

CHAPTER VI:

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

What happened in the other, outer world [beyond Kasempa District] became of little interest or concern. Wars, disasters, the rise and fall of kings, dictators or ministers, or the absurd mass amusements of the uninitiated, became dwarfed in size before a bridge that had fallen, the death of a Headman of traditional importance, or the defalcation of a chief's clerk. A world once experienced that I remember. I cannot forget, for it was a world of the Middle Ages, enjoying a brief time of peace under a good king.

Robin Short, DC{1}

While the situation was much less romantic, Short was partly right. Before 1945 the NWP's society was superficially an idealized "world of the Middle Ages." Because white settlers were insignificant, administrators and missionaries became its nobility and clergy. Having superimposed themselves at the top, they then sustained enormous governmental and ecclesiastical power. Africans formed a much larger, mostly powerless group of peasants.{2}

This anachronistic society functioned through the interactions of these three social elements because of their different motivations, perceptions and social status. Two issues initiated and continued the interaction: taxation

{1} Robin Short, Sunset, p. 18.

{2} Ibid. See especially Chap. III for the implications of these statements.

imposed by the Northern Rhodesian government and Christianity interpreted and preached by the SAGM and the Brethren. Forced interaction in turn generated voluntary interaction. The latter initially assumed many forms, but education increasingly became the most significant. By 1945 many Africans, but by no means all, accepted education as a key that unlocked the secret benefits of the modern world.{3}

The Elements of NWP Society, A Closer Look

Fraternity united and suspicion divided the NWP missionary and administrative elite. The similarities noted in the last three chapters generated feelings of fraternity. For example, both groups were white and shared broad cultural assumptions. With few exceptions, those who were not British spoke English as their mother tongue. Almost all were Protestant. Members of the middle class, they shared beliefs about the work ethic, formal education, and the importance of religion in that education. All received

{3}Acute observers will correctly note that events preceeding the Balovale District secession from Barotseland in 1942 led to the most interaction in that district. Unlike the issues and topics dealt with here, this secession derived from the more localized Balovale situation, described briefly in Chap. III, over Barotse suzerainty of the Lunda and Luvala areas in the colonial era. Its wider implications related not so much to the present-day NWP, but more to the whole territory and to British imperial rule. It requires a different, more political analysis. Hence, except for passing references in Chap. IV, the next footnote in this chapter, and Chap. X, this issue has not been included.

economic support from outside the area, and all could be classified as adventurous and ruggedly individualistic. The missionaries' strong sense of God's direction helped them face difficult tasks that required much personal initiative. The administrators' official position, with its prestige and power, strengthened their resolve in setting up and sustaining a new political and economic system.

While these similarities reinforced the administrators' and missionaries' sense of belonging to an elite, their differences generated ambivalence about the alliance. First, each brought preconceived notions of the other from overseas, and the reality of living together often reinforced these. The officials thought both the Brethren and SAGM were unduly strict and disorganized, and the missionaries refused to taint themselves by participating in government and regarded the administrators as sinners needing salvation.

Second, their different vocational loyalties--secular and religious--influenced the perspectives from which the men viewed their time commitment to the region. The government regularly transferred its men in order to reduce the possibility for personal involvement. Consequently, government officials tended to subordinate themselves to the wider objectives of uniform government in the territory. Missionaries often acquired a deeper commitment because their belief in personal service reinforced their life of service to the region. Some mis-

sionaries sustained long-term relationships both with individuals and particular groups of Africans. Thus, they occasionally became deeply enmeshed in local affairs. Chitokoloki provides an exceptional example, especially in George Suckling's long-term relationships with local African church leaders and also in his representation of the Lunda/Luvale interests against Lozi suzerainty in the 1930s and early 1940s. [4]

During the first decades of the colonial era, members of this tiny white elite developed an informal, symbiotic relationship within itself and with the African people. As individuals, neither missionaries nor officials depended directly on the African population for economic support. Nonetheless, the missionaries expected their adherents to support African evangelists and the new African church, and the officials demanded tax payments on behalf of government. Thus, both had traditional economic interests and also traditional sanctions to protect them. Furthermore, they perceived themselves as the people's saviors: the officials believed that they initially had stopped war and slavery and later had introduced the people to the modern world; the missionaries believed that they had rescued the Africans from spiritual and material degrada-

[4] For Suckling's representation of the Lunda-Luvale peoples, the following interviews produced considerable information: Chifuanyisa Silas Chizawu, Kabompo Township, 15 June 1976 (given in Appendix J) and Gordon Suckling, Sachibondu in Mwinilunga District, 26 Nov. 1977; see also, Papstein, "Luvale," pp. 34-5 and Gann Northern Rhodesia, pp. 296-8. See also Chap. X.

tion. Both required African acquiescence and passivity. In short, they became two sides of the coin that affected colonial rule.

