

**A Brief, Critical History of Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa among the amaZioni of southern Africa with special reference to its relationship with the Christian Catholic Church of Zion”**

by

Andrew Leslie Sullivan

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER of THEOLOGY

at the

SOUTH AFRICAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

in

October 2013

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Frank Jabini and Mr. Twanda Maenzanise  
as co-supervisor

*The opinions expressed in this thesis do not necessarily reflect the views of the South African Theological Seminary.*

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby acknowledge that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any academic institution for degree purposes.

Andrew Leslie Sullivan

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I give praise to my Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ for giving me the strength and perseverance to finish this thesis. I pay tribute to the patience and encouragement that I've received from Heather, my wife and partner in ministry for many years, both in the pastorate and now in the mission field.

I also thank the following for their assistance – Franklin Jabini, Tawanda Maenzanise and Leschenne Rebuli of South African Theological Seminary (SATS) , Blanche Norris, Susan Binion and Kirsten Burnett for their editorial help and Mike McDowell and Ken Langley from Christ Community Church, Zion, Illinois, USA (previously known as the Christian Catholic Church of Zion) for their valuable input. I also praise the Lord for my colleagues, the ZEMA missionaries who took the time to read the thesis and also made valuable contributions.

I pray that this research will be a source of encouragement to the readers that God loves the world, including the wonderful amaZioni who reside in southern Africa.

Andy Sullivan

October 2013

## **SUMMARY or ABSTRACT**

This thesis is a brief overview of the history of a missionary organization that specializes in ministering to the amaZioni of southern Africa. The word 'amaZioni' is taken from the Zulu word meaning 'the people of Zion'. This Mission Organization was first known as the Mahon Mission and later became Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa (ZEMA). ZEMA has a close relationship with the Christian Catholic Church of Zion that was founded by John Alexander Dowie in 1896. Missionaries of ZEMA use this relationship that they enjoy with the church in Zion to gain acceptance by the amaZioni church leaders who themselves trace their history back to the Christian Catholic Church of Zion.

The researcher attempts to give a brief history of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion in Illinois, USA that was founded by Dowie. It includes a history of the establishment of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion in South Africa and focuses on the most important characters who were influenced by Dowie in South Africa. These were Johannes Buchler, Pieter le Roux and Edgar Mahon, the latter being the founder of the Mahon Mission.

The thesis also investigates the ministry of the missionaries of ZEMA through the use of the instrument of a questionnaire. The results of this questionnaire reveals by way of testimony and personal experiences from both ZEMA missionaries and local amaZioni church leaders that the knowledge of ZEMA's history and the unique relationship that ZEMA has with the Christian Catholic Church of Zion has proven to be of great value to both missionaries and the amaZioni churches.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

- 1. Background Page 9
- 2. Purpose Page11
- 3. Design and Methodology Page11
- 4. Overview Page13
- 5. Definitions Page15

### **CHAPTER 2: DOWIE AND ZION CITY**

- 1. Introduction Page 16
- 2. Life and Ministry of John Alexander Dowie Page 16
- 3. History of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion Page 20
  - 3.1 Zion City Page20
  - 3.2 Wilbur Glenn Voliva Page21
  - 3.3 Michael J Mintern Page 22
  - 3.4 Carl Lee Page 22
  - 3.5 Roger Otterson Page 23
  - 3.6 Ken Langley Page 23
- 4. Conclusion Page 23

### **CHAPTER 3: BEGINNING OF ZIONISM IN SOUTHERN AFRICA**

- 1. Introduction Page 25
- 2. The African Independent Churches Page 25
- 3. Pentecostalism Page 28
- 4. Dowie's Influence on South Africa Page 29
  - 4.1 The influence of Daniel Bryant
  - 4.2 The Ministry of Johannes Buchler 1864 – 1944
  - 4.3 The ministry of Pieter Louis Le Roux
  - 4.4 The Ministry of Edgar H Mahon
  - 4.5 Conclusion
- 5. Conclusion Page 37

## **CHAPTER 4: THE MAHON MISSION AND ZEMA**

1. Introduction Page 40
2. The Early Years: 1904 – 1946 Page 41
  - 2.1 Introduction
  - 2.2 Grace Missionary Church
  - 2.3 Zulu and Basutoland Mission
  - 2.4 Early Missionaries
  - 2.5 Conclusion
3. The Mahon Mission: 1946 – 1970 Page 46
  - 3.1 Introduction
  - 3.2 Change of name to “The Mahon Mission”
  - 3.3 Affiliations
  - 3.4 Conclusion
4. Alfred, Edgar and Lyle Mahon Page 49
  - 4.1 Introduction
  - 4.2 Alfred Joseph Mahon
  - 4.3 Edgar Henry Mahon (1936 – 1997)
  - 4.4 Lyle Burton Mahon (1933 – 2011)
  - 4.5 Conclusion
- 5 Constitutional Changes: 1970 – 1990 Page 52
  - 5.1 Introduction
  - 5.2 Grace Missionary Church and the Mahon Mission
  - 5.3 Revision of the Constitution
  - 5.4 Relations with the Baptist Union of Southern Africa
  - 5.5 New Missionaries
  - 5.6 Conclusion
- 6 Division within the Mahon Mission: 1990 – 1996 Page 55
  - 6.1 Introduction
  - 6.2 Resignation of Edgar Mahon
  - 6.3 Establishment of the Zion Evangelical Fellowship of Africa
- 7 Recent Events: 1996 – 2012 Page 59
  - 7.1 Introduction

7.2	Name changes	
7.3	Purchase of Properties	
4.8	Conclusion	Page 61
<b>CHAPTER 5: THE QUESTIONNAIRE</b>		
1	Introduction	Page 62
2	Use of Empirical Data	Page 62
3	The Questionnaire	Page 64
4	The Resultant Answers	Page 65
4.1	Missionary 1	
4.2	Missionary 2	
4.2.1	Kanana ZEBS	
4.2.2	Bizana ZEBS	
4.2.3	Lusindisweni ZEBS	
4.2.4	Bala ZEBS	
4.2.5	Sondela, Mthatha ZEBS	
4.3	Missionary 3	
4.2.1	Maputo ZEBS	
4.2.2	Machaze ZEBS	
4.2.3	Casa Nova ZEBS	
4.2.4	Tete ZEBS	
4.4	Missionary 4	
4.2.1	Mdantsane ZEBS	
4.2.2	Zwelitsha ZEBS	
4.2.3	Queenstown ZEBS	
4.2.4	Peddie ZEBS	
4.2.5	Port Alfred ZEBS	
4.5	Missionary 5	
4.2.1	Virginia ZEBS	
4.2.2	Randfontein ZEBS	
4.2.3	Dube, Soweto ZEBS	
4.2.4	Rustenburg ZEBS	

4.2.5	Katlehong ZEBS	
4.6	Missionary 6	
4.7	Missionary 7	
4.8	Missionary 8	
4.9	Missionary 9	
5	Written testimony concerning Bishop Titos Ndlovu	Page 95
6	Conclusion	Page 98
<b>CHAPTER 6: THE ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE</b>		
1	Introduction	Page 99
2	Methodology	Page 99
3	Early Methods of Ministry	Page 101
4	Changes in Methods of Ministry	Page 101
5	Zion Evangelical Bible Schools	Page 104
6	Analysis of the Questionnaires	Page 107
6.1	Preliminary Results	
6.2	Answers to Specific Questions	
6.3	Question 1 “have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School?”	
6.4	Question 2 “have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School?”	
6.5	Question 3 “how has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the “Mother Church” in Zion, USA helped your own ministry?”	
6.6	Question 4 “how has the historical link posed a problem when working among the amaZioni?”	
7.	Conclusion	Page 116
<b>CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION</b>		
1	Introduction	Page 117
2	Importance of Bible Teaching	Page 118
3	Recommendations	Page 118
4	Concluding comments	Page 119
APPENDIX 1	Letter to Respondents	Page 121
APPENDIX 2	Instructions	Page 122

APPENDIX 3      Questionnaire

Page 123

SOURCES CONSULTED

Page 125

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1. Background

ZEMA (Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa) is a mission agency that ministers among the amaZioni of southern Africa. The mission was established by Edgar Mahon after he met with Daniel Bryant who visited South Africa on behalf of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion in South Africa. John Alexander Dowie had commissioned Bryant to oversee the ministry of this church in South Africa and Bryant in turn commissioned Mahon to oversee the ministry among the amaZioni in his area of the Orange Free State. Bryant and Mahon met at the end of 1903 in the Harrismith area of the Orange Free State and this encounter led to the formation of the Mahon Mission, today known as Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa.

The researcher joined Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa (ZEMA) in 2008 after serving as a pastor of various Baptist Churches in South Africa for 25 years. During his last pastorate he served as a Field Council member of ZEMA for six years. At this time he also went on a number of short term mission trips with ZEMA missionaries to Mthatha in the Eastern Cape and to Mozambique. The researcher has been impressed by the welcome that ZEMA missionaries, himself included, receive among the amaZioni because of their relationship with “the mother church”, the Christian Catholic Church of Zion, Illinois, USA. Missionaries teach and explain the history of the amaZioni when they teach the churches the biblical message of the gospel of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.

When ZEMA missionaries explain that they have been sent from their “mother church” in Zion, USA, the amaZioni church leaders welcome them and allow these missionaries to teach them the Bible. It has been noticed that the amaZioni are very suspicious and resistant to “outsiders” for fear that these “outsiders” will take their people “out of Zion”. They fear that “outsiders” will change their practices and customs that are particular to Zionism in southern Africa and force them to follow the ways of the “mainline churches” and other more socially acceptable church groups.

The title of this thesis is “A Brief Critical History of Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa among the amaZioni with special reference to its relationship with the Christian Catholic Church of Zion, Illinois, USA”

This thesis will investigate the history of ZEMA and will show the value of the historical relationship that it has with the Christian Catholic Church of Zion and how it

has proven to be of benefit for the missionaries. Many studies have been done on the Zionists. Writers such as G C Oosthuizen, B Sundkler, M L Daneel, and A Anderson have done extensive research and have written numerous books and articles on the Zionists of southern Africa. It has been stated that “since the publication of Bengt Sundkler’s epoch-making work, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* in 1948 (second edition, 1961), independent Black Churches have been the object of continuing and serious missiological study.” (Kritzinger J J 1980: 190)

These writers have adequately shown that Zionism can trace its origins to the Christian Catholic Church of Zion, Illinois, USA founded by John Alexander Dowie in 1896. However few have focused on the actual history of this particular Mission and its work among the amaZioni. Some have also acknowledged the life and work of Edgar Mahon but do not discuss the history or the work of the Mahon Mission which is now Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa.

This lack of historical information has not been investigated or researched, although articles have been written about the life and work of Edgar Mahon, the founder of the Mahon Mission (which was the original name of ZEMA). Edgar H Mahon, the grandson of the founder has written an article for *Religion Alive* and W Burton has written a book entitled “*When God Makes a Missionary*” (Burton W 1961). Rev R S Akers, a ZEMA missionary has written an article about the amaZioni for the 1999 edition of *The South African Baptist Theological Journal*. However nothing has been written about the Mission since the name of the Mission changed to ZEMA in 1997.

The article by E H Mahon is entitled “*The formation of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion and its earliest contacts with South Africa*” and provides a brief overview of the life and ministry of John Alexander Dowie, the establishment of Zion City and the publication “*Leaves of Healing*”. He also discusses the influence of Rev J Buchler and notes that “other personalities who influenced many arose ... such as P L Le Roux and Edgar Burton Mahon to mention but two”.

W Burton has written a short biography of Edgar Burton Mahon and provides a number of personal details about his life. The article by R S Akers was written for the South African Baptist Journal of Theology, under Section C: Specialised Mission Ministries. His article entitled “Working Among the AmaZioni in South Africa” relates to his ministry among the AmaZioni. These books and article are dated therefore requiring that an updated record of the Mahon Mission be provided for.

The author will seek to ‘fill this gap’ with a history of the Mahon Mission from its beginnings when it was established as a constituted mission in 1934 to the present time. He will also investigate how missionaries of this Mission use this historical link to their own advantage to gain acceptance and credibility among the amaZioni.

This thesis will through necessity concentrate on those aspects of Zionism that relate specifically to the influence of Dowie on Edgar Mahon, the founder of the Mahon Mission which today is known as Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa (ZEMA).

## **2. Purpose**

The purpose of this thesis is to provide a brief history of Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa, a mission agency that was previously known as the Mahon Mission and that traces its origins to the Christian Catholic Church of Zion, Illinois, USA. This church was founded by John Alexander Dowie in 1896 and had an influence on the amaZioni of southern Africa. Today the church is known as “Christ Community Church” as many were confusing the appendage “catholic” with the Roman Catholic Church.

This thesis will not only study the life and ministry of John Alexander Dowie and the Christian Catholic Church of Zion but will also study the beginnings of Zionism in southern Africa. This is important because, in order to investigate and understand the ministry of ZEMA, one will need an understanding of Zionism as a “type of church in their own right” (Grundman 2006: 256).

Oosthuizen states that “John Alexander Dowie made the word ‘Zion’ familiar in the hearts and minds of many people throughout the world and not the least in South Africa” (Oosthuizen 1987:1). He gave it a specific meaning for faith healing, for the rejection of medicines, and the rejection of alcohol and tobacco, as well as for the conscientious visitation of people in need and among Black Christian communities. Dowie had a strong emphasis on teaching the Bible as the inspired Word of God at a time when biblical criticism flourished (Oosthuizen 1987:1).

