



The Methodist Church of Southern Africa in the Eastern Cape Province: A case study of Annshaw Methodist church

Xolisa Jibiliza (PhD Candidate)
Centre for Theology and Religion
University of Fort Hare, South Africa
E-mail: xjibiliza@yahoo.com

Introduction

This article seeks to address the life of the missionaries William Shaw, his wife Ann and Chief William Shaw Kama. These Wesleyan Methodists establish a mission station in challenging times and sought to uplift the poor. Moreover it will give an insight on the livelihood of the AmaGqunukhwebe people before the missionaries arrived in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. Also it will address how the missionaries changed the lives of people during the eighteenth century. Furthermore it will give highlights on how Methodist Church of Southern Africa at Annshaw in the Middledrift area faced the wide range of poverty induced stricken challenges. Religion can and should influence a response to dire poverty by engendering an attitude of willingness to practise generosity as we serve the poor. Religion can indeed educate communities so there is human dignity for all. The Methodist church has been and is part of a group of Christian churches actively encouraging and participating in alleviating poverty for communities in dire need.

Keywords: Missionary, Methodist Church, Eastern Cape, South Africa.

The life of William and Ann Shaw

Rev William Shaw arrived in South Africa as the missionary with the colonizers of that day, the British. But the purpose of the missionaries was somewhat different from the purpose of traders but they were dependent on them for inter alia transport. The earliest record of Methodist presence in Southern Africa was in 1795 when soldiers arrived at the Cape during the first British Occupation. During the second British occupation from 1806 onwards, Methodist soldiers built a stone chapel near Table Mountain, where they held classes and meetings and also Sunday worship services (EMMU, 2016). In 1816, the Rev Barnabas Shaw and his wife established the first mission station at Leliefontein, Namaqualand, hence, we commemorates 200 years of our own heritage and history (EMMU, 2016). Rev Shaw established many other Methodist Societies in and around Cape Town, which gave rise to the need to bring more ministers from Britain to Southern Africa.

The second advent of Methodism into South Africa was with the arrival of the 1820 settlers at Algoa Bay (Port Elizabeth).

In 1820 William Shaw (unrelated to Barnabas) arrived in the Eastern Cape with the British Settlers. Even though he was officially chaplain to the Sephton Party, he regarded the whole settlement as his own parish and established a flourishing colonial church. Commemoration Church in Grahamstown, which memorializes the silver jubilee of the settlement, bears testament to its standing and sanguinity. Shaw did not restrict his attention to only the colonists. In July 1820, the Rev William Shaw gathered his first congregation at Salem, then at Grahamstown later that year, and other areas along the Eastern Cape coastline (EMMU, 2016). His intention was to create a chain of mission stations from Natal through to Mozambique.

In November 1823 he established Wesleyville among the Gqunukhwebe people and by 1830 he established six more stations between the Fish and Umzimvubu Rivers and laid the foundation of



the robust Methodist witness in the area. It was not always easy , as several of the missions were destroyed more than once in successive frontier wars, but the missionaries persevered and their perseverance was finally rewarded.

However the politics of the day prevented this enterprise. Shaw did succeed in planting ten stations in the Eastern Cape, including Mount Coke, where the Bible was first translated into isiXhosa and Annshaw played a role. The Annshaw Methodist Church was named in commemoration of Rev William Shaw's wife, who was so supportive of her husband's work to establish mission stations that she was greatly respected. Rev Shaw came with two brothers James and Charles Lwana, to the Middledrift area. They assisted him in efforts to interpret the language for the local natives. These two brothers also eventually became evangelists.

At his home mission at Wesleyville, Shaw worked hard to get the local chiefs on his side:.

Dec. 19th. I have lately had several very pleasing conversations with Kama, who is the next Chief in power to Pato, in his tribe. They are brothers, but their views on the Gospel are very different. Pato greatly valued our mission, because it is a civil and political benefit to himself and people, but I fear he hates the Gospel. Kama, while deeply sensible the external advantages which they desire from the Mission, is also quite aware of the importance of our main object, viz. the conversion of the people. He himself firmly believes the Gospel and often defends it against the arguments of many of his pagan people. He tells me that he prays to God daily, and when he is at home he is rarely absent from Public Worship on the Lord's day. . . He admits that nothing prevents his formally embracing Christianity but his fear of man. He waits to see whether some more powerful chief will not show him the example and he would, he thinks, then immediately follow it...