Possessing visible power and the force and self-confidence to use it, the officials demanded obedience and normally received it. With their status assured, they tolerated and often encouraged traditional African customs as long as the people broke no laws. A few mixed with varying degrees of intimacy with their subjects. The best, for example Frank Melland and Charles White, made extraordinary attempts both to understand African customs and beliefs and general patterns of living, and to write about them with considerable sympathy and understanding. {5}

Most NWP missionaries would have indignantly and sincerely denied being agents of colonialism. Beginning with Arnot in the 1880s, they perceived themselves as politically neutral. But their independence from the people, their informal connections with the government, and especially their religious monopoly made them a part of the ruling elite. They had power over the local churches and social programs even when they did not use it. They generally expanded educational and health programs as the officials requested, if these demands could be integrated

{5} The double insinuation of "mixed rather intimately" is intended. Zambian 'coloureds' in the NWP indicate one side of the intimacy. The other side is revealed by White's numerous writings--the most relevant of which are given in the bibliography--and Melland's book on the Kaonde and his other articles and reports, as typified by the one in App. D.

into their broad evangelical aims. Appreciating evangelical autonomy and fearing the entry of dissimilar mission bodies, they rarely quarreled with government officials. Thus, the missionaries became the tail side of the colonial coin. Benson Kakoma's comment on Dr. Walter Fisher's reluctant secular involvement supports this.

Fisher could not easily divorce himself from the district's secular problems. Indeed, it is only fair to regard the establishment of Kalene Hill as another aspect of the colonial intrusion in Balunda at the turn of the century, especially as the missionary movement and the Company administration arrived in the area almost simultaneously. {6}

While missionaries abhorred forced obedience, they tended to be intolerant of traditional African lifestyles. They prayed for Africans to feel a need of salvation and to desire a new Christian life. As Charles Foster explained, "We had not come into the country as a Government does, to command them to do, or not to do this, that or the other, but to tell them of a Savior." But they also required new converts to deny much of their traditional culture. Often confusing religious beliefs and social customs, they regarded many revered African customs and Christian doctrine as irreconcilable. Thus they made Christianity an unappealing option to most prospective volunteers, and consequently, Africans frequently wanted the missionaries' new

{6} Kakoma, "Mwinilunga," pp. 45-6.

social services but infrequently desired salvation. {7}

Since all members of the elite were white and spoke the same language, many Africans did not initially distinguish between missionaries and administrators or settlers in the towns outside the NWP; they simply regarded them as parts of a larger whole. This troubled NWP missionaries. By 1911 when rural to urban migration had already started, the South African Pioneer requested overseas supporters to pray for the two Kasempa/Solwezi missions because the "influx of godless whites for work on the adjacent mines makes it all the more necessary that the Gospel should be brought to the natives, who are apt to think that a white skin and a clothed body are emblems of Christianity." Nine years later, Charles Foster reported in the same magazine that on one NWP safari people asked permission to have a "death dance . . . not because we were missionaries, but because of an undue regard and almost reverence for white people." A final comment by another SAGM missionary clarified the Africans' early fears about the Europeans as a group.

On the path we met two headmen. We told them our business. One of the two said, 'I do not want to listen to your words. The white man who first came to us wrote our names and now we have to pay tax. Now the white men send you. You will write our names and bring other difficult things. If the white people whom you

{7} By "death dance" he was referring to local rituals conducted after a person died. These supposedly warded off evil ancestral spirits. Foster, Pioneer (Am.), 1 (1920-1), p. 34.

represent will urge the Government authorities to release all Christians from paying tax--then we will believe in your God.' [8]

As the three groups had more contact, the situation changed. Africans began to differentiate between the methods and purposes of the other two groups. The result, however, did not especially please the missionaries. For example, in continuing his story of the "death dance," Foster told the villagers that the missionaries did not want them to "deny themselves a pleasure simply for our comfort; but that if they really wanted to follow Christ they themselves would eventually want to give up such things for His sake." When the people learned this, "the initial dance proceeded." What happened to Foster was typical. When the people learned that the missionaries, unlike officials, did not directly force them to obey, most did not. [9]

Without white settlers, the missionaries and officials unintentionally provided Africans with two different models of accepted social behavior. The officials' lifestyles revealed that the new society sometimes permitted such simple, traditional pleasures as smoking, drinking, and sex beyond the strictures of the monogamous marriage.

Two officials in Kasempa described to Pirouet the

[8] Pioneer, 24 (Feb. 1911), p. 17. Foster, Pioneer, (Am.), 1 (1920-1), p. 34. Irene A. Bartling, Pioneer, 37 (1924), p. 148.

[9] Foster, Pioneer, (Am.), Vol. I (1920-1), p. 34.

model that the missionaries correctly feared most Africans would choose.

We swear, we drink, we smoke, we live immorally and do all those things which you [Pirouet] are telling the natives are wrong; then they see that we do these things, yet that we are the men that live in the greatest luxury and that we have the power. I do not know a single white man in the country who is a Christian. If there is one I have never met him. {10}

Only a small minority accepted the missionaries' model.

