hundredfold, though the heathen were, if possible, more depraved than they now are, so long as we have the command, 'Go ye into all the world ... we would desire cheerfully to continue our work and leave results with God' (Grout 1968: 219).

The following table represents the average size of the Sabbath audiences, of the schools and churches at several American Board mission stations in the Colony of Natal and within the Zulu empire about 1845:

	Sabbath congregations	Learners	Church members
Amanzimtoti	120	40	47
AmaHlongwa	36	07	02
Esidumbini	45	14	---
Ifafa	40	10	03
Imfume	77	32	30
Inanda	82	16	51
Maphumulo	40	12	01
Table Mountain	14	---	02
Umvoti	210	40	50
Umsunduzi	50	16	51
Umthwalume	85	32	15

Source: Grout 1968: 220

While the basic ethical, metaphysical and social ideas of the Zulu people were contradicted by doctrines espoused by the missionaries, Mpande repeatedly and earnestly requested that at least one missionary should reside near him (Cory 1926: 8). Much as one might concur with the fact that the Zulu people were devoid of organised religion which might prove a bulwark against the evangelisation process, Mpande's acceptance of the missionaries was mainly diplomatic. He could not display bellicose tendencies while still at an embryonic stage of consolidating his rule. Aldin Grout of the American Board Mission wrote the following of his new location:

In travelling from Natal (Durban) to Umlambongwenya by two different routes, I have neither seen nor heard of a place where so great a population is accessible as here. Thirty-seven villages are near enough to be collected for worship upon the Sabbath. The country here is one which the Natives like to occupy ... I will only say that I am, single-handed, about a hundred miles from a fellow labourer, and the same distance from anybody that I can call Civilised, in the midst of a nation which, if it does not ask for teachers, will not throw the least obstacle in their way (Gray 1911:22).

Aldin Grout, however, had little respect for Mpande, whom he felt the people laughed at; he was mistaken, however, to think that Mpande was feeble.

It was Grout's own views about Mpande that might have contributed to the distrust in which Mpande began to hold him. He boasted:

Some Zulus say openly that if Mpande does not treat them well, they will just walk off, or move their village upon my place, taking it for granted if they are upon the station, they are out of the way of Zulu authority (Grout 1968:228-230; Cubbin 1994:15-17).

Grout appeared to have miscalculated the nature of Mpande's authority within the empire and his (Grout's) own influence over the local Zulu population. From the king downward, he thought that the Zulu people stood in perfect fear of the European people.

Reverend Grout expressed repugnance to the polygamy and witchcraft practised by the Zulu people. To the northeast of the uThukela River potentate (inkosi) Mfungumfu Dube embraced Christianity while his sons Siyazana and Mqiko abhorred its spread in the empire (*Herald* 1943: 77). They objected to Grout's vehement opposition to the traditional

way of life of the Zulu people. This further contributed to despondency between Mpande and Grout. Suddenly, on the night of 25 July 1842, the uDlambedu regiment (ibutho) from Mpande surrounded and attacked the nearest Zulu dwellings at the mission stations around Groutville. Grout watched in astonishment and then gathered a minority of Zulu converts to flee with him southwards beyond uThukela. They eventually settled on the northern banks of the Umvoti River (Sales 1971:17). With this episode the American Board's work ended in KwaZulu north of uThukela.

After the mission of the American Board in Natal and Zululand, the oldest and largest was the Wesleyan Methodist Society. In 1849 they had five mission stations in the field: Rev. Holden at Port Natal, Henry Parkinson at Pietermaritzburg, Rev. Thomas Jenkins at Palmerston (among Faku's people in Pondoland), Indaleni and Verulem (Grout 1968:238-239). Mpande did not object to the evangelisation of Africans south of uThukela. Many converts also abandoned Zulu law and customs. These Africans were not necessarily part of the Zulu empire.

The Norwegian Mission was founded by Rev. Hans Schreuder in 1845 near the present-day town of Empangeni (situated on the north coast of KwaZulu-Natal). Not fully contented with the prospects of this field, and finding Mpande opposed to his evangelisation mission in that part of his empire, he left in 1847. In 1854 he came back and started a new station at Ntumeni, among the sources of the Matigulu River, about 40 kilometres from the sea. Rev. Ommund Oftebro had opened a station at Empangeni, a branch of the Mhlathuze River (Grout 1968:239). Of all the missionaries who made contact with the Zulu people in Mpande's time, the Norwegians sought closer ties with the Zulu royalty. Their principal aim was to meet the audience with what represented the most essential points of their Christian message, namely the gospel of a new life and salvation in Christ.