He later states:

Kama strongly urges me to take his son and train him up in my house, that he may be able to read, write and speak English. As this may probably be a great benefit to the Mission ultimately I design complying with his request, as soon as the new mission house is finished, so that I can do it without much domestic disadvantage. As proof of the reality of Kama's belief in the Gospel I may note his steady resistance hitherto of all temptations to polygamy. He has only one wife, a daughter of Gaika. Being quite a young man when our mission was commenced here, and as he hears that our Scripture give no sanction to polygamy, he appears resolved not to be a polygamist. (The Journal of William Shaw, 1827)

Their strategy to penetrate into the black peoples with the faith, especially the AmaGqunukhwebe people was intended to win the hearts of children and also the elders . One of the greatest tools they used was education that empowered people and changed the lives totally. The second tool was to evangelize to the native people and that also changed the people from following paganism to becoming fervent Christians.

The Life of Chief William Shaw Kama

Chief Siseko William Shaw Kama was the chief of AmaGqunukhwebe tribe. AmaGqunukhwebe is a subdivision of the Xhosa nation that was created under the reign of King Tshiwo who was born in 1670 CE and died in 1702 CE as the King of amaXhosa. He was also a grandfather to Gcaleka and



Rharhabe. The area consisted mostly of the Khoi chiefdoms, Gonaqua, Hoengeniqua, Inqua and others, that had been displaced by colonists and became incorporated into the Xhosa nation (Le Vaillant, 1790).

Khwane kaLungane, a counselor and warrior under King Tshiwo, was chosen to lead the new chiefdom. This marked the start of his Khwane dynasty, which would lead the chiefdom for some decades (Beck, 1993). The chiefdom spanned from the Buffalo River to Zwaartkops, but most of its territory was lost after the amaXhosa Wars and it was given to colonial settlers (west of the Fish River) and the amaFengu people (between the Fish and Keiskamma rivers) by the colonial government. The chiefdom gradually grew more homogeneous, until a divide occurred when two members of the leading family, Pato and Kama, split and settled in different areas of the region. In addition, Kama converted to Christianity, which further alienated him from the royal family. Later, Kama was recognized by the Cape Colony as the true leader of the chiefdom, possibly due to his religious conversion.

Kama's territory was in between the territory of amaNtinde and Chief Thyali's territory, which started from the river banks of the Tyume River in the west to the territory of amaNtinde in the east. This involved chiefdom surrounding all the villages of Middledrift, from the north starting from the Keiskamahoe territories and to the southern amaNdlambe territory in Peddie.

Kama was the chief of the Gqunukwebe tribe and was the first chief to publicly acknowledge that he was a Christian. The territory of the Gqunukwebe was west of the Buffalo River in the Eastern Cape. Kama was the second son of Chungwa who was killed in a skirmish with the Boers in the early years of the eighteenth century. The Gqunukwebe were not of the Xhosa royal house but were descended from a commoner. Kama was born at the time that Johannes Theodorus van der Kemp was trying unsuccessfully to establish some mission work among the Xhosa peoples. (Raupp, 1992). Van der Kemp moved away to Bethelsdorp In 1803 wher he established a mission settlement for vagrant Khoi people. Local farmers accused him of protecting lawless elements. He struck back accusing local farmers of ill-treating the Khoi. Unfortunately the evidence proved unsatisfactory and the farmers were acquitted (Lipschutz, 1986).

From 1821 the Rev. William Shaw of the Wesleyan Methodists tried to establish mission stations in the Eastern Cape. In 1824 Henry Somerset, Commandant of Kaffraria, arranged a meeting so that Shaw could meet the chiefs: Ndlambe, Dushane, Mqhayi, Phato and Kama (Hammond-Tooke 1972: 10). Kama was the brother of Chief Phato and second in command of the tribe. The first of the mission stations envisaged by Shaw was established at Wesleyville, near Peddie, in 1823.