The alternative social models created a new divergence among Africans. The believers pitted themselves against the non-believers, and officials often regarded the mission 'boys' as 'sneaky' while the missionaries regarded government clerks and messengers and police as a 'hard lot'. A new African possessiveness also developed as the whites became 'our' missionaries and/or 'our' officials. {11}

Since movement toward either social model occurred relatively slowly, Short was right in stating that the NWP remained tranquil. Unlike the more rapid change that took place in other areas, it did not as frequently traumatize individuals. Even the social interaction in the NWP reflected this tranquility. Government officials, missionaries, and the African populace interacted relatively

{10} Herbert Pirouet, Pioneer (Am.) 1 (Dec. 1920), p. 33. This document appears in App. E. "Musonwedzi--Kasempa--Northern Rhodesia."

{11} Ernest Frost observed that "It was generally considered by the natives that it was impossible to be a Christian whilst in Government service, and taking this attitude apparently hardened their hearts against the Gospel." Pioneer, Vol. 51 (Feb. 1937), p. 19.

cordially. They did so, however, in an anachronistic manner. As the major issues of taxation/migration, evangelism, and education later show, grave deficiencies permeated the whole social system.

Forced Interactions: Taxation/Migration and Evangelization

Taxation was the primary issue that forced all three elements of the NWP society to interact directly. By collecting it, the administrators became the foremost element of the new society. Striving to be spiritual guides, the missionaries became indirectly affected. For the African population, taxation often meant extreme individual and collective trauma.

The BSAC instituted its taxes in the NWP between 1902 and the end of World War I. As described in Chapters III and IV, the BSAC not only desired revenue to run the company-government; it also wanted to force Africans to migrate to new economic centers. In such places these uprooted Africans created the foundation for new economic growth. To achieve these aims quickly, the BSAC designed the initial tax as 10/= (ten shillings) per year for adult males. In this region where currency remained rare, men might only earn a tuppence a day. As a result the Africans had one and possibly two or three months of hard work as carriers or in other menial positions to earn tax money.

When the BSAC authorized its officials to enforce compliance, men like Macgregor in Mwinilunga ruthlessly burnt homes and inflicted severe hardships on the whole population. The imposition of taxation at that time may prove to be the most profound and traumatic event to confront the NWP's people in the twentieth century. {12}

By the 1920s, taxation affected every African. Overt resistance proved impossible and going to jail was not viable. Likewise, people discovered that fleeing to Angola and the Congo provided only an illusory option because these colonial territories also instituted taxation. Furthermore, the trauma involved in abandoning homes, lands, and food supplies made fleeing unrealistic. Consequently, those who fled generally came back quickly. In Balovale, a few people could sell some products to limited markets downstream. Also a few others found work on government bomas and mission stations. {13}

{12}As cited several times in Chaps. III and IV, Fergus Macpherson's new interpretation of the BSAC period shows the drama and general violence that accompanied BSAC taxation, in the whole of Northern Rhodesia as well as the NWP; see pp. 105-90. For the standard interpretation accepted by most historians that Macpherson strongly refutes, see Gann, Northern Rhodesia, pp. 100-11. This ten shilling tax was later reduced to seven shillings and sixpence and again to six shillings in the late 1930s.

{13}For Fisher and Suckling on instituting taxation in Mwinilunga and Balovale, see App. G.

As the BSAC intended, most people in the NWP followed the pattern set elsewhere in Central and East Africa. Their only long-term option became the periodic trek or migration to new centers with capitalist enterprises. Here they earned tax money. Many young people from Kasempa/Solwezi went to the nearby Congolese and Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt towns in the north and east. Balovale and Kabompo men followed the Zambezi River downstream toward Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. And in isolated Mwinilunga, the "pattern of labour migration was oriented to Katanga." [14]

In these new centers, with their cosmopolitan population of diverse Africans and Europeans, NWP migrants discovered that they needed new skills. If they possessed new language and/or industrial skills, they would not have to do the hardest and most unpleasant tasks. Furthermore they would earn more money, which meant less time away from their homes and families. Consequently many began to ask the NWP missionaries, their new religious shepherds, new or harder questions.

To these shepherds, taxation presented an indirect, but serious dilemma. On the one hand, these missionaries believed that people must "render unto Caesar the things

[14] Wim Hoppers, Education in a Rural Society: Primary Pupils and School Leavers in Mwinilunga, Zambia (the Hague: the Centre for the Study of Education in Developing Countries [CESO, 1981]), p. 35. See also, Mary Jackman, Regent Population Movements in Zambia: Some Aspects of the 1969 Census, Zambia Papers No. 9 (Lusaka: University of Zambia, 1973), pp. 56-7.

which are Caesar's." On the other, the atrociously high taxation inflicted grave handicaps on their parishioners--poor people who were unfamiliar with western currency. {15}

Missionaries also were concerned about the result of labor migration. When they failed to see any alternatives, however, most responded by unconsciously building contradictions into their thinking. They correctly believed that Africans, because of labor migrations, contacted the worst vices of the modern world. The mining towns were clearly more sinful than the local 'heathen' environment. Like Arnot after his meeting with Rhodes, they saw no religious value in educating and training young men and women simply for emigration. Sin was sin. As late as 1937 one missionary stated that Mukinge Mission would train carpenters only if the trainees stayed and helped the region. Like most NWP missionaries, he was not realistic. Throughout the colonial era, the urgent need for tax money constantly prodded the best trained young men, as well as the illiterate, away from their homes and from traditional family life. Only toward World War II did town life as town life begin to attract large numbers of Africans. {16}

George Suckling was alone in imaginatively and energetically tackling the taxation issue and the resulting abuses. He searched for alternative methods for Africans to

{15} Matthew 22:21.