## **3. Design and Methodology**

This thesis falls within the field of missiology and more specifically missions history. J A B Jongeneel notes that the history of Christian mission uses the historical method, which is also used by those who study general history, church history and the history of religions (2006:249). However, the difference in this particular discipline is that it focuses on the object of mission, while the other disciplines focus

on both the subject and the object. Jongeneel further states that the history of Christian mission is a well-developed academic discipline because “many general mission histories and general surveys of world mission have been written” (Jongeneel 2006: 292) as well as specific studies of different denominational missions, mission societies and orders. These included the history of the Hebrew Christians, Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholics and Protestants, as well as the Ecumenical, Evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches and missions.

Jongeneel distinguishes between scientific studies that are critical and empirical in nature and popular histories that tend to advance the cause of a particular mission and tend to be explicitly or implicitly devotional in their nature. Scientific histories of missions are descriptive while popular histories are normative in character. However Jongeneel cautions that this distinction must not be forced too strongly. In the light of these distinctions, this thesis will be scientific in nature although it will also contain elements of the popular history. This is because it will seek to advance the cause of a particular mission society, namely ZEMA.

Jongeneel further distinguishes between comprehensive histories of the Christian mission that do not limit the object of their mission studies and categorical histories that are engaged in specific research. This thesis will fit into the second type as it will limit itself to a study on a specific aspect of the history of Zionism, namely the work of ZEMA missionaries among amaZioni churches and their church leaders.

Jongeneel notes that the relation between mission history and world history is important because the historian must set the recorded events in the context of world events. This aspect of his definition is relevant for this thesis as the work of ZEMA among the amaZioni of southern Africa needs to be studied within the context of Pentecostalism of the late 1800's, the life of John Dowie, and the historical situation in South Africa in the early 1900's.

This thesis will essentially be historical in nature. However it will also be descriptive in nature because it will attempt to describe the history of a mission society from its beginnings to the present day. It will also attempt to be analytical and critical in that the researcher will investigate the effective usage of this historical link between the Christian Catholic Church, John A Dowie, the amaZioni of southern Africa and this mission society that ministers among them.

#### **4. Overview**

This thesis will comprise five chapters together with an introduction and a conclusion.

**4.1.** Chapter 1 will focus on the history of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion which was founded by John Alexander Dowie in 1896. This will include the establishment of the city of Zion, north of Chicago in 1900. Today the name of the church has been changed to Christ Community Church of Zion, Illinois, USA because the word “catholic” was often confused with the Roman Catholic Church. This chapter will be of a literary nature and various sources will be mentioned.

**4.2.** In chapter 2 the research will show that Zionism in southern Africa traces its origins back to the Christian Catholic Church of Zion and the life and ministry of John Alexander Dowie. This chapter will also be of a literary nature and various sources will be referred to.

**4.3.** The third chapter will constitute the history of ZEMA. Research will trace its history from its beginnings when it began under the leadership of Edgar Mahon to the present day. Mahon was appointed by Dowie to care for the amaZioni churches after he had been healed under the ministry of Daniel Bryant who came to South Africa in 1905. Mahon “was a strong Charismatic figure who, together with Mr Buchler, founder of the Free Baptist Church, and P L le Roux, founder of the Apostolic Faith Mission, had been influenced strongly by John Dowie from the Christian Catholic Church, Zion Illinois, USA” (Roy and Hudson-Reed 2001:41). This research on the history of ZEMA will be achieved through referring to historical and current newsletters and other information available from the ZEMA website and other ZEMA publications. The researcher will also consult with the churches in Zion who have access to primary source material. There is an original letter written by Dowie to Bryant when he sent him to South Africa kept by the Zion Historical Society

The preamble of the Constitution of Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa states “the Mahon Mission has operated as an inclusive body incorporating a Missionary Society and an association of Churches since 1934. The Association of Churches has operated under a Constitution which was

originally accepted in 1934 and revised from time to time. The Missionary Society operated initially under Resolutions and a Missionary Manual (1949) until a Policy Document was formulated in 1963. This Policy Document was revised in 1985. This has been replaced by guiding Rules accepted in 1991. The Missionary Society has always managed its own financial affairs, the work and welfare of the missionaries and owned and controlled the properties of the Missionary Society. Following the decision of the Annual Missionary Conference, February 1991, it was decided to formalize the structure of the Mahon Mission Missionary Society in Southern Africa by adopting a Constitution.”

The Constitution of Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa, Zion, Illinois, USA dated July 2002 states that “The Mission’s purpose, therefore, shall be that of a philanthropic, educational, religious agency, designed to form a Protestant Evangelical missionary order representing churches, societies and Christian individuals for spreading the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and establishing, developing, and promoting all phases of church work and missionary activity in Southern Africa. We are also committed to the recruiting, sending, and supporting of missionaries to assist in this task.”

This aspect of the research will include the change that occurred in 1996 when the name was changed from the Mahon Mission to its present name Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa. Data for this research was taken from minutes of meetings and interviews with missionaries, especially the notes and files collected by Lyle Mahon, who was the grandson of the founder, Edgar Mahon, and the brother of Edgar H Mahon. During this time the Mission was accepted as a General Association of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa and therefore research will be made of the relevant minutes of Baptist Union Executive meetings and their publication, the Baptist Handbook. Roy and Hudson Reed note that the Mahon Mission joined the Baptist Union in order for the churches to be granted government recognition (2001:41). These records will also refer to a period in the Mission’s history when there were problems in the leadership that ultimately resulted in the Mission forming a new Constitution and renaming itself Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa.

- 4.4.** In chapter 4, this research focuses on a critical evaluation of the work of ZEMA missionaries among the amaZioni in different parts of South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique. This was done by referring to annual reports and newsletters as well as through interviews with the missionaries. This research will be essentially empirical in nature and will be in the form of questionnaires sent to missionaries and on site visits where possible. The purpose of the questionnaires will be to show the value of this historical link that ZEMA missionaries enjoy with the “founding church of Zionism”. The researcher acknowledges that the process will include both objective and subjective results. Information regarding the various Bible Schools will be objective in that it will be based on the comments and statements made by missionaries and amaZioni church leaders as recorded in the answers to the questionnaires. However there will inevitably be a subjective element as the researcher interprets the results from his own perspective and personal experiences as a ZEMA missionary and as an experienced ordained pastor.
- 4.5.** In the final chapter the research will conclude with an analysis and an evaluation of the empirical data in order to show that the history of ZEMA is closely related to its relationship with the Christian Catholic Church of Zion. This historical relationship that the missionaries enjoy with the Christian Catholic Church of Zion enables them to have what could be described as “an unusual and unique relationship” with the amaZioni of southern Africa. This also enables the ZEMA missionaries to have an “open invitation” to most of the amaZioni churches and church groups.

## **5. Definitions**

- 5.1.** ZEMA is the acronym for Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa
- 5.2.** “amaZioni” is the anglicised word from the Zulu word for “the people of Zion”
- 5.3.** CCC of Zion is the abbreviated form for referring to the Christian Catholic Church in Zion City, Illinois, USA.
- 5.4.** Grace Missionary Church is the church that first supported the Mahon family and the Mahon Mission. It was also previously known as another Christian Catholic Church of Zion which caused confusion among the residents of Zion.
- 5.5.** Quotations from the Bible are taken from the New International Version.

## **CHAPTER 2: DOWIE AND ZION CITY**

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to lay the foundation for understanding the historical roots of Zionism by examining the life of the founder of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion, John Alexander Dowie. Much has been written on the life and works of John Alexander Dowie and the establishment of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion (Cook 2000, E Cairns 1974. N V Hope, G C Oosthuizen 1987. B Sundkler 1961), therefore this chapter will not involve an extensive study on Dowie's life but rather a brief overview of his life and ministry.

### **2. Life and Ministry of John Alexander Dowie**

John Alexander Dowie was born in Edinburgh, Scotland 25<sup>th</sup> May 1847. According to his own testimony, written in his publication *Leaves of Healing* he "had a conversion experience at the age of seven" (*Leaves of Healing*, Vol. CXXII No1, 2, January-February 1986, page 1). According to Kevin McDermott he "received his religious conviction while singing a hymn from a street pulpit in that city" (McDermott 2011). Cook notes that his family moved to Adelaide, Australia in 1860 when he was 13 years of age "where John Alexander was employed by his uncle, Alexander Dowie, who owned a shoe shop and was engaged in the import business" (Cook 1996: 6). He later received business experience when he worked "as a clerk in a wholesale dry goods firm" (Cook 1996: 6). Dowie later returned to Edinburgh in 1869 for further studies at the University of Edinburgh and subsequently returned to Australia as an ordained minister of the Congregational church in Sydney in 1872. While in Edinburgh, Dowie worked in the infirmary as a chaplain which allowed him to attend lectures in medicine, listen to diagnoses and observe surgeries (Cook 1996: 6). This also negatively affected his view of medical practices of the day and motivated him to consider divine healing as an alternative.

Dowie married a cousin, Jane Dowie on 26 May 1876 despite opposition from the family. Three children were born, Gladstone, Jeanie and Esther, but Jeanie died at an early age in November 1885. Their other daughter, Esther, died in 1902 when she was burnt to death in a fire accident (Chant 1992: 19).

Dowie took an interest in spiritual matters from an early age and is said to have read through the whole Bible through at six years of age (B Chant 1992: 10). Kiek describes him as 'amazingly precocious' and points out that he loved to attend Bible

study classes and Christian meetings and asked questions which would normally be beyond those of a child of his age. (E. S. Kiek cited in B Chant 1992: An Apostle in Australia, London: Independent Press, 1927, p.297)

Chant states that “John Alexander Dowie spent only eight and half years of his astonishing ministry in Australia. Yet they were in some ways the most significant of his career. It was during this time, that he developed a philosophy of ministry and leadership that would catapult him into international fame as a religious leader.” (B Chant 1992: 1)

In October 1877, Dowie left the Congregational Church in order to establish his own Free Christian Church. He explained in a letter to his wife that he would never again lead a denominational church because he desired freedom to minister as he saw fit and had a burden for those he saw as being misguided and ignorant. He also experienced “a constant sense of destiny” because Dowie clearly believed he was made for greater things (B Chant1992: 9).

In 1878 Dowie began evangelistic work and held meetings at various venues until he established the Free Christian Church in February 1883 in Melbourne. (B Chant 1992:13). At this time the country was affected by a terrible plague that killed many people. Dowie was concerned for all the sick and dying and was strongly influenced by the words in Acts 10:38

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him” (NIV),

These verses convicted him and resulted in him praying for the sick and discovering that they were healed. As a result of these miraculous healings, he founded the International Divine Healing Association in 1887, at the same time began to preach against alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

The Christian Catholic Church which he founded in Chicago in February 1896, with 500 members had rocketed to an estimated 40,000 members world-wide. Not only had he established a new church in America, but he had built a small city as well - a theocratic community where there were no taverns, no vaudeville theatres, no doctors, no chemist shops, no places of gambling and certainly no smoking or drinking. The new Tabernacle seated some 8,000 people. Citizens came from all over the United States and from overseas as well - including a large contingent from Australia. During the period, Dowie adopted the practice of baptism by triune immersion. He also became an American citizen. (Chant 1992: 18, 19)

Soon branches of the International Divine Healing Association were formed in various parts of the world. Dowie was careful to insist that divine healing was very different from spiritist or occult healing. His own understanding of it is clearly outlined in the following extracts from an address to a ministers' conference in the United States of America -

First: That Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, and being so, is unchanged in power.

Second: That disease like sin, is God's enemy, and the devil's work, and can never be God's will (Act 10:38).

We do not present our theories. Jesus did three things. He taught, he preached, he healed. This is the divine order, and the kingdom can only be extended by that three-fold ministry.

Divine healing points to a still more beautiful thing - holiness of life (Isaiah 35). If you defile your body by any nicotine poison ... then you sin against God and your own soul. To pollute the body with alcohol is a sin. The doctrine of divine healing comes with great force to them that are sick, causing them to quit sin.

That Christ is the healer does not depend on any human testimony; it rests upon the word of God ... We need to get back to the old church lines, as laid down in the New Testament.

We teach what is recorded in the 12th chapter of First Corinthians, that the Gifts of Healing are in the Holy Spirit, like all other Gifts of God (B Chant :82).

A year later in 1888 Dowie travelled to San Francisco, USA, holding healing services along the east coast. He had initially intended to attend a convention on healing in England, but then decided to remain in the USA because his ministry of healing was so well received (Cook 1996: 10). In 1890 he moved to Chicago, Illinois and continued his ministry of praying for the sick. In 1893 he built a small church named "Zion Tabernacle" near the grounds of the World Fair and a year later started the publication "*Leaves of Healing*" (Oosthuizen 1987: 2). During the Chicago World Fair he held healing services in a large tabernacle across the way from Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.

Dowie established Divine Healing Homes where ill people were ministered to. Tony Cauchi (Cauchi 2004) notes that

Dowie was intensely evangelistic and passionate about divine healing. His early meeting halls were filled with the crutches, braces, and other medical devices that his followers no longer needed because they had been miraculously cured. Dowie published his followers' healing testimonials in the weekly editions of '*Leaves of Healing*.' The November 1<sup>st</sup> 1895 edition of "Leaves of Healing" includes a picture of Zion Tabernacle with a wall decorated with crutches, boots, and plaster casts of different sizes as evidence of these miracles.