Kama was married to Nongwane, the daughter of Chief Ngqika. She had often listened to Ntsikana and had been impressed by his message of the faith. After the arrival of the missionary Shaw, Kama noticed that she often stole away by herself. One day he followed her and discovered that she often went to pray. This was an important factor in the conversion of Kama to Christianity.

Kama's final decision to become a Christian came during a visit to Grahamstown. He attended church services and was especially impressed by the Holy Communion / Eucharist. The historian Whiteside (1906: 180) commented that Kama 'left Grahamstown convinced of the supreme advantages of a Christian civilisation'. After Wesleyville was destroyed in the war of 1834, Kama moved nearer to the Fish River. When there was no missionary he voluntarily preached and led prayer meetings. Shaw wrote in his journal that Kama "...firmly believes the Gospel and often defends it against the arguments of many of his pagan people. He tells me that he prays to God daily and when he is at home is rarely absent from public worship" (Hammond-Tooke 1972:90).



Soon after this an event occurred which demonstrated the character of Kama as a warrior. He had always been considered a mild man but when the homes of his people were attacked by strangers one day they fought back and won. When the war of 1846 broke out Phato was drawn into it and lost everything. Kama supported the English and kept the line of posts open from East London to Fort Beaufort (Holden 1877:317). A rift developed between the brothers, Phato and Kama, and Kama and his followers eventually moved away from Phato's territory.

Kama was convinced that he should have only one wife and this led to some difficult moments. The Xhosa tradition was to have more than one wife and Kama had to argue with his councillors on the issue of polygamy. The test came when Mdushane, the son and successor of Ndlambe, sent Kama one of his daughters as a wife. Ndlambe was a chief of higher standing than Kama but Kama still refused to take another wife. He said that he could only rule the tribe according to the will and commandments of God. The daughter of Mdushane was sent back to her father with a generous gift of cattle and tributes to the house of Ndlambe. Shaw relates other incidents of the same kind when Kama refused to entertain the thought of taking another wife. When a complaint was lodged with Maqoma, the son of Ngqika, he answered: "I, Maqoma, son of Ngqika, do not have authority to question the laws of the God of Kama" (Hammond, 1972: 31). To escape the wrath of Phato, Kama and his followers eventually settled in Kamastone, near Whittlesea. Kamastone was named after Chief Kama and the Rev. Shepstone, a pioneer Methodist missionary in the area.

In the meantime Kama's second son, Xhanti, was growing up and learning about the Christian message at Salem near Grahamstown. Shaw described how one day, Kama asked him to take his son and train him in the Shaw household so that he might be able to read, write and speak English. The boy became known as William Shaw Kama. In 1829 Kama caused a stir when he attended a meeting of the Auxiliary Missionary Society dressed in a 'European costume' and thanked the missionaries for bringing the Gospel. At the same time, he asked the missionaries to open more mission stations. When Mount Coke was established, Kama and his brother Phato both brought donations towards setting up the mission. That year, Kama and his wife were baptized into the Christian faith by Shaw after attending a series of catechism classes. His baptismal name was 'William'. When the town of Whittlesea was attacked in 1851 Kama and his followers came to the rescue. In gratitude the governor granted the AmaGqunukhwebe a permanent territory of their own between the Chumie and Keiskamma Rivers, near Middeldrift. The Annshaw Mission was established there, named after the wife of William Shaw. Kama became the leader of the church. Sunday was proclaimed a day of rest and worship as practiced in the Christian tradition. Because of the strong faith of Kama, his followers were not affected by the cattle killing of 1857 and so escaped the suffering and starvation experienced by many other tribes.