{16} In Apr. 1983 the source of this 1937 statement in one SAGM publication was missing.

earn tax money locally and to uplift their traditional life. On one occasion, he even released tax violators who had been taken prisoner and abused by African police. He then boldly confronted the Native Commissioner about the matter. Although it is not recorded in existing government records, the incident and Suckling's defense of the people became part of local folklore. {17}

If BSAC administrators, on behalf of government, forced the interaction by taxation and caused the rural to urban migration, missionary evangelism forced a very different type of interaction. Unlike taxation/migration, the direct evangelism that is symbolized by preaching the Word certainly did not cause suffering and devastation. Nonetheless, it required an African response. On rare occasions, government officials even became involved. This happened when a missionary failed to provide requested social services while annoying too many people with over-zealous evangelism. In the absence of settlers, these missionaries initiated the most direct culture clashes in the NWP.

One major source of these clashes was evangelical, district-wide touring. Although the basic purposes and tactics differed from those of government administrators,

{17} Suckling is favorably remembered for this confrontation, although no one remembers the exact date, and for his later involvement in the Barotseland secession. See the following interviewees already noted in fn. 4: Chizawu (given in App. J) and Gordon Suckling. See also the Mwondela interview and the interview with Peter Sayila (Manyinga, Kabompo District, 17 Nov. 1976).

NWP missionaries devised similar systems for covering a district. Just as Native Commissioners, DCs, and other white administrative staff trekked from village to village for up to eight weeks, so did the missionaries. Just as African police or messengers supplemented the work of white officers, so did African evangelists supplement the work of white missionaries. Although not as forceful or as effective as government, such mission teams attempted to preach and rephrase the Word through their areas as often as possible. {18}

For villagers, the first missionary treks and the inevitable sermons provided novelty and diversion from the daily routine of village life, but the welcome grew less warm in areas where the teams visited often. For most people the missionary message seemed to have no particular earthly value and eventually became a nuisance. Although they lacked the formalized rituals of the Anglicans or the Roman Catholics, these missionaries still stressed water baptism for adults, the singing of baptismal hymns, and repetition of Holy Scriptures. Villagers found the services

{18} One of the most tireless trekkers was Herbert Pirouet. Shortly after he arrived in the territory, he married an equally young and enthusiastic missionary, Florence Alderton. Since Chisalala was becoming isolated from the African population, they more-or-less lived in temporary camps for several years. See the Pioneer for the years 1919-1922 and also the interview transcript of a conversation between Florence Pirouet and R. N. Wyatt, n.d., n.p., located in Wimbledon. For a narrative of one of Herbert Pirouet's later comprehensive treks, especially see App. E, "Musonwedzi--Kasempa--Northern Rhodesia."

cryptic; they also did not take some of the mission evangelists seriously because these evangelists were over-eager, poorly-trained, and too young. Most important, the NWP peoples did not regard themselves, and certainly not their customs, as sinful. Since the missionaries and their evangelists continually denounced them, the complaint of A. A. Wilson soon became typical.

At first when we approach, there may be quite a number of men and women about, but by the time we come fully into view there are just a few women sitting under the verandahs of their huts, . . . and our congregation is quite small. [19]

The missionaries presented a formidable list of 'no's' and 'do not's' to even the keenest prospective believers. The first major point of conflict has already been indicated. These American, Canadian, South African, and British missionaries regarded liquor, tobacco, dancing, and any form of sex outside a monogamous marriage, as visibly sinful. But the NWP peoples considered the same things as part of life's basic, simple pleasures. Furthermore, in different African societies, alcohol, tobacco, dancing and sex often had social or religious functions.

[19] Pioneer, 28 (Oct. 1915), p. 158. In 1926, John Stevenson noted that one "backslider . . . was much under conviction. His shirt was wet with tears. . . . This is practically the first Kaonde I have seen in tears because of his sin." Almost inevitably, such people who perceived sin had long maintained contact with the missionaries or with other whites. Pioneer, 50 (May 1936), p. 34.

They believed that eliminating them would be ridiculous. {20}

Three other points of conflict were witchcraft, respect for ancestral spirits, and death ritual; all key parts of the Africans' "intense and pervasive belief of the Spirit." Missionaries confused and denounced all three as equally evil. They railed against 'witchcraft' regardless of its purpose for good--e.g., healing--or evil and denied or ignored the ability of such practitioners or claimed them powerless against the Gospel. But such prescientific societies believed witchcraft was real and potentially dangerous, so when government officials and missionaries protected witches as Kalene did at its 'witchery', the Africans believed that evil forces would sweep through an unprotected society. Early missionaries classified respect for ancestral spirits with witchcraft. But the African believed that if neglected, their ancestors' spirits might take offense and immediate calamity could occur. This issue raised also the ultimate question of descendants' remembering and respecting them. Finally, missionaries abhorred death rituals. But without wailing and ritual intercourse, Africans feared that the dead person would not completely move out of the world of the living. Evil and misfortune might haunt the widow or widower, children, other relations,