Dowie faced opposition by those who disagreed with his message and methods and was arrested for opening Divine Healing Homes and practicing medicine without a licence. He was arrested many times by the authorities but finally won his case in the Supreme Court. He held that “he had the right under the Constitution of the State of Illinois to pray for the sick without calling in medical assistance” and this opposition was the main reason for the establishment of the Christian Catholic Church on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1896 (Oosthuizen 1987:2). Dowie was described as one who

harshly criticised the sinner, but loved his followers like a forgiving father. Blessed with a keen memory, Dowie spoke with authority as he effortlessly interspersed long passages of Scripture verbatim into his discourse. Optimistic, with a ready wit and exuding an infectious confidence, Dowie commanded the rapt attention of his rapidly growing congregation (Cook 1996: 12).

While Dowie's ministry predated the contemporary revival of Pentecostalism, many of his followers became influential figures in the Pentecostal revival in the early years of the twentieth century. Cauchi states that in 1900 Dowie visited England and Polly Wigglesworth was baptised in water while visiting meetings held in London by the noted healing restorationist from Zion City in America (Leaves of Healing, Nov 3rd 1900, page.64). There she was clearly influenced by the message of healing which was later taken up by her husband, Smith Wigglesworth. (Cauchi, Tony 2004).

K. Roy describes Dowie as “one of the more eccentric products of the holiness movement that was destined to have an unusual influence on South Africa“(2000: 102). G C Oosthuizen’s study on “the birth of Christian Zionism in South Africa“, which is largely gleaned from Dowie’s publication “*Leaves of Healing*” explains much of the beginnings of this movement. Oosthuizen notes that Dowie writes about his opposition to those who use tobacco and / or alcohol, who gamble or join secret societies. In this publication we read that baptism was a central teaching which followed repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour. Dowie also recognized the infallible inspiration and authority and sufficiency of the Bible as the rule of faith and practice for the Zion Church. He preached triune immersion and was himself baptised in this way in 1894 (Oosthuizen 1987:2). This mode of baptism is still practiced by many Zionist churches in southern Africa today.

### **3. History of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion**

#### **3.1. Zion City**

In 1899 Dowie bought land north of Chicago, midway between Chicago and Milwaukee in order to build a city dedicated to a biblical lifestyle. The announcement of the establishment of Zion City was made at the midnight service of 31<sup>st</sup> December 1899 as the new millennium was ushered in. Roy states that “this model community, in which pork, alcohol, tobacco and drugs were strictly prohibited, became the headquarters of Dowie’s Christian Catholic Church of Zion (CCC of Z), over which he ruled as Elijah III, the restorer” (Roy 2000: 102). The official publication of the Christ Community Church “This We Believe” states that

the Christian Catholic Church was founded, under God, by John Alexander Dowie in the city of Chicago on February 22, 1896 with five hundred charter members. The reason for its being brought into existence was the fact that the many thousands who had been saved and healed through Dr Dowie’s ministry, upon their return to their various churches were not allowed to bear testimony to God’s marvellous healing power or to the blessings received. Therefore the establishment of a church home for these precious souls whose hearts were overflowing with joy and praise to God, became a vital necessity (Christian Catholic Church 1993: 4).

Dowie appointed himself as General Overseer and in June 1901 he declared himself to be “Elijah the Restorer”. He assumed responsibility for every aspect of life in Zion City and claimed ownership of everything by having all the property registered in his name. McDermott (McDermott 2011) states that Dowie

owned everything personally, although settlers were offered 1,100-year leases (i.e., 100 years to usher in the Kingdom and 1,000 for Christ’s millennial reign — after that, seemingly, you were on your own). The leases specifically forbade gambling, dancing, swearing, spitting, theatres, circuses, the manufacture and sale of alcohol or tobacco, pork, oysters, doctors, politicians .... At the height of his power and influence, Dowie was worth several million dollars and claimed 50,000 followers, 6,000 of whom lived in Zion City. In 1901 Dowie proclaimed himself “Elijah the Restorer” and began to wear High-Priestly robes. This caused many disciples to fall away; the subsequent decrease in income combined with the expenses of building Zion marked the beginning of Dowie’s slide into bankruptcy.

In 1903 Dowie organized the “New York” visitation when he took three thousand of his followers, including members of his special vigilante unit, the Zion Guard, members of the Zion Band and the white robed choir, to do evangelism and home visitations in the city of New York. Oosthuizen states that this event “turned out to be

a humiliating fiasco and great financial loss” (Oosthuizen 1987: 8) and caused irreparable damage to Dowie and Zion City as he used this time to attack the editor of the “Century Magazine”

In 1904 Dowie proclaimed himself as the First Apostle. At this time the word “Apostolic” was added to the name of the church making it the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion”. This created problems among his followers and the name was changed back to the original in 1906, leaving out the word “Apostolic” (Oosthuizen 1987: 7). A number of Zionist churches in southern Africa continue to include the word “apostolic” in the names of their churches.

In the latter years of Dowie’s life, he and his family lived a lavish lifestyle in his home “Shiloh House” and also purchased “Ben MacDhui” in Michigan as a summer home. He travelled in luxury hired train cars, dressed lavishly and spent much on his homes and family. He overworked himself and suffered both physically and mentally, until he suffered a stroke at the close of the communion service on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1905. John Alexander Dowie died on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 1907.

### **3.2. *Wilbur Glenn Voliva***

Before his death in 1907, Dowie had appointed Wilbur Glenn Voliva as Deputy General Overseer in 1905. Wilbur Voliva had come to Melbourne in 1901 to take over the leadership of the church and was an efficient organizer. During Dowie’s absence the work had declined, but under Voliva’s supervision it soon regained its strength. By 1904, the year of Dowie’s ‘visitation’ in Australia, there were some 1300 members in the Melbourne congregation (Chant 1992: 14, 15).

Voliva left Australia where he had been the General Overseer of that country’s Zion Churches since 1901 and arrived in Zion in February 1906 when financial ruin faced the city and the church. Dowie continued to demand funds for his project in Mexico and for expenses incurred while in Jamaica. Although Voliva remained faithful to Dowie, he believed that the right course of action was to relieve him from all responsibilities as General Overseer. This decision was contested by Dowie in a court of law but was upheld.

After Dowie’s death, Voliva led Zion City through a period of recovery from 1914 through the great depression of 1929-32 until 1942. During this time he established the radio station, WCB D. He died on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1942 and was succeeded by Michael J Mintern, an Australian by birth.

Voliva was not only a man strong in the pulpit, but he also had a keen head for business as well. He was able to listen to others, to delegate responsibility to capable men, to see the broad picture and to make courageous decisions and stand by them. And he had a heart for Zion – for the people of God who had made such sacrifices to leave all and come to Zion to build a city for God” (*Leaves Of healing* Volume CXXXIII, January – March 1996: 5)

### **3.3. Michael J Mintern**

Michael J Mintern was born in Australia in 1880 and spent his early years in farming and trapping. He was active in the Zion Church in Australia where he had been a leader, then “in 1905 he emigrated to the United States and Zion along with 500 others” (*Leaves of Healing* Volume CXXXIII, Jan – Mar 1996: 5). He was ordained as an evangelist in the Church in 1913, after which he was appointed First Assistant to the General Overseer. Under his leadership the church was incorporated and a Board of Directors was elected. He was also known for developing the annual presentation of the life of Jesus in drama through the Zion Passion Play. He served as General Overseer until his resignation on the 26<sup>th</sup> April 1959 when he ordained Carl Q Lee as his successor. He died on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1961.

### **3.4. Carl Lee**

Carl Lee was born in 1907 and joined the staff of the church as an Evangelist in 1930. He was ordained as an Elder by Voliva in 1933 and became Second Assistant to the General Overseer In 1940 until he was appointed Assistant General Overseer by Mintern in 1943. Lee had the “ability to inspire and work with others”, which was necessary as his abilities were required in the choice of a new design for a worship centre and educational building for the Church (*Leaves of Healing* Volume CXXXIII, Jan – Mar 1996: 5). A new constitution was accepted on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1948 under Lee’s leadership which allowed more checks and balances between the General Overseer and the church congregation, including the appointment of the General Overseer for a five year term (Oosthuizen 1987: 9 -11). During his term as Overseer “the entire new church complex was built after the tragic fire of the College Building and Church Auditorium in 1959” (Christian Catholic Church 1993: 3). Lee emphasised the threefold teaching of Zion as salvation, healing and holy living which is still being used by ZEMA missionaries when teaching the amaZioni about the history and ministry of Zion. He was succeeded by Rev. Roger W Otterson when he retired in 1976.

### **3.5. Roger Otterson**

Roger Otterson studied at Bethel College in Indiana and received an honorary doctorate from that institution in 1992. He became involved in the Christian Catholic Church of Zion while serving at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois. In the 1996 centenary edition, the *Leaves of Healing* (Volume CXXXIII, January – March 1996: 6) states that Rev Otterson's heart for missions led to the sending of Tim and Luann Kuehl to South Africa and to the formation of a new organization to draw together amaZioni groups in southern Africa. This organization was first called the Christian Catholic Church of Zion of Africa and later changed to Zion Evangelical Fellowship of Africa. It is important for our study to note that Roger Otterson visited Africa in 1980, 1984, 1987 and 1991 before his retirement in 1994. These visits did much to build a good relationship with the Zionist churches and are one of the reasons why ZEMA missionaries are welcomed by these churches and permitted to teach in their areas.

### **3.6. Ken Langley**

Ken Langley became the church's pastor in March 1997, following pastorates in New Jersey and Colorado. During his term of leadership the church removed the name "Overseer" and began to use the more acceptable term "Pastor". During the interval after the resignation of Roger Otterson and the arrival of Ken Langley, the name of the church was changed to Christ Community Church to resolve the confusion caused among some people by the term "catholic". However, the name "Christian Catholic Church" still serves as the name for the world-wide fellowship of congregations and mission works, including that of ZEMA.

Rev K Langley continues to be the Pastor of the church. He first visited South Africa in 1996 and then visited both South Africa and Swaziland in 2008 when the author was ministering in the country of Swaziland. These visits by the senior Pastors of the founding church have done much to reinforce the good relationship that ZEMA missionaries enjoy with Zionist churches in southern Africa.

## **4. Conclusion**

Despite the strange behaviour of Dowie and the sad end to his life and ministry, the principles and methods of evangelization and mission practiced by the church started the dynamic church movement known as "Zionism". Zion Churches were active in many parts of the world including Australia, China, England, Guyana, Jamaica, Philippines, Holland and Southern Africa.

Today there are many churches in the city of Zion. Many trace their history to the church established by Dowie. The main church lead by Voliva, Mintern, Lee and others is on the original site of the Shiloh Tabernacle, built by Dowie but which burned down in 1937. Mention must be made of a second church which was established in July 1909 and took the title of Grace Missionary Church in 1920. The name was changed to alleviate the confusion caused by many groups claiming the original title of Christian Catholic Apostolic Church. Cook notes in the footnotes that the “the word ‘Apostolic ‘ was not part of the title, ‘Christian Catholic Church’, as established in 1909, indicating that Elder Bryant’s group had already rejected Dr Dowie’s prophetic office” (Cook 1996: 260)

The significance of the new name was in the active missionary work that engaged the church in South Africa. That branch of Dowie’s church was under the direction of elder Daniel Bryant in 1906. He finally rejected Overseer Voliva’s theocratic leadership and in 1908, upon his return from Africa, became the first pastor of the new flock. The Grace Missionary Church thus took over the South African branch of the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church’s missionary work. Testimony to this mission is the continuing existence of the Zulu Zionists of South Africa. The belief in triune immersion, healing and the power of the Holy Spirit is found among literally hundreds of small Zulu churches and communities with theocratic beliefs. The Christian Catholic Church, the Grace Missionary Church, and others now share in the support of the South African missionary efforts to the Zulu through the Mahon Mission, Zion, Illinois.” (Cook 1996: 218)

Other churches and organizations today continue to trace their history to John Alexander Dowie and the Christian Catholic Church of Zion. These include the Missionary Church Association and Lakeview Church in Zion. The original church is known today as Christ Community Church. ZEMA missionaries currently trace their history to the Mahon Mission and continue to use Dowie’s emphasis on “salvation, healing and holy living” as the essentials of his teaching. They use these three terms to describe the biblical foundation of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion when teaching about the early doctrines of the Church in Zion. Missionaries working among the amaZioni of southern Africa share this same information that is in this brief chapter on the life and ministry of John Alexander Dowie in order to explain the background of the Christian Catholic Church.

## **CHAPTER 3: Beginning of Zionism in southern Africa**

### **1. Introduction**

The intention of the research in this chapter is to show that Zionism in southern Africa traces its origins back to the influences of the African Independent Churches and to the Christian Catholic Church of Zion and the life and influence of John Alexander Dowie. This is important when explaining to the amaZoni the ministry of ZEMA and why the missionaries wish to teach and minister among them.