In 1866 Bishop Taylor of California came to South Africa to hold a series of revival meetings. One of the places where there was a great revival was Annshaw. William Shaw Kama became a local preacher and, with Charles Pamla, they accompanied Taylor on his travels. The young Kama wanted to enter the Methodist ministry, but when the time came for his father to die he had to become chief as both his other brothers had already passed away. Holden describes how when he went to Annshaw in 1871, he found the chief old and feeble. Kama could no longer walk to church and had to be taken to the services in a cart. He grew gradually weaker until he died on 25 October 1875 (Holden 1879: 46). On his gravestone in the grounds of the church in Middeldrift are the words: 'a noble man, a just governor and a faithful Christian.'

Annshaw Methodist Church, Education and Poverty

The church was named after the missionaries William Shaw and his wife Ann. The name of the church is thus the combination of the name of Ann and the surname Shaw. They used it in



commemoration of Ann Shaw for the meritorious work done by her and husband in the area. The village that is located near the church is also named Annshaw.

The church also changed the lives of many in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries and it still continues to change lives positively. The missional work that Annshaw Methodist does is very meaningful to the society.

The missionaries used education as the tool to evangelize therefore the Amaggunukhwebe benefited from education especially the Annshaw community. Education transforms and enlightens people as to the evils of paganism and helps them to understand things differently. The basic approach to education was first to develop literacy and literary education, followed by industrial education in order to teach needed hard-skills (Gqubule 2006: 74).

Modern events shaping the Church

In modern times, even though the approach of education as an entry was a good thing, there was an issue of industrial education that disadvantaged the inhabitants of the area. Their land was taken and the church had much more land than the people. Duncan (2018: 2) stated that part of this process was the introduction of industrial schools to teach black people trades, make them more compliant and less likely to challenge the loss of their ancestral lands while they were involved in more industrious activities. As the result of this the MCSA at Annshaw owned much land which was used for the purpose of agriculture. All four respondents in the study agreed that after sometime this land that is owned by the MCSA at Annshaw was given to them by the circuit to be used by them as people who are members of Annshaw Methodist Church for the purpose of agriculture and small-scale farming to alleviate poverty. Poverty is a state in which a person lacks the needed financial resources and essentials for keeping a minimum standard of living. Poverty thus indicates that the income level from employment or unemployment as such, does not allow even the most basic human needs to be met.

They started to use this land during 1998, when Rev GT Boyce was the circuit superintendent and the district bishop was Rev Diko. They used that land from that year until 2008 when the superintendent was Rev SL Madwe. Rev Madwe arrived at Annshaw Circuit in 2003 and served there. During his tenure those people that used the land were assisted by the Eastern Cape South Africa Council of Churches as they provided the proper fencing of the land and the needed seeds for ploughing. That group of people worked the land, and once having harvested, the production was not meant for marketing but was rather donated to people who were in need in the village. Charity was considered as a key virtue and was understood by Thomas Aquinas as "the friendship of man for God", which "unites us to God". He also called it "the most excellent of the virtues". In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul places the greater stress on Charity "So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

This was the kind of working against poverty that is still benefitting people at Annshaw village. In 2008 those people who were working the land were chased away by the police as there were new decisions that have been taken by the superintendent of the circuit and the circuit steward of that year. Their decisions were to give the land to the Amadlelo dairy farm for the rental of the land and the mission house (manse). They fought a big battle as they argued who would benefit from the project. They said the project would be benefitting individuals. They also said why Methodist church took a decision to terminate the project that came with the needed poverty alleviation programme. It was very painful to see people crying because of the thing of passion that was taken away from him/her.



Poverty is contrary to God's decision to create human beings in the divine image, as well as to God's judgment on the full value of creation. We are created for fellowship and mutual dependence with fellow Christians and poverty ultimately affects all of us, and not merely those who experience it directly. Poverty does not allow people to achieve their full potential and it brings with it many challenges of inequality between people, and thus prevents many from fully experiencing the abundance of God's creation.

Annshaw Circuit and the Amadlelo Dairy Farm

Amadlelo was established in 2004 by 70 commercial dairy farmers in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. The aim was to take underutilized land and develop it to its full potential, train the local community members in farming and management, and address some of the issues currently facing the dairy industry in South Africa. Ideally, today Amadlelo would like to contribute the livestock and loose assets in a 50/50 share of milk, as a 10% share of the farming profits is not considered a good return on the amount of time and money spent managing the farms (Amadlelo Dairy Trust, 2019).