{20} For example, in ukanda--as described at some length in Chap. I--alcohol, dancing, and sex all had significance, either as a symbolic part of the preparations or training or as a part of the general festivities.

and even the whole area. {21}

The last two points of conflict arose over the transition into adulthood. Missionary wives saw women's puberty rituals--including early marriage--as unspeakably sinful and degraded. Yet without these, most African women believed that they could not bear healthy children and that society could not continue. The missionaries also denounced all transition rituals for men, except for circumcision. But most NWP societies believed nukanda-essential if young boys were to become men. For society, sex was not merely a personal pleasure or even merely a matter of procreation. It presented a timelessness that transcended current existence. {22}

In principle, missionaries expected new Christians to retain their culture and not become 'black Englishmen'. But the practice was not so simple. On the one hand, missionaries totally misunderstood and condemned African

{21} Hunter's (p. 13) brief quotation on the "spirit" is part of his general analysis and synthesis that has been quoted from extensively in Chaps. II and III. For a vivid, negative description of the Africans' belief in the 'spirit', see: E. H. Sims, Echoes, 59 (Feb. 1930), pp. 41-2. For a good example of disciplinary action against African Christians for 'witchcraft', see: John Stevenson, Pioneer, 45 (Feb. 1932), p. 17.

{22} The following comments about nukanda are typical of the negative missionary responses. In 1931, Frederick Barnett at Chavuma described his visit to a nukanda camp. "In the ritual surrounding this native rite there is unspeakable sin. The boys are taught evil things." Echoes, 60 (Mar. 1931), p. 62. In like manner, three years earlier, E. H. Sims noted "instruction in unmentionable vices." Pioneer, 57 (June 1928), p. 136.

customs that gave traditional African societies coherence. On the other, they praised polite, superficial mannerisms and called them acceptable traditions. Thus their demands often had wide-ranging implications that they either failed to recognize or ignored.

Sydney Buckland of Mujimbeji illuminates this contradiction. He demanded that all new Christians follow African customs and traditions and not imitate Europeans. Consequently, he forbade Africans to wear shoes or speak English when talking to him. He condemned them as 'proud' when they did. He wanted them, however, to follow only the traditions and customs that he regarded as compatible with his interpretation of Christianity. He scorned and condemned those customs and traditions that were very significant, such as the ritual element in ukanda. Even after being in Africa for twenty-five years, he continued to misunderstand.

We have just visited parts of a new district which is now included in the Mwinilunga area. Seldom does a missionary get to those villages. There are three chieftainships, but the people are very backward. In the Chief's capital they had just made a new grave--burying the corpse right in the village! {23}

Instead of being "backward," these people were following old

{23} Voices, 36 (Mar./Apr. 1940), p. 6. Several informants, who preferred not to be named, recalled Buckland unfavorably. Government officials were also very displeased with Buckland and found his attitude towards educating Africans very negative late in the colonial era. See, G. B. Buckland (PEO) to PC in Solwezi, 4 Jan. 1954, "Agency Correspondence--Mujimbeji," (A/25) M/1/8, Min. of Ed., Solwezi.

customs that had not yet been altered in this isolated sector of the NWP. They were truly traditional.

This ignorance of and these attitudes toward the African conceptual world limited Christianity's appeal and placed African Christians in a difficult social position. A comparison of the lives of Simon Kibanza and John Pupe, two of the very earliest and able SAGM converts, reveals one aspect of this problem.

Kibanza left the region to seek 'higher' education elsewhere. In his journeys he learned to speak English well. Although handicapped by the color bar, he handled many important government duties in the Solwezi boma during World War II after he returned to the NWP. Since 'Faithful John' Pupe stayed with the missionaries as an evangelist and worked for the mission until his death, he spoke English poorly and the modern world passed him by. Only in the 1960s did the mission realize and regret its early policy that often handicapped its most faithful disciples. [24]

Several interviewees, many ex-teachers, explained

[24] For thoughtful regret about the early inadequacies of the SAGM's endeavors, see the Florence Pirouet interview; also, R. N. Wyatt's other interview, located in the Wimbledon materials, with E. M. Shoosmith, on 24 April [year not specified] in Miss Shoosmith's home at Crowborough, England. For Pupe's regrets, a conversation with John (Ginger) Wright in Ndola, Mar. 1975, was helpful. Wright's description was confirmed by various informal conversations in Solwezi during the next few years. Simon Kibanza (Chibanza) later wrote a monograph on the Kaonde's history, "Kaonde History," in Central African Historical Texts I (Lusaka: Rhodes-Livingstone Communication Number Twenty-Two, the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1961).

another aspect of this problem. They had been expected to be practicing Christians, yet as teachers, they found themselves in a social limbo between two societies. Other Africans regarded them as part of the new elite. But the missionaries and other whites held them at arm's length, especially as the color bar became more rigid. Many became demoralized. Some backslid. [25]

In this context, a 1937 report by John Stevenson, an SAGM missionary, is especially revealing. Touring Kasempa District, he visited new village schools almost three decades after the SAGM missions were founded.