### **2. The African Independent Churches**

The roots of Zionism in southern Africa can be found within the African Independent (or Indigenous) Churches. The first independent church in South Africa was established among the Thembu people by Nehemiah Tile, a Wesleyan minister, in 1884. The reasons behind his decision to secede from the Wesleyan Church included his concern that “the church and white government were trying to destroy his African culture and heritage” and his opposition to the poll tax levied by the Cape government (Ngada and Mofokeng 2001: 4). Other African leaders who followed his example were P. J. Mzimba who broke away from the Presbyterian Church of Africa in 1889 and Enoch Mgijima who left the Methodist Church in 1914 to establish “the Israelites”. This secession resulted in the Bulhoek Massacre of 1921. Other churches that joined the African Independent Church movement were a Herman Congregation who broke away from the Paris Mission in 1872 and the Native Independent Congregational Church who broke away from the London Missionary Society in 1885.

Roy (2000: 91) notes that the “earliest African independent churches were often referred to collectively as ‘Ethiopian’. The term was derived from “a text greatly beloved by early African Christian leaders” which is Psalm 68:31 “Envoys will come out of Egypt; Ethiopia will quickly stretch out her hands to God.” (New King James Version) (Roy 2000: 88). The first church to have the name ‘Ethiopian’ was established in 1892 by Mangena Mokone. He called it the “Ibandla laseTopiya”, the “Ethiopian Church”. The Ethiopian churches, being African Independent Churches, also resulted from their desire for liberation from white domination, both ecclesiastically and politically. Inspired by African-American examples, these churches developed because of industrialization and migrant labour and also as “a political reaction to the mounting oppression of Africans countrywide after 1900”

(Papini 2009). The Ethiopian church came under the American Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) in 1896. However, Dwane, a Gcaleka Xhosa, broke away from the AME in 1900 to establish the Order of Ethiopia that confined itself to his ethnic community. This church group later joined the Anglican Church. Although the Ethiopians upheld some African customs (mainly polygamy), they remained largely orthodox in their beliefs.

The “Zion City” type of spirit church arose on the model of Dowie’s Zion City, prioritizing land purchase and capital accumulation in order to achieve a degree of separation from a sinful world and working toward communal self-sufficiency. The leaders of these movements used alternative readings of the Bible to revitalize traditional forms and values that were in danger of being neglected and dying out. They perceived that the domination by the white people in South Africa and the influence of Western missionaries would destroy their African customs and traditions. While Ethiopian secession among the literate elite was a response to political and economic dispossession in South Africa, these Zion City “homes” were for the rural underclass and their chiefs. However, following the 1921 massacre of Enoch Mgijima’s Israelites at Bulhoek, Zionism remained politically quiet, spreading mainly in the poorer areas. In 1945, after the Second World War, the “Zion-Apostolic” type churches developed further in response to the intensified urbanization and its associated privations, drawing together both migrant worker and rural pauper alike into small prophet-led healing bands. Here the powers of both the Holy Spirit and ancestor spirits operated within a context of richly indigenized liturgy and biblical symbolism. Low wages and unemployment were met with prayers for healing and speaking in tongues, while taboo observances and purification rites protected the group (Papini 2009).

Oosthuizen (1986: 34) correctly states that Zionism as a category of the African Independent Churches developed in southern Africa as the result of the same factors which influenced other African Independent Churches. These included a reaction to the Anglo-Boer War of 1899 when many Africans were unsettled and lost their land. A fear of the African people developed among the white people after the Anglo-Boer which further exacerbated the desire for independence. The paternalistic manner in which the Western missionaries behaved towards the African church leaders also contributed to the growth of Zionism. The political situation in southern Africa was

revealed in the composition in 1897 of “Nkosi Sikelele iAfrika” (which later became the national anthem of South Africa in 1994) and the formation of the South African Native National Congress (which later became the African National Congress) in 1912. The clash that developed between Victorian (European) Christianity and African culture resulted in the indigenization of the African Independent Churches and the questioning of western cultural values that were being confused with the biblical message (Oosthuizen 1986: 34).

Although their roots were North-American, the amaZioni in South Africa have grown in an autonomous way, developing as a religious movement of the black population, specifically linked to the economical and political context of the Apartheid policy, as well as to the process of industrialization. The amaZioni distanced themselves from the traditional missionary churches (this was after receiving the name ‘Christian Catholic Church of Zion’) and distinctively constructed their identity as belonging to the black population. Jean Comaroff (1985) describes the Zionist churches in South Africa as a sort of “counter-culture movement, a coherent answer for a huge majority of the population to a dominant cultural and economic order, able to synthesize the universe of individuals marginalized by the modern system” (cited by Cavallo G 2011 np).

Cazziol further notes that “as a world-wide movement, ‘Zionism’ originated from the controversial but far-reaching ministry of John Alexander Dowie” (Cazziol 1987: 62). “In Zion” signified a New Testament church carrying on John the Baptist’s work. Where Ethiopian type churches longed for a free Christian African nation under a “Lion of Judah,” the mythological focus for Zionism, a new religion of the poor, was the Holy Land itself. Cosmological events such as Halley’s Comet of 1910 were regarded as portents, and during the devastating Spanish Influenza of 1919, many stricken labourers felt they had died and been with Jesus, who returned them as his envoys to the troubled earth. (Papini 2009)

Protestant missiologists (Sundkler 1961) at first proclaimed the Zionist church a mere “syncretistic sect” and a “bridge back to heathenism.” Anthropologists counter (Kiernan 1992) that the Zionist prophet is in fact a genuine Christian replacement of the diviner, his ritualizations having “inculturated” divine healing to African needs.

Ethiopian-type churches formed the majority of African-initiated congregations until the mid-twentieth century, but by 1970 the charismatic churches of Zion were almost

twice as numerous. They presently number between 3,000 and 6,000 congregations. Despite the continuous influence from American Pentecostals who arrived in South Africa since the 1910s, those who today who call themselves Christian Zionists have become a minority; a range of New Jerusalem charismatics who are currently “raiding Christianity from without, capturing features selectively” (Kiernan 1992).

Oosthuizen states

John Alexander Dowie made the word “Zion” familiar in the hearts and minds of many people throughout the world and not the least in South Africa. He gave to it a specific connotation, namely it stands for faith healing, for rejection of medicines, of alcohol and of tobacco, also for conscientious visitation of people in need and among Black for small Christian communities. At a time when biblical criticism flourished, he came to the fore with a strong emphasis on the Bible as the inspired Word of God (Oosthuizen 1987:1).

### **3. Pentecostalism**

Maxwell states that Zionism may be defined as a “parent of Pentecostalism” because

Pentecostalism was born out of the fusion of a number of related Christian traditions. The first was the Holiness movement embodied by the founder of Methodism, John Wesley .... Secondly, Pentecostalism drew strongly on the revivalist tradition exemplified by the campaign and camp meetings of Charles G. Finney, Dwight L. Moody and Ruben A. Torrey .... The third strand was the divine healing embraced by S. D. Gordon, A. B. Simpson, John Alexander Dowie and others .... Finally there was a revived interest in, and expectation of, the imminent return of Christ. (Maxwell 1999: 245).

Zionism in southern Africa was also deeply affected by the holiness movement because it was influenced by the teaching and ministry of Andrew Murray. This movement also influenced the Pentecostal movement. Murray in turn had a strong influence on the ministry of Pieter le Roux, one of the early ministers who worked among the amaZioni with Edgar Mahon and Johannes Buchler under the oversight of Dowie’s Christian Catholic Church of Zion.

Therefore Zionism in southern Africa can be traced to the influences of Dowie’s Christian Catholic Church of Zion and to the Apostolic Faith Mission Church established by John G Lake and Thomas Hezmalhalch who arrived in South Africa in May 1908 (Ngada and Mofokeng 2001:10). It is important to note that Lake previously had been an elder in the Christian Catholic Church of Zion under the leadership of Dowie.

John Alexander Dowie has been described as “one of the more eccentric products of the Holiness movement, (and) was destined to have an unusual influence on South

Africa” (Roy 2000:102). As stated previously in chapter 1, he established a publication, *Leaves of Healing* which became the mouthpiece of his teachings. He established Zion City north of Chicago as the headquarters of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion which became a model of holy living where pork, alcohol, tobacco and drugs were strictly prohibited. He also founded churches all over the world, including South Africa. The apocalyptic emphasis of the Christian Catholic Church with its mass baptisms in white uniforms made a deep impression on the African people, as did its emphasis on healing and fellowship (Roy 2000: 113).

#### **4. Dowie’s Influence on South Africa**

As previously stated, Dowie’s influence in southern Africa came primarily through his publication *Leaves of Healing* which was mailed to many places in the world, including South Africa. Among those who eagerly accepted and read the message of divine healing in South Africa were Pieter L. le Roux, a Dutch Reformed missionary; Johannes Buchler, a Congregational pastor; and Edgar H. Mahon, a Salvation Army officer. This paper will endeavor to examine the lives and ministries of these three people who were influenced by John Alexander Dowie and who in turn influenced Zionism in southern Africa and ultimately the ministry of ZEMA. It is also necessary to consider the life and influence of Daniel Bryant who was appointed to oversee the work in South Africa and who personally met with Buchler, Le Roux and Mahon. Maxwell refers to this when he notes that “Johannes Buchler, Pieter. L. Le Roux and Edgar H. Mahon solicited and cultivated links with Zion City, Chicago, briefly forming a triangle of Zion activity in Wakkerstroom (Natal), Kransfontein (Orange Free State) and the Johannesburg area” (Maxwell 1999:246).

##### **4.1 The influence of Daniel Bryant**

Rev. Daniel Bryant was appointed by Dowie as Overseer of the work of the Christian Catholic Church in South Africa. His visit to South Africa in 1904 was “of special significance for the work in southern Africa” (Oosthuizen 1987: 14). In a personal letter addressed to Professor Bengt Sundkler on 4 January 1974 the son of Daniel Bryant states that “they went to Africa, while Dr. Dowie was active, before the turn of the century. They carried on work in Johannesburg, Pretoria, etc. As well as assisting Daniel Mahon and his work with what were called respectfully, “the Natives”. These were Zulu, Basuto, etc”

He continues to state “As I recall, Dr. Dowie became unstable mentally – there was a question of his successor and my father split from the Dowie movement for the Grace Missionary Church.” Bryant also states that “Father and Mother always considered the “Mahons” as great people and the Grace Missionary Church always supported their work. There was no one he had high respect for than “Elder” Mahon, as he called him.”

Dowie wrote a long letter of instructions to “Overseer and Elder Bryant”, referring to Daniel and his wife, Emma. In the letter Dowie describes the political situation in South Africa in great detail. He instructs Bryant to land in Cape Town the capital of the Cape Colony and to travel to Natal “where we have a considerable number of friends, and where I desire you to establish the branches as strong as possible before you proceed up into the interior” (Dowie 1903: 5).

Bryant and his wife were accompanied by Deacon and Mrs Nicholas B. Rideout, who Dowie set aside “publicly as financial manager of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion for South Africa” (Dowie 1903: 6) who was to collect the tithes and offering and to be responsible for the financial matters relating to the Zionist churches. Bryant was also instructed to “lay much stress on subscription to *Leaves of Healing*” which Dowie describes as bringing “them into close touch both with myself and Headquarters and the wide scope of Zion throughout the world” (Dowie 1903:10).

They had travelled to South Africa via England after attending the New York Visitation and left Southampton on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1904 on the *Furhan Castle*. They arrived in Port Elizabeth and visited Zion related churches in Uitenhage. According to his report (*Leaves of Healing* Vol. XV, No 25, October 8, 1904, p.86) they were met by F.A. Megennis and H.W. Bates and found the group unorganised. From there Bryant and his party travelled on the *Armadale Castle* to Durban again meeting with Zionists in that area. He then travelled by train to Johannesburg stopping on the way at Zandspruit near Volksrust on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1904. Again he met with many Zionists. In his account of these meetings he makes particular note of the African’s “noble, Christian faces, and that none smoked” which distinguished them from the other African people (*Leaves of Healing* Vol. XV, No 25, October 8, 1904, p.86). He “baptized the first group of twenty seven Africans on May, 1904, in Johannesburg by triune immersion (Sundkler 1961: 48).

In a letter written to Dowie, Bryant describes his journey and the situation in South Africa after the Anglo-Boer War of 1899. He describes his attendance of the funeral of Paul Kruger, the President of the Transvaal Republic who was fondly referred to as “Oom Paul” (Bryant nd: 10). He also describes his ministry in Johannesburg where he established his headquarters. He notes that “it was Christ’s power to heal the sick through prayer that first drew Briton and Boer to my ministry” (Bryant nd: 12). He also describes a meeting with Zulus and Basutoes (sic) and notes the customary greeting “ukuthula” (Zulu for “peace to you”).

Bryant also mentions Pieter Le Roux in this correspondence. He notes that his “residence is Wakkerstroom” and that he is a “very able, consecrated man” and has “withdrawn from the Dutch Reformed Church and has become a member of this Church”. Bryant states that he “promised him ordination in the event of the Overseer being satisfied he was the proper person to ordain” (Bryant nd: 22).

It was on this journey that Bryant met and ordained Le Roux as an elder in the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, after baptising him by triune immersion. Bryant states that “we baptized one hundred forty-one of eight hundred who follow the faith” (*Leaves of Healing* October 8, 1904 cited in Sundkler 1976: 38). This baptismal service in the river at Wakkerstroom was the first Zion baptism for Africans in South Africa. It was here that Bryant met Daniel Nkonyane who was to be a forceful leader among the amaZioni and who later was instrumental in bringing Zionism to Swaziland. Bryant also met with Edgar Mahon in Harrismith where he baptized “sixty African, including Joseph Khumalo” (Sundkler 1976:40) who had been healed under the ministry of Mahon. Mahon accompanied Bryant and another African leader named Elijah Lutango to Basutoland (today Lesotho) where they met with Chief Jonathan Malapo and his family who were also baptized by Bryant. Sundkler (1976: 37) notes that it “was a two weeks’ visit of historical importance”.