In 1854 Rev. Schreuder met Queen Langazana³ at Esiklebheni palace of Mpande. He reported:

My visit to her was used, as usual, through conversation to present to her and her companions the path of truth ... (*Herald* 1854:15; Stuart 1897:66-69).

When he visited Mpande's Nodwengu palace shortly afterwards, Schreuder recorded that:

as usual there was, at the royal kraal, no lack of opportunities to speak with individuals of any rank of the thing necessary ... (Hernaes and Simensens 1987:6-9; *Witness* 1854:10).

Contact between members of Mpande's household and the Norwegian missionaries took place in three main categories, namely public preaching, instruction and conversation (Colonial Office 1858:122). This was either in private or in the presence of the council of potentates (amakhosi).

In a number of ways different members of Mpande's household took an interest in the religious preaching. This was often motivated mainly by a wish for better knowledge of what the missionaries stood for (Native Affairs 1860:1/3/9). The principles of autocratic rule as practised by Emperor Shaka had, at the time of Mpande, become more pliable, and the emperor's freedom to make decisions depended on approval from the council of potentates (amakhosi) and conformity with traditional usage (Stuart 1900:2-6). In the 1840s Rev. Schreuder discovered that the most compact resistance to his requests came, not from Mpande personally, but from his council of potentates (ABC 1853:15/4/7). Rev. Schreuder gave a report to the home constituency in early 1846, stating that:

they (the Chiefs) and other great men of the country originally were the ones to make the most resolute stand against the proclamation of the Gospel in their country (Schreuder 1957:249)

Although the Norwegian missionaries generally enjoyed a good measure of freedom to preach in Mpande's palaces, they were by no means granted free scope. From time to time, and with a few of the royal family, however, a more active interest in the message of the missionaries arose (Stuart 1909:24-28). In the case of Mpande himself, his most positive period appeared to have been the tense years from the battle of Ndongakusuka in 1856 until the mid-1860s when the prince secured his position as heir apparent (Colonial Office 1856:9).

This positiveness was expressed in his willingness to comply with many of the missionaries' requests, but there are few indications that he was more seriously attracted by the message itself. As far as the last seven to eight years of his reign were concerned, Mpande's relationship to the missionaries should be illustrated by the following abstract from a letter by Rev. Schreuder, written in March 1865:

Three times Wetlergreen and I saw the king. And with the king's consent I left to Wetlergreen the continual medical treatment of some wounds on one of the king's feet. The well-being of the king's soul also weighs heavily and intensively on my mind. There was a time of my knowing him when his heart was more like an open gullet of teeth of ferocious animals and like a hard unascendable rock. What a different man he is now when you can speak the truth to him; – he apparently listening calmly and docilely. When, after ending the conversation I bade him farewell, I said I would pray for him. He seemed so grateful and repeated emphatically: 'Yes, pray to God for me ...' Poor, powerless Umpande! How often has he not heard the Gospel

3. Queen Langazana was Senzangakhona's wife and king Mpande's step-mother.

since my last seeing him in April 1863. But even on this occasion I only managed during the conversation here and there to scatter something of the truth in Christ ... (Spohr 1965:59; Schreuder 1957:258).

Among other members of the Zulu royal house the missionaries occasionally experienced more interest in their message. Thus Rev. Schreuder, as early as 1854, reported on a visit with Queen Monase at Nodwengu, at which the missionary message was presented not only by preaching or discussion, but also by singing:

Umunase was, as usual, friendly, entertaining, interrogative, and pretty begging. And I gave her of my supplies, i.e. the truths of the Word of God. We had rainy weather on the day of my visiting her, and therefore we stayed in a big hut in which several of the royal children, servants and the personnel from the kraal came to gather. The queen recounted much of what I some 1½ years ago had taught them in her kraal, Ekulweni, and asked for some information wanting also to listen to our songs again. I therefore started to sing some hymns, which I had to repeat until all the audience started to sing along and we eventually formed a real chorus. First I recited the words, and made the meaning clear to them, and then we sang together (*Herald* 1865:14; *Native Affairs* 1856:1/1/6).