I have only recently returned from a trek round our out-schools and Christian groups to the west of the Station. . . . We covered about two hundred and fifty miles and in that distance there were quite a few villages: yet, all told, only five people professed to come to the Lord. On the other hand we had medicines with us and we gave injections for Yaws, and at times we were just besieged with people seeking medical attention. . . . The medicine gave out, but still they came, old and young, some walking miles. . . . Yet, when the Message of Life Everlasting . . . was told . . . they could not be bothered. . . . One woman came after the Yaws medicine was finished, and was told she could not get an injection for this reason, promptly said: 'If I believe, will you then give me an injection'?

Another thing that impressed me on my travels was the slackness of many of the Christians. Few came from a distance, . . . but over forty heathen came for medicine, some . . . having walked about forty miles.

Yet a third thing that impressed me and that was the emptiness of the conversations of the Christians. The white man's camp-fire is the place where the Christians usually gather to talk. I had rather a lot of writing to do on this trek, and so could not be with the Christians in their conversations as much as I

[25] When interviewed, Peter Sayila stated this dilemma for teachers most eloquently.

should have liked. But I could hear, while writing, quite a lot of idle tales and frivolity. I drew their attention to this at one place where we spent the week-end and the result was silence. {26}

Stevenson's report indicates that his medical services were very popular. By 1937 villagers clearly appreciated that yaws could be controlled. They did not, however, want to hear the Word preached. Nonetheless, they would say that they believed if this pleased the missionary and caused him to give them medicine.

Village Christians were not very enthusiastic either. Those who came to see Stevenson found him too busy to be bothered. He probably meant his comments to be a mild pastoral rebuke, but they became much more. He was a white man with power, and they were black men without any. At least for that period, all camaraderie between them ended, including conversation.

Like most Christian missionaries throughout the world at that time, Stevenson did not appreciate the breadth and depth of the chasm that separated the new white elite and their culture from the Africans and their culture. By not understanding how severely it divided them, Stevenson and the white elite seldom bridged the chasm. Africans dared not try.

This deep rent in the colonial society and the failure of whites to understand it led to a complicated paradox. Possessing great power, the elite generated a

{26} Stevenson, Pioneer, 51 (May 1937), p. 58.

multitude of diffuse African responses that in turn profoundly changed traditional African societies. And while only vaguely understanding the responses and changes, the elite actually guided the whole process.

The white elite knew much more about some African responses and changes than others. In nykanda, for example, changes occurred within individual African societies or among many African societies and remained largely hidden from Stevenson and other Europeans. Somewhat more visible, although generally misunderstood, African responses included the messiah cult in 1913 and the spread of kitavala (also called Watchtower and Jehovah's Witness) in the 1930s and 1940s. (The latter will be described in Chapter I.) In all of these responses and changes, Africans worked together in non-traditional ways across old linguistic and cultural barriers.

Desperate for anything which helped them cope with the problems created by the colonial society, the messiah cult quickly spread through the region. In 1913 rumors circulated that an African messiah had come. Promising relief from the miseries imposed by the new society, the cult spread like wildfire among different African ethnic groups. {27}

The messiah cult, however, quickly failed. Its solutions to old and new problems were too simplistic and

{27} For this messiah cult, see App. F; for Watchtower, see Chap. I.

unrealistic. Despite the messiah's fabulous promises, normal human problems still occurred; illness, death, famine and locusts continued. Furthermore, the burdensome taxes still fell relentlessly due. Ardent belief and much enthusiasm notwithstanding, the quality of individuals' lives continued to degenerate. A utopia was not ushered in.

The cult and others also failed because of white disapproval. Suckling and Harris wrote accounts of the messiah cult and both were clearly hostile. Suckling narrated its spread and also noted that the BSAC administration was also very watchful. Harris gleefully described its failure--see Appendix F. The all-powerful administrators were not only watchful of such new social phenomena that involved interethnic African cooperation; they also took stronger measures when they felt this was necessary. In the case of Jehovah's Witness in the 1930s and early 1940s, government officials first berated and threatened leading Africans for getting involved. Then in World War II, they completely banned the sect. Thus the white elite directed the course of African social change. [28]

As the supreme paradox, Africans had to solve the problems caused by the new colonial society and its white elite with solutions that that society and elite sanctioned. In this context, the new western-oriented education gained significance. Unlike the messiah cult and Watchtower movement, the white elite approved of voluntary interaction

[28] Ibid.

among the Africans and with the whites themselves because of education. Unlike other solutions to the new problems, education provided skills that were necessary to both the Africans and the Europeans. By 1945 and especially by the end of the colonial era, it became something valuable to Africans as well as the white elite.

Partly because of the increasing approval of all three social elements and partly because of the increasing demands of the new capital-oriented economy, education became the foremost form of voluntary social interaction. All other alternatives failed to generate a positive and voluntary three-way social exchange. And while interaction largely resulted from the primary forms of forced social interaction, this secondary form acquired a much greater complexity. Just as nyakanda and traditional education lay at the core of the LLLC societies, the new 'little school in the bush' and education slowly became part of the core of the colonial society. It also laid the foundation for modern post-colonial society. Both the social interaction generated by education and the initial limitations of the evolving system reveal the way colonial society functioned and its serious inherent defects.