As noted in chapter 1, Daniel Bryant sadly left the church that was established by Dowie when he returned to Zion in 1908. He then formed his own Christian Catholic Church of Zion, later calling it the Grace Missionary Church to avoid confusion which was already rampant in Zion because of the many break away churches.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Refer to 4. Conclusion in chapter 1

#### **4.2 The Ministry of Johannes Buchler 1864 – 1944**

Johannes Buchler was born in 1864. In 1893 he became an ordained minister in the Congregational Church ministering mainly to the “coloured people”. He later disagreed with paedobaptism as practiced by the church and resigned, building his own church in Johannesburg, naming it “the Zion Church” in 1895. It had no relationship with Dowie’s church at that time. He used the name “Zion Church” because of its relationship with the hymns of Zion found in the Moravian hymnbook. The hymnal was from Switzerland; it had influenced his parents. He later changed the name to the “Apostolic Faith Mission (Sundkler 1976: 31).

Buchler was introduced to the Christian Catholic Church of Zion through reading their publication “*Leaves of Healing*”, which he also introduced to Pieter Louis le Roux (Sundkler 1976: 28-29). It is therefore no surprise that Buchler became involved in a ministry of healing, including the healing of Edgar Mahon (Roy 2000:102). Mahon later married the step sister of Buchler (Burton 1961: 21). Buchler befriended le Roux who had resigned from the Dutch Reformed Church as the result of disagreements that arose with that church. Le Roux rejected the use of doctors and medicines, eating of pork, the use of tobacco and he also rejected infant baptism in favour of baptism by immersion. All of these were the teachings of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion. Buchler, Le Roux and Mahon became close friends, ministering to the amaZioni in different places in South Africa, but together spreading the message of “salvation, healing and holy living” as taught by John Alexander Dowie. These three statements continue to form the foundation of the teachings on ZEMA missionaries today.

In a letter to Dowie, dated 15<sup>th</sup> March 1897, Buchler stated that he had already started a work based on the teachings of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion (*Leaves of Healing* 1896: 399 cited by Mahon 1986: 173). The following year he wrote again to the Church in Zion that it “has given me great pleasure to see that you have officially recognized us as affiliated with the Christian Catholic Church of Zion” (*Leaves of Healing* 1897: 689)

According to Edgar Mahon, Johannes Buchler was the first person to be officially appointed by Dowie to be an Overseer in South Africa (Mahon 1986: 172). He visited the Christian Catholic Church of Zion in Chicago, Illinois and addressed a meeting in Zion Tabernacle on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1899. Mahon describes it as follows

The meeting held in Zion Tabernacle, Chicago, Lord's day afternoon, June 18, 1899 was one of more than ordinary interest. This was partly due to the fact that upon the platform was a simple, modest man, of Netherlandish blood, who has been a mighty power of God in far away South Africa, Overseer J C Buchler. With him was his friend and companion, Dr. Jarvis a member of the Christian Catholic Church in South Africa. To hear these labourers from a distant part of the wide field was an inspiration to Zion in Chicago and showed how worldwide a force Zion has become. (*Leaves of Healing* Vol. V, p.689, cited by Mahon 1986: 173 -174)

After this visit to Zion City, Buchler disagreed with Dowie and changed the name of his church to the Apostolic Faith Mission. He later changed the name again to the Free Baptist Church. Sundkler states "thus Buchler, who had played a certain role in introducing Dowie to South Africa, eventually, became one of his many critics" (Sundkler 1976: 31).

#### **4.3 The Ministry of Pieter Louis Le Roux**

Zionism also came to South Africa when Dowie's teaching that prayer alone could heal persuaded Pieter le Roux, an Afrikaner missionary to the Zulu, to break from the Dutch Reformed Church.

In a written testimony dated 27<sup>th</sup> August 1908 (*Leaves of Healing* Vol. XV, 25 October 8, 1904) Le Roux explains that he was converted at the age of fifteen and became involved in Christian ministry from the beginning of his walk with God (Oosthuizen 1987: 19). He qualified as a teacher and then as an ordained minister in the Dutch Reformed Church. The Dutch Reformed Church sent him to the Wakkerstroom and Volksrust areas of Natal to work among the Zulu people. In his testimony le Roux describes how his ministry grew to two thousand members after only seven years of preaching the gospel message. However he also describes how he became disillusioned with "a lack of real deep spiritual work which resulted in shallow conversions" (Oosthuizen 1987:19). This was resolved through his reading of Zion's *Leaves of Healing* after which he began to preach and practice healing. Le Roux had learned about faith healing from the controversial Scottish theologian of the Dutch Reformed Church, Rev. Andrew Murray who in turn introduced Le Roux to the writings of John Alexander Dowie, especially his monthly magazine *Leaves of Healing*. This however caused problems with the authorities in the Dutch Reformed Church and Le Roux resigned from the Dutch Reformed Church in 1902. Roy (2000:102) notes that the Dutch Reformed Church found Le Roux guilty of rejecting

the use of doctors and medicines, eating of pork, the use of tobacco and practicing infant baptism in 1901 but he continued to minister in the Zion Church in Wakkerstroom until he and his wife joined the Apostolic Faith Mission. This decision to leave the Dutch Reformed Church affected the African Church who followed him into the Christian Catholic Church of Zion. He states in his testimony that "I came out of the Dutch Reformed Church with four hundred members, since which time the work has reached its present magnitude, namely five thousand" (*Leaves of Healing*, December 1905, p.319).

As noted previously, John Alexander Dowie sent Daniel Bryant to South Africa in 1904 to oversee these congregations who had joined the Christian Catholic Church of Zion. After meeting with Bryant, Le Roux and his wife together with about 140 black Zionists were baptized by three-fold immersion in a river outside Wakkerstroom. Le Roux was ordained by Bryant to represent the Christian Catholic Church of Zion as an Elder and his wife as an Evangelist. From this beginning many other Zionist congregations were established and many leaders were developed. When Bryant returned to Zion in the United States he placed Le Roux in charge of the work in Johannesburg

Le Roux had not only accepted the teaching on faith, healing and the rejection of alcohol, drugs and tobacco, but also "accepted adult baptism by triune immersion as the only form of baptism" (Oosthuizen 1987 :21). Sentiment against diviners was already strong among the Zulu converts, so that Le Roux's congregation followed him, although when he broke from Dowie, they remained "in Zion," and were soon introducing innovations such as prophecy, trance-dancing, use of white robes, and healing staves (Papini: 2009). Cavallo (2011 np) notes that through his personal investigation of the amaZioni of Mozambique he has discovered that an "important feature that distinguishes Zion churches is the use of drums (with special and recognizable rhythms), protective dances performed during the cults ... colored vestments and ropes (mainly red, white, green, blue, yellow and brown) which have a protective function against evil spirits."

Le Roux left the Christian Catholic Church of Zion in 1908 to join the Apostolic Faith Mission, a Pentecostal church organization. The factors influencing this decision included the Apostolic Faith Mission's emphasis on baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. Le Roux served as President of the Apostolic Faith Mission.

“When Le Roux went back to Wakkerstroom to explain this step to his flock, they were dismayed, because they did not want to lose their identity as Zionists. A period of confusion ensued. Some of his members went with him, but several others seceded to form their own African-led Zion churches. Those who followed Le roux remained the Zion branch of the Apostolic Faith Mission. Later there were secessions from this church as well. It is from this point that the paths of the classical Pentecostal churches and the amaZioni begin to diverge... It is important to remember that South African Pentecostals and Zionists share the same common sources – John Alexander Dowie’s Zion City and William Seymour’s Azusa Street revival.” (Roy 2000:103, 104)

For many years the church at Wakkerstroom was called the Zion Apostolic Church and was regarded as the Zion Branch of the Apostolic Faith Mission (Roy 2000: 113). Le Roux’s influence on Zionism in southern Africa cannot be underestimated. This is reinforced by the statement by Ngada and Mofokeng (2001: 11) when they state that

It was the influence of Dowie and his teachings through the work of Le Roux that opened up the way for the stirrings of the Spirit that became the great outpouring of the Spirit known in South Africa as amaZiyoni (sic) or Zionists. Roux founded the first Zionist churches in Wakkerstroom in Zululand in Natal, and was later ordained an overseer by Daniel Bryant after he left the Dutch reformed Church in 1903 and established the Christian Catholic Church of Zion of South Africa.

#### **4.4 The Ministry of Edgar H Mahon**

This thesis will pay more attention to the life and ministry of Edgar Mahon than the previous two individuals as ZEMA’s history is traced directly to him. Mahon

was a strong Charismatic figure who, together with Mr Buchler, founder of the Free Baptist Church, and P L le Roux, leader in the Apostolic Faith Mission, had been influenced strongly by John Dowie from the Christian Catholic Church, Zion Illinois, USA (Roy and Hudson-Reed 2001:41).

Edgar Mahon was born in Maseru Basutoland in 1868 (Sundkler 1976:31). Edgar’s father, Alfred Mahon moved from Mafikeng to live in Kimberley in 1866.

Lyle Mahon describes the history of the Mahon family as follows

In 1886 the Mahon family moved to Johannesburg to set up a bottle store business. Edgar Mahon arrived later with a transport rider to discover that his parents and his five brothers had been converted through the ministry of the Salvation Army and had abandoned the bottle store. He attended the Salvation Army with them and yielded his

life to the Lord Jesus Christ and soon became involved in the life of the Salvation Army.<sup>2</sup>

Mahon only received education to a Standard 4 level (Grade 6) before leaving school. Subsequently, he was trained as a Salvation Army Officer at Beaconsfield Training institute near the town of Kimberley where he first met Joey Buchler, Fred Buchler's step sister. He served the Salvation Army in Vryburg, and was then sent to Fort Salisbury in Mashonaland, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1891 (Burton 1961:10). Mahon was then appointed to minister in Robertson, Georgetown and Oudtshoorn where he married Joey Buchler. He was then sent to Lewis Settlement outside Pietermaritzburg, Natal. While serving in Pietermaritzburg, he contracted tuberculosis but was healed through the ministry of Johannes Buchler, his wife's step-brother (Burton 1961: 21). This experience resulted in Mahon being baptised by triune immersion and beginning a healing ministry among the African people of Lewis Settlement. These two actions created tension with the leaders of the Salvation Army and resulted in Mahon's resignation.

After his resignation from the Salvation Army Mahon moved to Harrismith where he lived on the farm of a friend, Walter Puttrill (Burton 1961: 25), but in 1899 he and his family had to leave Harrismith due to the Anglo Boer War. They fled to Ladysmith and stayed there from 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1899 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 1900, during the historic siege of Ladysmith. During the rest of the war years they lived on a deserted farm and later in a native reserve led by Chief Khumalo.

After the war, Mahon bought the farm "Hillside" near Harrismith in the Orange Free State Province where he continued preaching salvation and praying for the sick. As a result many local African people followed his teaching and joined his ministry. The work spread to the little mountain kingdom of Basutoland (Now Lesotho) and into Natal Province. Mahon realized that he would have to form some kind of fellowship into which these people could be received, however "it had never been Mr Mahon's desire to establish an independent church" (Burton 1961: 36).

Therefore at the end of 1903 "Rev Daniel Bryant who was in charge of churches in Johannesburg and Pretoria under an American board was invited to come to Hillside to establish a church" (Burton 1961: 38).

---

<sup>2</sup> Taken from handwritten notes by Lyle Mahon relating to the founding of the Mahon Evangelical Church of South Africa (MECSA)

Burton notes that since that time Mahon's ministry has been connected with the Christian Catholic Church and the Grace Missionary Church of Zion, Illinois, USA. He changed the name of his church to the 'Grace Missionary Church' in 1920 on account of his strong relationship with Daniel Bryant who left the Dowie – Voliva group and became the first pastor of the newly named 'Grace Missionary Church' in Zion. The name of Mahon's organisation was later changed to the "Mahon Mission" in 1934 as the mission sought government recognition through an association with the Baptist Union of Southern Africa (Sundkler 1976:33, 34)

Mahon later moved to Kalkoenkrantz where he built a church building and began to gather believers for training over Christmas (Burton 1961: 43). Mahon bought another farm "Mooigelegen" and set aside land for the Mission and named it "Ethembeni". This land became the headquarters for the Mahon Mission. Mahon followed the example of Dowie and "was the one European in South Africa who managed to establish something akin to a 'Zion City' of his own" (Sundkler 1976:33). Mahon used "Ethembeni" as a training centre and taught a number of local leaders among whom were Timothy Mabuza and Zachariah Zulu who joined the Mahon Mission.

Edgar Mahon died on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1936. His son Alfred became his successor and this tradition was followed by his two grandsons, Edgar and Lyle Mahon (Burton 1961: 46).

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

After Daniel Bryant left South Africa to return to Illinois, different Zionist churches were established under the control of African leaders who were themselves influenced by either Buchler or Le Roux or Mahon.