On the same occasion Rev. Schreuder also reported having conversed with some 'grown-up' royal princes who came to him daily and were his attentive listeners (*Colonial Office* 1856:40/380). These representatives of the Zulu royalty are known to have worshipped at the mission stations or to have come to receive instruction there.

Not least, the message of the missionaries seemed to have gained the ear of some of the female members of Mpande's household (*Mercury* 1878:25-26). For instance, in 1860 Schreuder reported on a visit to the palace of Mpande's mother, Queen Songiya:

One day when I visited the king's mother, Usongiya, in the kraal of Umlambongwenya, a group of people soon gathered in her big house, among whom were also several of the princesses. A religious discussion soon developed and questions were asked (notably by one of the princesses) on the issues of death, resurrection, and what is therewith connected ... (Cope 1806:8).

Some months later he wrote thus about his visit to the same palace:

Usongiya, the king's old mother, who is the head of this kraal has, since my first stay in this kraal some nine years ago, changed as much as it is possible for a person who is not yet converted in point of listening to the preaching of God's Word. Also two of the princesses who, for long, have been attentive listeners as often as the Word has been preached in this kraal, seem inclined to accept the Gospel and to believe ... These two princesses, USigagayi and Ubekiwe, of very, one could almost say, beautiful appearance are hereby committed to your warm and continual prayers ... (Schreuder 1957:263).

Among the male members of Mpande's household, the reports of the Norwegian missionaries from this period give the names of only three princes who took an extraordinary interest in contact with the missionaries and their message.⁴ The first was Prince Shingana of Cetshwayo's Ondini palace of whom Rev. Ommund Oftebro wrote in 1864:

Several of the young princes – there were, I think, six of them present – proved especially attentive, and afterwards they wanted to discuss what they had heard. One of them in particular, uShingana, proved not only to possess a knowledge of the basic tenets of Christianity which highly surprised me, but he spoke of it with such earnestness that one would think he not only knew the Word of God, but was also affected by it ... (*Witness* 1864:18; *Du Plessis* 1965:79-84; *ABC* 1868 :15/4/8).

A prince whose interest in the missionaries seemed to have been aroused more by their knowledge in reading and writing than by their religious message was Mgidlana. In 1869 Rev. H.K. Leisegang wrote:

Also a younger prince (Umgidlane) showed, in the first months of this year, a particular interest for the book ... He even came with a group (of 6 - 8 mates of the same age) saying that he wanted to *funda* (be taught). Again and again he came back in order to learn. And when I once came to him in the kraal of Umdumezala [sic] in order to celebrate Sunday, he regretted that his hut could house only a few. But when having become greater himself he would build a bigger house to have services in. Unfortunately my contact with him was discontinued when he, in April, was called to Ondini. But several times he sent friendly greetings to me saying that he was still fond of books asking also for one for repetition ... (*Native Affairs* 1868 :413; *Herald* 1870 :12-16).

Prince Dabulamanzi represented the most distinct expression of a positive attitude to the gospel among Zulu princes. He was Mpande's son, whose homestead was not far from Entumeni mission. In 1871 Schreuder rendered a rather detailed report of his relation to the missionaries and their message (*Colonial Office* 1871:179/43). He said:

4. Renegade royal princes in Natal were not included.

Our neighbour, prince Udabulamanzi, seems lately to have taken a most peculiar attitude to the truth in Christ. This, in particular, became visible when I, on my way home from Umbonambi and Empangeni in early September, visited the prince's kraal of Undi in which I also met this prince. In connection with two longer sermons of mine – relating to the grief in the royal house because of the deaths of prince [Usilwane, Ukekjwayo's full-brother, and his mother Unkumtaze, and dealing with death, judgement and resurrection to felicity or eternal damnation, he in the presence of chiefs and queens expressed himself in the most peculiar and unexpected way ... a whole company of us went over to his main kraal Ezulwini to experience there what has probably never been seen or heard of here in Zululand, – i.e. an abdurated Zulu of the royal house shedding tears when conversing of God and the matters of His kingdom – a conversation in which the prince himself took a most independent part. None of the other royal children understand him except Ubatonjile (Schreuder 1957:263).