Voluntary Interactions:

Education as a Symbol of Modern Society

In the colonial era, education symbolized an increasingly potent golden key. Thinking education would unlock their dreams, the NWP's administrators, missionaries, and Africans began to interact voluntarily. For the BSAC administrators who were establishing a new and 'glorious' empire, it became a key to cheap social services, a way to gain skilled workers and to keep the African population happy. For the SAGM and Brethren missionaries who sponsored new educational programs, education was a key to the Kingdom of God, a tool for attracting reluctant Africans to, and retaining their interest in, the evangelical message. For the African peoples trying to balance their ancient traditions and western innovations, it became a key to an earthly paradise, a magic wand for acquiring the white man's power, wealth, and technology. For the white elite and the black population alike, education--especially that offered by the 'little school in the bush'--became the most significant symbol of the new society.

Education, and the school that embodies it, especially lends itself to symbolization. In the West after the Middle Ages, education became the primary means for the emerging middle class to advance. And both the NWP missionaries and administrators were typical products of the

middle class. Their education enabled them to get where they were.

As western humanitarians in the NWP, the missionaries especially desired to uplift and "enlighten the dark hearts and minds of these heathens." Even the most ardent missionary evangelists realized the inadequacy of direct evangelical preaching and the need for indirect evangelical work through basic education. They knew that both potential converts and new Christians wanted it. Furthermore, since the government did not provide such social services, missionaries needed to help new catechists learn to read the Bible. [29]

Administrators gave the missionaries moral support. Like the missionaries, they increasingly saw the need for education and encouraged Africans to seek it. Ever-increasing numbers of administrators had lofty ideals and wanted to counterbalance the negative effects of taxation. Many others besides Melland believed that the government was morally wrong to exploit the people by forcing them to pay taxes and migrate all over south-central and southern Africa, especially if it gave nothing in return. But most of all, to achieve their governmental goals and get approval for their work, these officials needed to have blacks educated in the right way--and just enough--to make them

[29] Burr, Kalene Memories, p. 60.

work happily for and in the empire. {30}

The symbolism related to education and the school was possibly even more valued by many NWP Africans. In Mukanda, for example, an adult group gave up and shared its secrets with other individuals for the good of all. As they adapted and reintegrated themselves into the colonial society, Africans increasingly realized what education might do for them. New schools and education fit into the old symbolism. With education they discovered the secrets of the white men and could possibly share their powers. The relative prosperity of the Nyasaland clerks in the NWP and the other black men who spoke English in the towns also reinforced belief in the symbolism. So did totally correct stories that spread about Lewanika speaking English, visiting England, and attending the coronation of King Edward VII in 1901. With this learning--particularly reading and writing, industrial skills, and above all else, English--individuals and their kin might survive and advance in the new colonial society. {31}

Medicine and hygiene also had similar symbolic value for all three social groups. Like education, medicine became an indirect form of evangelism, another way of attracting new converts and keeping believers faithful.

{30} For these lofty ideals, see Chap. IV.

{31} Lubinga Mijatulanga made many points clear: interviewed at his home in Lubinga Village, near Kasempa Township, 12 Nov. 1978. See also Chap. III.

Furthermore, the hygiene required by western medicine was expected of practicing Christians. In the eyes of the missionaries, a visible shift towards modern hygiene often indicated a change of heart. Government officials went further and demanded new hygienic measures in the villages, especially pit latrines. These symbolized progressive local government. {32}

Although Africans did not necessarily see a connection between modern hygiene and medicine, the latter symbolized a new kind of magic. Dr. Fisher's pills, liquid medicines, and lotions became increasingly desirable. For many decades, the surgical operation--generally performed in the environs of Kalene--became the ultimate and unfathomable form of this magic. The needle, after being used extensively in the early yaws campaigns, became the most visible symbol. As Stevenson noted in 1937, "Some who came for injections were trembling with nervousness, yet they would have the needle." {33}

Medicine, however, never gained education's enormous social importance. While only Dr. Fisher and a few others were able to do more than pass out pills and give injections, most missionaries could give African parishioners enough literacy training to read God's Word. And as they

{32} In the early colonial days, the administration forced villagers to build and use pit latrines. The people initially resented these endeavors.

{33} Pioneer, 58 (May 1937), p. 58.

badgered both the missions and the territorial administration to provide more medical staff, local officials still regarded better education as a more urgent priority. Africans increasingly regarded medicine and improved hygiene as good western magic and desirable innovations. They realized, however, that western education helped them to learn and manipulate these medical secrets for themselves.

As symbols, medicine with its needle and education with its school shared an inherent weakness. In all men's minds, symbols conjure up vivid but different legitimate images. The Africans, administrators, and missionaries worked from a conflicting, rather than a common ground. Each group applied its own meaning rather than developing it in harmony with the others. And since all placed exceptional importance on education, their symbolic meanings clashed when applied to the NWP's only educational systems. Yet for much of the colonial period, these little mission programs generally had no room for multiple meaning, only the one held by the mission sponsors. {34}

{34} One missionary, Eva M. Jakeman, contrasted the clashing symbolism of the Africans and missionaries: "Over the hearts of the people of the Dark Continent, . . . there has come a restless desire for something new; and education is to them a symbol for something new. [Is this] not a clarion call to the Church of Christ [to] give to these eager souls education in its highest sense . . . of which the end and aim is to teach them the things of God?" Pioneering, pp. 11-2.