Many African religious sects have started up – a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. Among the African people in South Africa there are over two thousand sects who have no white supervision or missionaries to guide them. They have queer beliefs, many of which border on heathenism and fanaticism. Most of them cannot distinguish between legalism and grace. Some of them adhere to the heathenish practice of divining which under the cloak of religion they term prophesying. Many of them still believe in sacrificing animals. Some of them believe that baptism is washing and that every time one has committed a sin he must be baptised to wash away his sins, the number of immersions depending on the number of sins he has committed. Their religion is based on isolated verses in the Bible and more often than not, taken out of context. (Burton 1961: 93)

The first black Zionist leaders of note were Daniel Nkonyane, Michael Mngomezulu and Joel Ngobese. Daniel Nkonyane founded the Christian Catholic Apostolic Holy Spirit Church in Zion establishing his headquarters in Charlestown, Transvaal. Daniel is regarded as the founder of the Swazi Zionists together with his brother Andries (Cazziol 1987:66). He worked together with Johanna Nxumalo and Stephen Mavimbela who introduced him to the Swazi royal family and involved him in the healing of the Queen Mother Labotsibeni. He introduced the most visible hallmarks of Zionism which are still practiced today, namely white robes, bare feet, holy sticks and Old Testament symbolism (Cazziol 1987:63)

Other leaders who have influenced Zionism in southern Africa today include Ignatius Lekganyane who founded the Zion Christian Church. He was one of the first converts of Daniel Bryant when he visited South Africa between 1904 and 1908 (Cazziol 1987: 64). Today his church is one of the most well known Zionist churches and is famous for the gathering of millions of believers at their headquarters at Moria, outside Polokwane in the Northern Province during the Easter period.

Another leader was Elias Mahlangu who founded the Zion Apostolic Church of South Africa, Paulo Mabilitsa who founded the Christian Apostolic Church in Zion in 1920 and a Malawian, John Philips who founded the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion. These were the beginnings of a process of fragmentation from which multitudes of Zion churches developed and formed.

Gradually the customs began to change and ritual symbols began to develop including the wearing of white robes, carrying of wooden staffs with crosses on the end, taking off shoes when gathering to worship and other symbols (Ngada and Mofokeng 2001: 13). This splintering among the amaZioni, as they called themselves, resulted in a diversity of teachings and practices.

Yet there remained certain features which have continued to characterize the great majority of Zionist churches. These include threefold baptism by immersion; belief in divine healing and the rejection of medicine and doctors; taboos against alcohol, pork and tobacco; the wearing of white robes with green and blue coloured cloaks, cord and turbans; holy sticks; Sabbath observance; holy dances; purification rites and various degrees of accommodation with traditional African customs (Roy 2000: 113, 114)

Roy (2000: 103) names and describes a number of key Independent churches and leaders among whom are Edward Motaung and the Zion Apostolic Faith Mission,

Job Chiliza and the African Gospel Church, Ma Nku and the St John Apostolic Faith Mission, Isaiah Shembe and the “*amaNazaretha*” and Enoch Mgijima and his “*Israelites*”.

This chapter has shown that Zionism in southern Africa is able to trace its origins back to the influences of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion as well as that of the African Independent Churches. This historical fact gives ZEMA missionaries credibility and acceptance among the amaZioni and enables them to teach the Scriptures which formed the basis of Dowie’s teachings.

## **CHAPTER 4: The Mahon Mission and ZEMA**

### **1. Introduction**

This chapter will trace the history of the work of Edgar Mahon and the Mahon Mission from the days when he served under Daniel Bryant as Elder of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion to the present time. As noted in chapter 2, Edgar Mahon was appointed by Dowie to care for the amaZioni churches in his area after he had been healed under the ministry of Rev Johannes Buchler and was greatly influenced by the ministry of Rev Daniel Bryant who came to South Africa in 1904. He was succeeded as leader of the Mahon Mission by his son, Alfred and then by his grandson Edgar Henry.

This chapter will achieve this purpose of investigating the life and work of Edgar Mahon and the Mahon Mission through sections 2 – 7 as follows:

Section 2 will deal with the development of the relationship between the Mahon Mission and the Grace Missionary Church in Zion (a church that resulted from a split with the Christian Catholic Church). The organization was then known as the Zulu and Basutoland Mission or the Christian Catholic Church of Zion, South Africa (later known as Grace Missionary Church) as it was mainly supported by this church.

Section 3 will examine the change of the name to “the Mahon Mission” in 1946 and the reasons why this happened.

Section 4 will study the lives of Alfred Mahon, the son of Edgar Burton Mahon; as well as Edgar Henry and Lyle Burton Mahon, grandsons of Edgar Burton Mahon.

Section 5 will investigate the events that occurred between 1970 and 1990 when the Grace Missionary Church withdrew its financial support from the Mahon Mission. It will show how the mission began to be supported by the original Christian Catholic Church of Zion and other churches and individuals.

Section 6 will investigate the period between 1990 and 1996 when Edgar Mahon resigned as the superintendent and the mission began to focus on other Zionist churches which were not affiliated to the Mahon Mission.

Section 7 will examine the period from 1996 until today. During this time the ministry’s name was changed to the current name, Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa and more missionaries joined the organization.

The preamble of the current Constitution of Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa gives some understanding of the developments that have occurred since its establishment (ZEMA 1996: 1). It states that

The 'Mahon Mission' has operated as an inclusive body incorporating a 'Missionary Society' and an 'Association of Churches' since 1934. The 'Association of Churches' has operated under a Constitution which was originally accepted in 1934 and revised from time to time. The 'Missionary Society' operated initially under Resolutions and a Missionary Manual (1949) until a Policy Document was formulated in 1963. This Policy Document was revised in 1985. This has been replaced by GUIDING RULES accepted in 1991. The 'Missionary Society' has always managed its own financial affairs, the work and welfare of the missionaries and owned and controlled the properties of the 'Missionary Society'. Following the decision of the Annual Missionary Conference, February 1991, it was decided to formalize the structure of the 'Mahon Mission Missionary Society' in Southern Africa by adopting a Constitution.

It needs to be acknowledged that much of the research material consists of minutes of various meetings, correspondence between missionaries and churches and reports of different meetings. Therefore the veracity of these sources cannot be substantiated. There will inevitably be a certain amount of subjective information as some of the primary sources were written by individuals who wrote history from their perspective. However the researcher will consider this when making his conclusions.

## **2. The Early Years: 1904 – 1946**

### ***2.1. Introduction***

Daniel Bryant and his wife returned to Zion in 1908 after visiting South Africa for a number of years. He had previously been called back in 1906 to be ordained as one of the apostles of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion. A Mr Lewis was appointed by Dowie as his successor but he was not able to cope with the task and therefore Dowie requested that Bryant return to be the spiritual leader. However Bryant declined this invitation and returned to South Africa for a second visit to continue his ministry as overseer of South Africa and to reinforce his relationship with the amaZioni and with those who ministered to them, including Edgar Mahon. On his second return to Zion USA, Bryant then left the Christian Catholic Church founded by Dowie and established another church with other members who had broken away from Dowie. He named this church Grace Missionary Church. Others had also left Dowie and started their own churches in Zion.

When Bryant returned to Zion, USA for the second time in 1908, which was after the death of Dowie on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 1907, Voliva had succeeded Dowie as General

Overseer and therefore had control over the publication “Leaves of Healing”, so Bryant began the “Pen and Pulpit” (L Mahon nd: personal notes).<sup>3</sup>

After the return of Overseer Daniel Bryant to the United States, the original Christian Catholic Church of Zion, Illinois tried to maintain contact with many of the amaZioni churches in southern Africa. In 1924, Overseer van Buren Shumaker was sent from Zion by General Overseer Voliva to minister to these groups. This fact is substantiated by a comment concerning the ministry of Wilbur Glenn Voliva who “had sent out missionaries to foreign lands.” Reverend and Mrs Van Buren Shumaker served in the mission stations in South Africa. (Zion Historical Society: 30). For the next six years or so, Overseer Shumaker visited and taught the Word of God and ordained a number of men into the ministry. When he was about to leave South Africa for ministry in Israel (referred to then as the Holy Land), he appointed Rev Arnold Mellor to look after the churches. Elder Mellor lived in Cape Town and tried to keep in touch with the churches by correspondence. When his health failed, much of the correspondence was then directed to the headquarters in Zion, Illinois (*Leaves of Healing* volume CXI (January – February 1985)).

## **2.2. Grace Missionary Church**

The ministry of the Mahon Mission began with only Edgar and his wife until two ladies were sent from the Grace Missionary Church in Zion, Illinois to assist them in 1912. Miss Sisson and Miss Thorpe were sent to establish the first school at the Ethembeni Mission Station (Burton 1961: 31). Other missionaries later joined Mahon, including Rev L McCordic who married Miss Thorpe. There is a reference to the sending of Miss Thorpe and Miss Sisson in the publication issued by the Mahon Mission called the “*The Zulu and Basutoland Missionary*”. On page two (inside front cover) of every copy. It states that

The Mahon Mission, South Africa is affiliated with the South African Baptist Missionary Society. Rev Edgar Henry Mahon and Mrs Mahon began work among the Zulus and Basutos in 1898; the

---

<sup>3</sup> Further information regarding the relationship between the Christian Catholic Church of Zion, Illinois, USA and those in southern Africa can be found in a summary of the history of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, Illinois that was written in *Leaves of Healing* volume CXI (January – February 1985).

present Mission dates from 1904, and the first American missionaries went out in 1912.

In the beginning of their work in South Africa, the Mahons worked with the Christian Catholic Church of Zion which was under Daniel Bryant's leadership. The mission was given the name of the church which Bryant represented, namely "the Christian Catholic Church of Zion, South Africa". After a number of years of confusion that was caused by the various Christian Catholic Churches in Zion, Bryant renamed his church the "Grace Missionary Church". Cook (1996:218) describes this church as "the largest other faction to have historic roots in the church of Zion". He notes that this church was formally organised in July, 1909, and then took the new title of Grace Missionary Church in 1920 (Cook 1996:218). In the meantime Edgar Mahon continued his work among the amaZioni using the name Christian Catholic Church of Zion until 1947.

The Grace Missionary Church was responsible for the South African branch of the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church's missionary work for many years until the original "Mother Church", the Christian Catholic Church once again became directly involved in the ministry. Today this church is known as "Christ Community Church" and the Mahon Mission is referred to as Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa (ZEMA). This is supported by personal notes written by the late Lyle Mahon when he states that

before Bryant left, he asked my grandfather, Edgar Mahon to take charge of the work, promising to send him financial assistance. This was the beginning of a long partnership between what became Grace Missionary Church and what became the Mahon Mission.

Burton (1961: 98) also supports this fact when he states that

The Grace Missionary Church of Zion, Illinois, USA has taken the greatest portion of the support of the Mahon Mission and has contributed thousands of dollars for this great work. There are other churches, especially in Iowa which have helped a great deal

The active involvement of the Grace Missionary Church can also be seen in the makeup of the USA Mission Board which consisted of the Chairman of the Grace Missionary Church Executive Board, all members of the Executive Board, the Pastors of the Grace Missionary Church, the Superintendent of Grace Missionary Sunday School and the Secretary, Assistance Secretary, the Treasurer of the Mission "all duly elected at the annual Missionary Conference at its headquarters at

Grace Missionary Church, Zion Illinois” (Missionary Manual page 2). The Editor of *The Zulu and Basutoland Missionary* publication who was appointed by the Board also served on this Board.

After many years of serving the Grace Missionary Church in Zion, Bryant resigned and “eventually returned to that Baptist Church from which he hailed”. Yet “throughout all the changes Bryant stuck to the Mahon Mission and gave it his support” (Sundkler 1976:41).

### **2.3. The Zulu and Basutoland Mission**

In the early years when the Mahon Mission was under the control of the Grace Missionary Church of Zion, it was known in the United States of America as The Zulu and Basutoland Mission with a Mission Board in Zion, USA. The October 1946 edition of *The Zulu and Basutoland Missionary*, the publication sent from Zion, states that

The Rev E H Mahon and Mrs Mahon began their work among the Zulus and Basutos in 1898. They established the present Mission in 1904. The first missionaries joined them from America in 1912. At present there are 14 white missionaries, 32 ordained ministers and evangelists, 500 local preachers and thousands of believers.

For many years Grace Missionary Church published the Zulu and Basutoland Missionary which featured reports and information from the missionaries in South Africa, Basutoland and other places. The preface of the 1949 edition of the Missionary Manual of the Mahon Mission states that

we recognize ourselves as a Cooperative Fellowship of various Churches, committed to the sending out of the message of the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, especially to that great but dark continent of Africa, and now especially to the Zulus, Basutos and Kenya tribes

As the mission developed and grew it became more formalised and therefore a constitution was written in January, 1935 with the title “Constitution of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion, South Africa.” The conclusion of this constitution states that

the Christian Catholic Church in Zion has operated under the foregoing as an unwritten Constitution since its organization in May, 1904. It is now written and formally adopted by Committee in Session, December 21, 1934.

Ministry focused on working together with Zionist church pastors and leaders in various places. Their responsibilities included the erection of church buildings and

the education of African children at schools located in these church buildings and at Ethembeni outside Bethlehem, the 'headquarters' of the work of the Mahon Mission. The name "Ethembeni" means "place of faith" in isiZulu. There was a printing press (Mahon Press) located at Ethembeni and also a book room from which suitable written material was made available to the leaders and members of the Zionist churches. The missionaries also organized annual Conferences that were held over Christmas at Ethembeni, a practice that was begun by Edgar Mahon, but later was held earlier in the year around October.