Amadlelo has not had the funding to purchase the required livestock and assets (R12 million for a 1000 cow unit) to be the 50/50 share milker, and they have now got commercial farmers involved to fund the livestock and assets or lease the livestock from commercial farmers. Amadlelo Agri is a partnership between Vuwa Investments (an empowerment company, which has a 35% stake in the company), the farmers (who have kept 49%) and the rest of the company is shared between 400 workers from the 50 dairy farms (Amadlelo Dairy Trust, 2019).

The Amadlelo dairy farm is a milk production farm that began in November 2008 and five months later, the project reached break-even point. This dairy operation uses previously unused land that belongs to Annshaw Methodist Church and 65 Middledrift beneficiaries. The Methodist Church of Southern Africa Annshaw Circuit No. 233 leased the land to the Amadlelo for the period of 15 years and also the mansion. The size land that includes both the Annshaw Circuit and the community is 165 ha in size. There are 18 community members that are permanently employed in this project.

Respondents' 1 and 4 argued that the expansion required market access and this was achieved by substituting this milk for milk being imported from South America through the creation of Coega Dairies, a state of the art UHT processing facility in the IDZ in Port Elizabeth. Respondents' 2 and 3 stated that an innovative partnership with Famous Brands provided an additional takeoff for processed cheese products from the milk that is produced from the dairy farm. This project is now generating money for the church and the community at large which is a good thing from a biblical perspective.

The Annshaw Circuit benefits with more than R10000 from the that project every month, and the money assists in the assessment of the Circuit to the MCO. Even though the minister is working hard during the coronavirus 19 era this money assists more towards the assessment that is due for the circuit.

Respondent 2 stated that the Amadlelo projects aim to achieve two goals which are: to develop under or unutilized redistributed farmland to its full potential and to ensure skills development and capacity-building to allow local community members to manage their own farmland. Therefore this project helps about 65 beneficiaries to know how to manage the property that belongs to them (farmland). This project has changed lives of people and it came with the help of Methodist Church of Southern Africa at the Annshaw Circuit. Their land was not used for a long time but in 2008 when the Methodist Church of Southern Africa came up with the idea of Amadlelo dairy farm people did not see the light because the ideas were formless during that time. Many families were impoverished



but now are relieved to a large extent from the sufferings that were endured by them. Thanks to the Methodist vision and its Christian approach:

The company aims to build prosperous agribusinesses and benefit from exceptional operational capacity, extensive project management, proven skills development and significant resources as investors. Amadlelo is driven by highly successful and experienced commercial operators with the vision to invest capital, assets and expertise over time into projects that uplift historically disadvantaged individuals (HDIs). The business is 72% majority black-owned. Tulsacap (46,4%) which is a group of black professionals and business people that have pooled investment resources in Amadlelo Agri. Amadlelo Milk Producers Investment Company (26,8%) which includes about 50 commercial farmers from KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape Vuwa Investments (18,8%) which is a 100% black-owned investment company Amadlelo Empowerment Trust (8%) which represents 500 black workers of AMPIC members. (<https://amadlelo.co.za/>)

To fight against poverty is to use what a person has, for example people around Middledrift have land but they don't use it as a way of fighting against poverty, instead they want to get money even though the money could be gained by working on the land. Annshaw community use their land with the help of Annshaw Methodist Church in collaboration with them. This project is a form of alleviating poverty for the people that are living in the village. This project is a sustaining one that will not be closing down any time soon. Those who are employed in that project will work for the rest of their lives and those families are members of the project will likely benefit for the rest of their lives as will future generations. The Holy Spirit calls us into a new community where justice is served, and in which true freedom and love abound. Christians must live by the promises of God the Father, which is a source of faith and also hope.