During the period of Mpande's reign the Norwegian missionaries in the empire referred to two of Mpande's daughters as displaying an extraordinary interest in and a positive attitude to the missionary message. These were Bathonyile and Nokwenda (Native Affairs 1868:4/3; *Herald* 1869:13). They were Queen Monase's daughters and full-sisters to Prince Mbuyazi. The two were among the royal highnesses gathered in Queen Monase's palace in order to listen to Schreuder's preaching and singing.

In 1868 Wetlergreen wrote a letter from Mahlabathini which described Bathonyile's positive attitude towards the missionaries. He stated:

The name of Batonjile, the King's daughter, will be one of the best known from here. I suppose she will be on the list of those referred to in his time by the Right Reverend the Bishop Colenso as the first in the royal family to lend a more open ear to the Word of God than usual ... Almost always she has shown me her interest in speaking of God's Word although this wish often has been rather subdued. For a long time she has declared she no longer believes in amathlozi ... (Whisson and West 1975:170-177).

Princesses Bathonyile and Nokwenda had regular instruction by the missionaries at Mahlabathini. This took place in Mpande's palace and on the mission station (ABC 1862:15/4/7). In 1870 Princess Bathonyile uttered a wish 'to come and live on the station ... She would no longer pay heed to the king. It is fear of the Prince (Cetshwayo) that binds her ...' (Native Affairs 1869:113/9). Nevertheless, the Norwegian missionaries were disappointed in their hopes. Bathonyile finally got married off to a potentate (inkosi) of the Mthethwa clan (*Mercury* 1854:13-15). As a widow she is known to have lived for some years not far from Eshowe where Rev. Stavem went to see her on several occasions. Stavem recorded:

that she still loved the Word of God, but she had now become so dull and was no longer able to make any definite decisions ... (Stuart 1863 :1/3/9).

Mpande appreciated the medical expertise of the Norwegian missionaries. They helped him cure his sporadic attacks of gout.

The Berlin Mission in the Colony of Natal and within the Zulu empire dates from the year 1847, when two missionaries of that society, Rev. Dohne and Posselt, came from the interior over the Ukhahlamba Mountains and commenced operations with permission from Mpande (Native Affairs 1863:1/3/9). They founded two stations, one called Emmaus at the Ukhahlamba, at the source of the uThukela; and another, New Germany near Pinetown, about 20 km from Port Natal.

The Hanoverian Mission had its origin (under Providence) in the zeal and energy of the pious Pastor Harms at Hermannsburg, on the source of the Inhlimbithi, one of the eastern branches of the Umvoti. The Hanoverians, having obtained permission from Mpande, subsequently built six additional mission stations at Sterk Spruit, Ehlanzeni; Ethembeni on the Mpofana, Inyezane on a northeastern branch of the Matigulu, another on the Umlalazi, and another at Landela near the Umkhumbane, a branch of the White iMfolozi River (Bird 1965:120-128).

The Anglican Mission in the Colony of Natal and within Mpande's empire began with the arrival of Bishop John Colenso on 20 May 1855. It could be argued that this was not their first attempt because in 1835 Capt. Alien F. Gardiner of the Royal Navy got permission from Dingane to commence missionary operations (Bird 1965:129). In 1856 Mpande recognised them and the Church of England Mission opened a station on the Umlazi with Dr. Adams as a missionary. In 1859 it established a station at KwaMagwaza, on some of the higher branches of Umhlathuze River, between that area and the iMfolozi, a place which Mpande gave the bishop for that purpose (Winquist 1978:97-105). The mission also had two other stations, one between the Illovu and Umkhomazi River, near the sea; the other at Ladysmith in the northern part of the Colony (Mael 1974:115-168).

The Roman Catholic Mission was situated to the south-west of the Umkhomazi, and formed a centre from where the Roman Catholic Dr. M.J.F Allard and two or three priests were making some efforts to introduce their faith among the

Zulu people. Mpande also permitted them to start missionary work within his empire. Common among all missionaries who came to the empire were dreams of converting the Zulu people *en masse* to Christianity.

But during Mpande's reign the Zulu people predominantly adhered to their cultural norms and values, believing that the spirits of the departed live on. Ancestral honour and the worship of the Supreme Being called Umvelinqangi were pre-eminent and the education of children was merely informal, based on imitation and observation (Native Affairs 1863:1/3/9).

It could be argued, however, that while Mpande thought that missionaries might strengthen his political position, ordinary Zulus were frightened by the gospel that evoked terrors of damnation and hell. They were told that, unless they were converted, a fiery furnace awaited them where they would burn eternally (Hance 1969:112). Those who became converts of the missionaries were pestered to recant by the 'hard-hearted' or unrepentant Zulu subjects.