#### **2.4. Early Missionaries**

According to *The Zulu and Basutoland Missionary*, the early missionaries included the Rev and Mrs L McCordic who joined the Mission 1919 and 1912 respectively. Lathrop S McCordic was one of the early missionaries who served with the Mahons for over fifty years and had a great influence on the work among the amaZioni in southern Africa. He was born 30<sup>th</sup> October 1874 and died 19<sup>th</sup> April 1969. He "was converted at the age of fourteen" (*The Zulu and Basutoland Missionary* May – June 1969 page 3) and was called to do mission work in South Africa in 1918. He accompanied Myrtle Sisson and Ethel Thorpe who were returning to South Africa from furlough in the USA. He later married Ethel Thorpe in 1921 and "they worked together in the Mahon Mission for forty-six years" (*The Zulu and Basutoland Missionary* May – June 1969 page 3). Ethel passed away on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1967, two years before Mr McCordic passed away.

Other early missionaries sent out from the Grace Missionary Church between 1912 and 1935 included Miss Lois Rockefeller, Daniel Joubert and his wife, George and Margaret Fales, Miss Tillie V Burkey, Lester and Mrs Johnson.

Alfred J Mahon and his wife Margaret (fondly known as "Meg") joined the Mission in 1927 and Daniel and Edith Mahon joined in 1933. These brothers were the sons of Edgar Burton Mahon. Lyle Mahon states that "Alfred ran away from home as a young man as he didn't want to minister among the African people. He travelled to South West Africa (today known as Namibia) where he joined the Police force after trying his hand at farming. There he met his wife Margaret nee Hagen whose father was also in the police force. The Lord worked in his heart and he agreed to return to the Mission on the condition that he would live by faith alone and never make any

requests for anything. Another member of the Mahon family also joined the Mission, namely, Evelyn who later married a Mr. Geschwend".<sup>4</sup>

Alfred assumed the leadership of the Mahon Mission after the death of his father, Edgar, on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1936. Harold and Laura Suttie, and Gerald (Jerry) and Elsie J Lee were sent out in 1946.

### **2.5. Conclusion**

During these formative years the Mahon Mission grew into a small nucleus of committed men and women under the leadership of Edgar Henry Mahon and related primarily to one church in the USA, namely, the Grace Missionary Church. They also developed a following among the amaZioni who identified themselves with Edgar Mahon.

## **3. The Mahon Mission: 1946 – 1970**

### **3.1. Introduction**

During these years significant developments occurred as the name "Mahon Mission" was officially accepted and a revised constitution was adopted.

### **3.2. Change of name to "The Mahon Mission"**

The 1935 Constitution was revised in 1946 when the name Christian Catholic Church of Zion (South Africa) was changed to "the Mahon Mission". The main reason for this change was that the name "Christian Catholic Church" created confusion among those in South Africa who were not aware of the existence of this church in Zion, USA. The black leaders also requested that the name be changed to the Mahon Mission because so many other groups were also calling themselves the Christian Catholic Church of Zion but were not following the teachings for the parent church in Zion Illinois (*Leaves of Healing* volume CXI (January – February 1985)). The Constitution of the Mahon Mission (as amended 5<sup>th</sup> September 1946) states that

at the meeting of a Special Church Conference of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion held at Ethembeni on the 5<sup>th</sup> September 1946 and called in terms of article 5 section 3 (b) of the Constitution of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, the following resolutions were made and agreed to unanimously

1. That the name of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion be changed to Mahon Mission taking effect from the first day of December 1946.
2. That the Constitution be amended accordingly in terms of Article 8 of the Constitution.

---

<sup>4</sup> From personal interview with Lyle Mahon 25 September 2007

### 3. That the Constitution be revised and reprinted

The name “Mahon Mission” was chosen because of the influence of Edgar H Mahon and his family on this work among the amaZioni in southern Africa. Another reason for the choice of this name was that the African believers were called “Mahoni” by the other African people because of their relationship with the Mahon family.

*The Mahon Mission Messenger* dated 20<sup>th</sup> September 1971 (Mahon Mission Press: back page) explains that “with the assistance of the Rev Daniel Bryant of America, the mission was established in 1904 and given the name of the church he represented: The Christian Catholic Church of Zion.” It also explains that the reason for the change of the Mission’s name was because the original name was often confused with the Roman Catholic Church and in later years it was also confused with numerous little “native sects” that used the name of the mission – especially the word “Zion”. The article on the back page of *The Mahon Mission Messenger* continues to explain that in 1946 the mission dissociated itself from the 40 year old description and took the name “The Mahon Mission”.

A paper was presented to the Annual Conference of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion in October 1996 by Rev L B Mahon as part of the Centenary Celebrations of Dowie’s original church. In this paper it states that

In 1960 when Rev Alfred Mahon visited Zion, he was asked by the then General Overseer Carl Q Lee if he could refer all African correspondence to him as it was very difficult to deal with matters when he was so far away. In 1963 Rev Alfred Mahon called all the leaders who had been corresponding with the (original) Church in Zion for a meeting to discuss how he could best help them. He began to call the leaders together every year in October and on various occasions the General Overseer from Zion, Illinois, USA came to meet with them and visit some of the churches.

Another development resulting from these changes was that a new missions policy was accepted at the annual Missionary Conference in February 1963 and this resulted in a further revision of the constitution and by-laws of the Grace Missionary Church and the Mahon Mission. This revised constitution was written and accepted “by the Church Body” on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1964. In the preamble it states that

the Grace Missionary Church had its origins in the year 1906 as a Sunday School. In 1909 a church was formed and on July 9, 1909 were printed the Articles of Faith of this new church. Later, in 1920 this church became known as the Grace Missionary Church.

The relationship between the Mahon Mission and the Grace Missionary Church was further explained in article 1 of the Constitution where it states that “the Church shall be known as Grace Missionary Church of Zion, Illinois and Headquarters for the Mahon African Mission”.

### **3.3. Affiliations**

The Mahon Mission was affiliated with the Evangelical Foreign Mission Association and the World Evangelical Fellowship of the National Association of Evangelicals in order to give the fledgling mission credibility among supporting churches and individuals. In this way the organization would be accountable to other bodies for the manner in which they manage their finances and in the content of their teaching and doctrines held by the missionaries.

Another strategic relationship was entered into in 1957 when the Mahon Mission sought affiliation with the South African Baptist Missionary Society. Roy and Hudson-Reed note that the Mahon Mission joined the Baptist Union in order for the churches to be granted government recognition (2001:41). They state that

(The Mahon Mission was) accepted as a “Branch” of the South African Baptist Mission Society in 1955 and became an Association of the Bantu Baptist Church at their Assembly in Warden in 1956. The Mahon missionaries became recognized missionaries of the South African Baptist Mission Society (SABMS). The black pastors and evangelists were recognized by the Baptist Union and listed in the Baptist Union Handbook under the Bantu Baptist Church pastors and evangelists” (Roy and Hudson-Reed 2001:41).

Roy and Hudson-Reed further elaborate that the churches which were served by The Mahon Mission are now known as the Mahon Evangelical Church of South Africa and describe them as “a group of black evangelical churches that grew out of a holiness-revivalist movement at the beginning of the century”. (Roy and Hudson-Reed 2001:41).

This fact is further substantiated both by an entry in *The Mahon Mission Messenger* which explains that “in 1957 the Mahon Mission affiliated with the South African Baptist Missionary Society and has had the happy privilege of working with them for the extension of the Kingdom among the Bantu of southern Africa” and by an article in *Leaves of Healing* (volume CXI, January – February 1985: 5) which states that

in 1957, because the Mahon Mission was not recognized by the government and because only those churches so recognized were given church sites in the many developing black townships, it was

felt best to become associated with the South African Baptist Missionary Society – though they still maintained their own identity.

Because of this relationship, many of the pastors and evangelists were trained at the Baptist Bible Institute in the Eastern Cape (a recognized training institution of the Baptist Union) and at the Union Bible Institute outside Pietermaritzburg, a Zulu speaking evangelical training institution, which is still being used today to train Zionist church pastors and leaders. The ministers were also listed in the Baptist Union handbook giving them ministerial recognition.

### **3.4. Conclusion**

This section was a review of the Mission as it grew into an organized body of missionaries with a Board in the USA and as it developed strong relationships with the Baptist Union of Southern Africa.

## **4. Alfred, Edgar and Lyle Mahon**

### **4.1. Introduction**

Before dealing with the developments from 1970 onward it is necessary to examine the lives of three important missionaries who had a great influence on the Mahon Mission. They are Alfred Mahon, the son of Edgar Mahon and Edgar and Lyle Mahon, the grandsons of the founder.

### **4.2. Alfred Joseph Mahon**

Alfred Mahon was the son of Edgar Mahon and father of Edgar and Lyle Mahon. He studied at the Afrikaanse Baptiste Seminarium (the theological training institute for the Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk recognized by the Baptist Union of Southern Africa). After graduating from seminary, he was appointed as a missionary superintendent of the Mahon Mission on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1978 and was inducted 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1978.

He became the pastor of the Cullinan Baptiste Kerk on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1982 and resigned from that position on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1985 after which he assumed the pastorate of the of Afrikaans Baptist Church in Krugersdorp. During this time “Mahon was also responsible for a large area of the Black work in the Southern Transvaal under the Mahon Mission which is a branch of the South African Baptist Missionary Society” (Baptist Union Archive material sourced in 2012). This is substantiated by a notation in the 1985 publication *Leaves of Healing* (volume CXI, January – February 1985) which states that “significant development in the work occurred when Alfred Mahon, son of the founder visited the United States and spent time with Overseer Carl Q

Lee. Lee asked Mahon to take over the correspondence from these South African pastors and become the voice of Zion”. The “significant development” mentioned by Lee took place under Alfred Mahon’s leadership when the work expanded and more missionaries joined the organization, including his two sons, Edgar and Lyle, as well as his brothers and their wives.

#### **4.3. Edgar Henry Mahon (1931 – 1997)**

Edgar Henry Mahon was born in 1931. He joined the Mahon Mission in 1965 and became Superintendent of the Orange Free and Basutoland fields in 1967. Edgar then succeeded his father, Alfred Mahon as leader of the Mahon Mission. “In the years following, Rev Edgar Mahon, grandson of the Mahon Mission founder, had an increasing amount of contact with the amaZioni church leaders and found great acceptance by them (the amaZioni).” *Leaves of Healing* volume CXI (January – February 1985) Each time he visited Zion, Illinois, he shared his burden for the Zionist people of South Africa and challenged the Christian Catholic Church of Zion to seek a greater ministry to them. The involvement of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion was further developed by the visits from Overseer and Mrs Carl Q. Lee in 1975 and by Overseer and Mrs Roger Otterson in 1980, who along with Deacon and Mrs Robert Peterson visited many of the amaZioni churches in South and southern Africa (*Leaves of Healing* volume CXI January – February 1985). Edgar and his wife Anetta (who was affectionately referred to as ‘Netta) visited the Christian Catholic Church of Zion, Illinois, USA again in 1987. As is typical in many mission organizations and on the mission field, the children of the missionaries would marry one another. This is also true of the Mahon Mission as Anetta Mahon’s parents were Gerry and Elsie Lee.<sup>5</sup>

Edgar Mahon also became deeply involved in missionary activities of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa. He was requested by the Baptist Union Executive to assist them as acting Superintendent of the Orange Free State Field of the South African Baptist Missions Society in 1976 for a number of years (whilst continuing his work in the Mahon Mission) and was later appointed Associate Missions Secretary of the Missions Department of the Baptist Union which replaced the South African Baptist Missions Society (Roy and Hudson-Reed 2001:41). In 1981 Edgar was appointed

---

<sup>5</sup> Note also that Lathrop McCordic married Ethel Thorpe in 1922.

as Coordinator of the Central Baptist Association of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa. Edgar Mahon died tragically in a car accident on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1997.

#### **4.4. Lyle Burton Mahon (1933 – 2011)**

Lyle Burton Mahon was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1933, the younger brother of Edgar Mahon. He applied for acceptance to the Mahon Mission in 1957 and was accepted in 1958. He began his ministry in 1959 by attending the Baptist Theological College in Johannesburg for four years of training. Week-ends and holidays were spent visiting Zionist churches and doing practical work. He was installed as the superintendent of the Transvaal in 1963. His father, Alfred Mahon had started a new church at Natalspuit (Germiston) and Lyle was to build a building for the new believers. The affiliation that the Mahon Mission enjoyed with the South African Baptist Missionary Society enabled them to purchase sites for churches in the Bantu Townships. Lyle was also involved in building churches in Dube, Jabulani, Umlazi and Diepkloof and Standerton. In her tribute to her late husband, Sandy Mahon noted that “Lyle had started, built or repaired more than 2000 churches in his lifetime.”<sup>6</sup> His skill as a carpenter, builder, mechanic and all round handyman is evidenced throughout Southern Africa”.

In a tribute written by ZEMA Executive Director, Mike McDowell (“*Focus*” volume 4, issue 1), he states that Lyle Mahon was “truly the patriarch of what is now called ZEMA”. He explains that Mahon was “literally born into the mission but officially became a missionary in 1958. He became the leader of the mission agency during difficult times of transition”. McDowell quotes Mahon who wrote

those years were a most enriching time, during which we faced many trials and difficulties where the very foundation of the mission was shaken. But God in his mercy, showed us that He still had a plan and purpose which he wanted the mission to fulfil.