Conclusion

Although the missionaries came with traders that had a colonial agenda, they came also with the transformation of the people of Middledrift in mind. Middledrift people of the historical past became literate and accepted Christianity. The Methodist Church became the church of AmaGqunukhwebe tribe as their chief accepted Christianity fully.

The Annshaw Methodist Church is serving the community as Jesus said to Peter in John 21:17 "He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep". The sheep that Jesus was talking about are the needy people, all the poor and not only the members of the church but also people in the broader community. The land that the Methodist Church of Southern Africa owns must be used for the purpose of poverty alleviation projects as the right means to develop people. Not only the land that is owned by the church but the role that the church must play is to further promote and teach and encourage people to use their land. They could for example undertake vegetable garden projects. There is a huge challenge as people want to get money as a handout instead of working the land to get money they need. People need to be encouraged to work the land to get money. Poverty is a moral and also a political issue. The Methodist and other churches should work with all stakeholders to alleviate the plight of the poor and it is then necessary to form strong partnerships with all stakeholders concerned with the problem of poverty or any other issue that affects society (Nicolaides, 2015).



The Methodist Church must come up with some strategies in making the value of working the land as way of fighting against poverty be viewed as an honourable way forward. People are not employed as there is a scarcity of job opportunities in South Africa especially the Eastern Cape Province, Consequently people must learn to work for themselves by working the land that they have been given by God. People need to confess that they are created in the divine image and this affirms that they are created for fellowship as they work with others. People invariably exist in relationship with God, each other, and with the nature and the land they possess. Proverbs 19:17 tells us “Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done.” Thus the Methodist church is on the right track since the poor represent all those who are marginalized in society. Jesus himself taught the importance of helping those who are poor and need help. Methodists working with this in mind focus on helping those who live in poverty.

References

- Beck, R. B. (1993). *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People*. *History: Reviews of New Books*, 21 (4): 174–175.
- British Rule in South Africa*. London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1879.
- Crafford, D. ed. (1991). *Trail-blazers of the Gospel: Black Pioneers in the Missionary History of Southern Africa*. Pretoria: ISWEN.
- Duncan, G. A. (2018). Lesseyton: A Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Experiment in African Industrial and Theological Education. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 44, (3). University of Pretoria: Pretoria.
- Education for Ministry and Mission Unit. (2016). *The Wesley Studies*. Johannesburg: Methodist Church Office.
- Gqubule, T. S. N. (2006). “*Methodism and Education*”: In *Rediscovering Wesley for Africa*, edited by Purity Malinga and Neville Richardson. Silverton: Methodist Church of Southern Africa, 59– 80.
- Hammond, T. ed. (1972). *The Journal of William Shaw*. Cape Town: A.A. Balkema.
- Holden, W. C. (1877). *A Brief History of Methodism and Methodist Missions in South Africa*. London: Wesleyan Conference Office.
- Shaw, J.W. (1827). The Journal of William Shaw, 1827 Available online at <http://www.wright.edu/~christopher.oldstone-moore/shaw.htm>
- Le Vaillant, F. (1790). *Travels into the interior parts of Africa : by the way of the Cape of Good Hope in the years 1780, 81, 82, 83, 84, and 85 /*. London: Printed for G.G.J. and J. Robinson.
- Lipschutz, M. (1986). *Dictionary of African Historical Biography*. University of California Press.
- Millard, J.A. (1999). *Malihambe - Let the Word Spread*, Unisa Press, Pretoria, South Africa.
- Nicolaidis, A. (2015). Tourism Stakeholder Theory in practice: instrumental business grounds, fundamental normative demands or adescriptive application? *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 4(2), July-November.



Raupp, W. (1992). Kemp, Johannes Theodorus van der (Vanderkemp), in: Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon, vol. 3, Herzberg: Bautz.

Taylor, W. (1895). *Story of My Life*. New York: Eaton & Mains.

Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae: The passions of the soul in particular: and first, of love , *Prima Secundae Partis*, Q. 26, . Available online at www.newadvent.org.

Unpublished Document, (2019). *Amadlelo Dairy Trust*. Middledrift. 2019

Whiteside, J. (1906). *A History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa*. London: Paternoster.