Among the individuals who became proselytes was Mbulasi Makhanya, a widow, in 1845. She, together with Dr. Adams, established the Amanzimtoti church. She contributed to the rapid spread of Christianity in that she led prayer meetings and visited homes. This also hastened the growth of a group of Zulu Christian proselytes called amakholwa, i.e. the believers (Native Affairs 1859:1/3/9). Eleven months later Nembula, her 20-year-old son, was baptised at Amanzimtoti.

On 1 May 1847, Ntaba KaMadunjini was baptised. He was one of those who fled with Rev. Grout from Mpande's wrath in 1852. He became the first school teacher near Umvoti and used to visit homes on Sunday evenings to question them on the sermon (*Herald* 1865:18). They were joined by his wives Titisi and Mciko, who broke with his family to join the Christian community.

It could be stated that towards the end of the nineteenth century Rev. Grout had built the first school in the area, known as Aldinville, which catered for the primary education of Zulu Christian proselyte children. On completion they were allowed to proceed to Amanzimtoti School at the Adams Mission of the American Board (Witness 1852:4; Taylor 1971:26-28).

In Mpande's time the Colonial establishments were viewed by the various Christian missionaries as super exploiters of the Zulu people (Owen 1838:288). The attitude of the Voortrekkers towards Zulu Christian proselytes was best described by Rev. Grout who, in his report, said:

The Trekkers granted Umlazi and Imfume as places for mission stations, but they are now getting sick of it as they say the people on their places will always be leaving them that they may stop on the station and there be free (I would not speak it aloud enough for them to hear, but that seems to show what they want and intend, they want slaves) (ABC 1840:332).

One may argue that the antagonism of the Voortrekkers towards the proselytes was prompted by the political ramifications evangelisation had on them. The proselytes demanded exemption from the legal disabilities the colonial establishment at Port Natal had imposed on the Zulu people (Native Affairs 1860:1/3/9).

In 1863 at Pietermaritzburg Johannes Khumalo retorted:

We have left the race of our forefathers; we have left the black race and have clung to the whites. We imitate them in everything we can. We feel we are in the midst of a civilised people, and that when we became converts to their faith we belonged to them (Witness 1863:2-5).

These attitudes, however, seemed not to have deterred the Zulu emperor's attempts to use cordial missionary relations as a yardstick with which to keep Colonial threats of invasion in check.

Conclusion

Throughout his reign Mpande struggled to successfully consolidate Zulu power in the face of pressures emanating from respectively the Voortrekkers, British colonial establishment and the Christian missionaries in Natal. While Mpande thought that missionaries might strengthen his political position, ordinary Zulu people were frightened by the gospel that evoked terrors of damnation and hell. They were told that non-believers in Christianity would be thrown in a fiery furnace where they would burn eternally. Zulu subjects who became proselytes of the missionaries were pestered to recant by their neighbours.

The missionaries did not assist Mpande in the internal disputes of the empire, and remained neutral in the civil upheaval that erupted in 1856. Though Mpande did not encounter the missionaries with a programmed policy as clear-cut as theirs, he came to play a highly active and determining role in the process of interrelation with them. Mpande's policy towards the missionaries was shaped by and founded upon his own world of experience. It is to be discerned within the framework both of his indigenous social tradition and of what he had learnt about Europeans through his contact with them.

Arguably, a packaged Christianity in liturgy presentation, hymnody and organisation brought about ecclesiastical alienation among the Zulu people in Mpande's time. This largely frustrated all efforts at ecclesiastical indigenisation by the Zulu emperor Mpande. During the 1860s, in forms of religious expression the Christian Western "civilisation" received greater considerations than the potential of the Zulu people and their traditions.

With the emergence of Zulu converts and the influence of missionaries, Mpande's empire accepted Christianity in spite of differences between the Zulu subjects and the Christian missionaries in approaches to conversion. Rather than doctrine, the Zulu people accentuated the existential value of the Christian message in their specific situation. Christianity had a deep Colonial disposition in as far as it became the 'servant' of the British imperialists to facilitate colonial expansion. This manifested itself more after Mpande's death in 1872 when Prince Cetshwayo, Mpande's heir, ascended the throne.

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