The Historical Limitations of Education

At the heart of this and all histories of education in Africa is a stubborn and ironic problem. Before World War II, western-initiated education often meant little to the majority of the African population. Consequently, if we confuse it with the mass education of today, we commit a major error. Nonetheless, early education created the foundation of both modern education and modern African society.

From the time of Zambian independence in 1964, the enormous symbolic meaning of education cannot be disputed. Fred. C. Burke (a former professor at Syracuse University) succinctly noted that for modern Africa education had become the "magical key opening the door to knowledge and power." This is now as true in most of the isolated NWP as it is elsewhere. For this reason, dealing with education as a key of ever-increasing symbolic value is appropriate. By learning of the inception and general development of this formal educational system, we better understand the modern African world of the '60s, '70s, and '80s. [35]

But a precautionary note is essential. In trying to explain the enormous significance of formal education in Africa today, many writers have over-stressed and over-isolated the new western-initiated education that began in

[35] Burke, Africa's Quest for Order (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1964), p. 88.

the little mission schools throughout Africa in the first half of the twentieth century. In doing so they have given their readers a distorted and even grotesque view of how colonial society worked. Education was and must be perceived as a key part of social history--no more and no less. The society in this case was an exploitative colonial one. {36}

As described in this and previous chapters, the sudden imposition of taxation, followed by forced labor in World War I, placed Africans in an impossible position. Their old traditions and skills meant very little. Like Africans elsewhere, people in the NWP desperately needed new skills. Nonetheless, the kind of western education that inculcated these skills was only available and meaningful to a tiny percentage of the NWP's population. For many decades the mission schools in the NWP were too small, too restricted, and too isolated to cause extensive interaction among administrators, missionaries, and Africans.

When the initial 'prayer' schools in the NWP had sustained meaning, they symbolized evangelical Christianity's attempts to save Africans from sin and, in

{36}For a rather startling and extreme example of such distortion, see John Erni Remick, "American Influence on the Education of the Ovimbundu (the Benguela and Bihe Highlands) of Angola, Africa, from 1880-1914" (Ph.D. dissertation, Miami University [Ohio], 1976). It was submitted to the Department of Educational Leadership (Educational Administration). This thesis promised a lot with a useful framework. It delivered nothing. The author seemed to confuse the little educational program of two American missionaries with the educational needs of the whole of Central Angola.

the process, to change their revered traditions. As shown in the next chapter, schools in the Kaonde-Lunda Province lightly skimmed over or altogether skipped training in English and industrial skills. Even those that offered practical help, like Chitokoloki, kept trying to impose Christianity upon the students. Quite simply, schools became good places to indoctrinate. Missionaries asked their pupils first to memorize religious songs and passages and then to read and write using the same materials. Very infrequently did the mission schools symbolize the things that schools and education symbolize today. {37}

These deficiencies frustrated the tiny minority of relatively sophisticated young men who perceived education's modern symbolism. Quickly disappointed, they did one of three things: a) accept the new religious training and reject many of their old ways; b) reject religious training and seek something better elsewhere; or c) reject the training and resign themselves to their new status as unskilled laborers. Very few found the first option appealing. Likewise, only the most determined and healthy searched across the savanna for schools that taught 'inglishi'. Most of these young men apathetically resigned themselves to the last. Those who discovered that education was a golden key also learned that they could not acquire it in most of the NWP.

{37} This paragraph indicates the basic educational problem of the missionaries' educational programs that are described in Chaps. VII and VIII.

Only a handful of astute and lucky Africans realized that mission education would become the correct key to the future and discovered ways to acquire and use it. These African pioneers were the focus of Frank Melland's attention. Writing in 1921 when the new colonial society was becoming permanently established in the NWP, he correctly observed:

Except for very little at Kalene Hill and Musonwedzi Missions the natives get no [education] in this district. Over 90% are quite untouched. . . . Yet [they] can learn; local natives at Kansanshi Mine soon become adept at winding machinery: a local (raw) native who drifted to Cape Town is now driving a doctor's car, etc. The raw material is here; and, if anything were done for it, it would soon repay the expenditure and trouble. {38}

Melland stated his case out of extreme frustration with the dual inaction of the territorial government and mission agencies. With regard to education, his 90% was probably no exaggeration in 1921. The long-term problem was that little would be done for this "raw material" for many decades, often only after World War II. The region's population remained a small, untrained labor pool that of necessity migrated to the new towns and cities. Like the NWP's mineral resources, this human resource remained largely undeveloped, improperly used, or totally unused. And with convoluted logic, the territorial and local colonial society came to regard both the NWP and its people as 'backward'.

{38} "Report of the DC for the Kasempa Dist. [Prov.]" for the year ending 30 Sept. 1921, ZA 7/3/9, NAZ