McDowell also notes that the Mahon Evangelical Churches of Southern Africa with approximately 372 churches and over 7 000 members became autonomous under Lyle’s leadership and that he also had oversight of the purchase of the properties at Sunbury and Sondela.

---

<sup>6</sup> Sandy was the daughter of Gerald Lee and sister of ‘Netta and Geoff Lee.

Lyle retired to a farm outside Bethlehem; however, he remained active in the work among the amaZioni during his retirement years until his death on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2011. At his final Annual Conference he made the following statement

it has been my desire and hope that before we retired we would see at least 10 Missionary couples involved in the ZEMA ministry. It was a great joy during our annual Missionary Conference at the beginning of this year to see how God has fulfilled this vision, and it was confirmation to us that the time had come for us to retire<sup>7</sup>

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

These three individuals influenced the Mahon Mission the most. Each one made a major contribution to the history of this mission and therefore constitutes an important aspect of this research.

### **5. Constitutional Changes: 1970 - 1990**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

The written records from minutes and reports reveal that changes began to occur in the late 1960's. A letter dated January 30, 1968 was written to Gerald Lee in South Africa by Clinton Bell, pastor of Grace Missionary Church and also signed by Harold Light, Executive Secretary of the Mahon Mission Council, USA. This letter refers to "a degree of misunderstanding developing over the past few months". It also refers to the use of funds on the field which seemed to be administered in an unfair manner by those in leadership.

#### **5.2. Grace Missionary Church and the Mahon Mission**

Lyle and Sandy visited Zion in 1968 to mediate with the Church on behalf of the missionaries because of differences that had arisen between Grace Missionary Church and the Mahon Mission in South Africa. The issues related mainly to financial matters and resulted in the Grace Missionary Church withdrawing financial support and removing all references to the Mahon Mission from their Constitution. This decision by the Grace Missionary Church resulted in the formation of a USA Mahon Mission Board in 1972. Other churches became involved one of which was Lake View Church in Zion which continues to be a supporting church in the present day.

Another strongly worded letter dated December 3, 1969 was sent to Edgar Mahon as superintendent of the field and chairman of the Field Council. The letter expresses

---

<sup>7</sup> paper delivered at 2007 ZEMA Annual Conference at Sunbury, KwaZulu Natal

the concern of the Mahon Mission Council in Zion, Illinois regarding the use of funds in South Africa. The treasurer, Mrs 'Netta Mahon (wife of Edgar Mahon) had not paid the missionaries their salaries and allowances but had rather used the funds for buildings and other needs. The letter continues

“The Council truly regrets that this (action) is necessary and we are also aware of the fact that this is not in keeping with the feelings of several of you there. We take this strong action because previous requests have not been followed.”

The problems within the Mahon Mission was further described in an undated letter from the Grace Missionary Church to the field which stated that

We seem unwilling to face the fact that there are two very divergent avenues of thought in regard to the relationship between the Mahon Mission and the Grace Missionary Church. One line of thought is that the Mahon Mission should be joined as closely as possible to the Grace Missionary Church and that the church should feel itself responsible for the major portion of the support and direction of the Mahon Mission. The second line of reasoning is that the Mahon Mission should remain quite removed from the Grace Missionary Church so that the Mission will not appear to be a one church mission. At present these two lines of thought are having a divisive influence on the church.

These differences led to the withdrawal of financial support by the Grace Missionary Church in Zion and the removal of all references to the Mahon Mission in the Constitution of the Grace Missionary Church.

### ***5.3. Revision of the Constitution***

During 1970 a charter committee was established to review the work by Grace Missionary Church in South Africa. Those in attendance were named “The Original Organizational Committee”. Cleburn McIlhany, Jr. was appointed as the chairman. It was noted in the minutes of the meeting held January 30, 1971 that those in the USA “were aware of the very difficult position of those on the field”.

At a special meeting held 7<sup>th</sup> February 1971 the constitution of the “Zulu-Lesotho Mission” (another designation in the USA for the Mahon Mission) was revised in accordance with the request made by the (USA) government so that the Mission could be dissolved.

Another meeting was held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1972 which discussed the problems concerning the situation at Grace Missionary Church in Zion, USA and within the

“Zulu-Lesotho Mission” in South Africa. Questions arose as to the legality of the organization in South Africa since it had no officers nor a board in the USA as required by the Internal Revenue Service of the USA.

A new constitution was drawn up on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1972 as the result of these difficulties and resultant discussions. The meeting of those attending accepted the new constitution and elected a board of twenty members and six trustees. Five churches were represented at this meeting. A letter was sent to the “friends of the Mahon Mission” to explain these decisions and to encourage continued support of the missionaries in South Africa. This new constitution of the Mahon Mission (USA) dated 28 April 1972 (revised March 1984) states that the Mahon Mission (USA) is

hereby established by the undersigned persons for the purpose of receiving and distributing funds for the operation of the Mahon Mission...which is an association of the Missions department of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa.

An indication of the greater support that the Mahon Mission received can be found in the list of contributors described in the revised bi-monthly publication of the Mahon Mission named “The Mahon Mission Focus”. The January – February 1970 edition (page 2) listed the following as contributors

Grace Missionary Church, Zion, Illinois (headquarters); Zion Bible Church, Zion, Illinois; Ozark Bible Institute Osark, Arkansas; Evangelical Free Church, Madrid, Iowa; Evangelical Free Church, Polk City, Iowa; Leavitt Street Bible Church, Chicago, Illinois; Everybody’s Bible School, Youngstown, Ohio; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Carol Baptist Church, Atchison, Kansas; Wildwood Evangelical Free Church, Ottumwa, Iowa; Lakeview Church, Zion, Illinois.

#### **5.4. Relations with the Baptist Union of Southern Africa**

During this time changes also occurred within the relationship between the Mahon Mission and the Baptist Union of Southern Africa. The erstwhile South African Baptist Missionary Society was replaced by the Baptist Missions Department of the Baptist Union. As a result of this, the Mahon Mission was accepted as a Special Association at the 1987 Baptist Union Assembly.

#### **5.5. New Missionaries**

These years of change within the Mahon Mission enabled the missionaries to work among other Zionist groups and not just the Mahon churches. In 1980 the Mahon Mission requested help from the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, Illinois. The first

missionaries sent from the Christian Catholic Church were Timothy and Luann Kuehl who arrived in 1986. Later Richard and Geraldine Akers joined in 1989. Richard was a graduate of the Theological College of Southern Africa in Johannesburg and had served in a Baptist Church before joining the mission. Gregory and Carlene Seghers were also sent out from the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, Illinois in 1993. Lyle Mahon makes reference to these events when he states that

Rev and Mrs T. Kuehl arrived from the USA as the first full time missionaries to work with the Zion churches. Subsequent to them Rev and Mrs R Akers joined the mission to work in the Transkei and the Rev and Mrs G Seghers arrived to work in KwaZulu Natal. (Mahon 1996)

In 1988 Geoff and Katy Lee joined the Mahon Mission. Geoff was the son of Gerald Lee who joined the mission in 1946 and had studied at the Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa in Johannesburg.

### **5.6. Conclusion**

The Mahon Mission, USA became a member of the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1991 as the previous organizations, namely the Evangelical Foreign Mission Association and the World Evangelical Fellowship of the National Association of Evangelicals had amalgamated to form this new organization.

## **6. Division within the Mahon Mission: 1990 – 1996**

### **6.1. Introduction**

The problems within the Mahon Mission that began in 1970 were not totally resolved, but were again raised in 1987 and came to a head in 1990. The major problems related to inter-personal matters within the Mission.

### **6.2. Resignation of Edgar Mahon**

It would be useful to refer to handwritten notes from Lyle Mahon. In these notes he states that

In 1991 some big changes took place. The USA Board had become increasingly aware that unless some drastic changes were made there would be no future for the Mission. Under the existing structures it was almost impossible for new missionaries to stay on in the mission and new guiding Rules were introduced by the Board where there would be a Field Chairman elected by the missionaries and the power of leadership would no longer be in the hands of the

superintendent Edgar Mahon. I reluctantly agreed to stand and was elected as the first Field Chairman.

He notes that these decisions were not acceptable to Edgar and his wife and they were eventually dismissed by the Board. This was very traumatic for them and for the Mahon Mission Churches, including their Executive Council. Lyle Mahon explains that Edgar and his wife sought to use the Church Executive Council of the Mahon Churches against the other missionaries and USA Board members which resulted in the introduction of an Interim Executive Council which decided that the churches should become independent of the mission under a new constitution and new name. This led to the formation of the Mahon Evangelical Church of Southern Africa (MECSA). As a result of these changes the church properties were handed over to the Mahon Evangelical Church of Southern Africa, as well as the property at Ethembeni, which had served the mission for many years as their headquarters. Although he had resigned as a missionary from the Mahon Mission, Edgar Mahon continued to serve as the leader of the churches that his grandfather had led.

As a result of these problems another Constitution was accepted in 1984. This was followed by yet another constitution in 1987 together with the establishment of a new Missions Policy which was finally accepted in 1990.

One of the consequences of these disagreements was that Edgar Mahon was given permission to occupy the house owned by the Mahon Mission at 44 Melville Avenue in Johannesburg until the end of 1992 (Minutes of Missionary Conference 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> January 1992). This agreement was further extended to the end June 1995 (minutes of the January 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> 1995 Missionary Conference).

In a letter addressed to Rev Terry Rae, General Secretary of the Baptist Union, dated 12 September 1992, Grant Sisson (member of the Mahon Mission USA Board) states that “Pastor Roger Otterson of the Christian Catholic Church (USA) was also present at this meeting” referring to a meeting held in November 1991 with two representatives of the Baptist Union Executive, Rev Andrew van den Aardweg and Rev Trevor Swart. The involvement of Revs Theo Pass and Stuart Akers representing the Baptist Union Executive was also invaluable. They served on the Field Council of the Mahon Mission and their advice and experience in mission work was a great encouragement to the missionaries.

After about two years of protracted legal actions, an out of court settlement was agreed to in 1996. All parties agreed to allow the setting aside of the previous judgment to proceed and to offer to sell the Melville Avenue house to the Mahons at a reduced amount. On 28<sup>th</sup> May 1996, the Mahon Mission missionaries and the USA Board members discussed the Memorandum of Agreement between Edgar Henry Mahon and his wife, Annetta Jane Mahon and the Mahon Mission Missionary Society, the Mahon Evangelical Church of Southern Africa and the Mahon Mission, USA. The Board meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1996 noted that the matter had been resolved. As was stated in a previous section Edgar died in a motor vehicle accident in January 1997.

### **6.3. Establishment of the Zion Evangelical Fellowship of Africa**

An article in *Leaves of Healing* volume CXI (January – February 1985) summarizes the history that concerns the work of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion in southern Africa. The article states that a number of amaZioni leaders were invited to attend a Conference held at Ethembeni from the 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> October 1984. Eighty four leaders attended this Conference representing “a good geographical cross-section of South Africa” (*Leaves of Healing* volume CXI: 8).

A constitution was accepted and a president was elected with an eight member Executive Council. Rev Edgar Mahon was appointed as the official representative of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, the church “headquarters” in Zion, Illinois (*Leaves of Healing* volume CXI: 8). The minutes of the first General Conference held on 24<sup>th</sup> October, 1984 states that the meeting was chaired by the Rev E H Mahon who extended a special welcome to the Rev. Roger W Otterson, the General Overseer of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion in Zion and his wife, Mrs Gayleene Otterson.

In October 1996 Lyle Mahon presented a paper to the Annual Conference of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion as part of their Centenary Celebrations. In this paper he also mentions this event when he notes that “at the annual meeting of the Mahon Mission in 1983 it was decided to form an umbrella organization where the various Zion churches and church groups could become members”. This Organization was launched in 1984 duly constituted under the name “Christian

Catholic Church in Zion of Africa”. This name was later changed to “Zion Evangelical Fellowship of Africa”

The above mentioned article in the January – February 1985 edition of *Leaves of Healing* was written by the Rev Roger Otterson, Overseer of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion after his visit to South Africa and Malawi. In that article he poses the question that if the African Independent Churches (referring mainly to the amaZioni) “have made such remarkable progress in the years that there has been little contact with the headquarters church in Zion, why should we now seek a closer tie?” (*Leaves of Healing* volume CXI: 8). His own reply contains two reasons, namely that the amaZioni churches “recognize the need for being part of a larger Christian Catholic Church in Zion organization and the benefits that will bring” as well as the beneficial results this relationship will have in bringing about a “purer doctrinal beliefs and practices through the study of the *This we Believe* booklet”. He notes that this booklet had been translated into Zulu and other Bantu languages. He also refers to the benefit of “helping more of their ministers to get theological training in a Bible institute or seminary” (*Leaves of Healing* volume CXI: 8).

At a meeting of the Executive Council of the Mahon Churches held on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1999 it was agreed that the name of the previous ‘umbrella organization’, “the Christian Catholic Church in Zion of Africa” be changed to “Zion Evangelical Fellowship of Africa” (ZEFA). In the minutes of the meeting of the Annual Conference of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion of Africa held at Sunbury on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1999 (as part of the Mahon Churches Executive Council Agenda) it states that “it was agreed that the Constitution be amended wherever necessary to the new name “Zion Evangelical Fellowship of Africa” with the addition of “in affiliation with the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, Illinois, USA”. be added to the title when used in correspondence. This occurred after the dismissal of Edgar Mahon and therefore concern was expressed that authority on the field could cause conflict among the erstwhile Mahon Churches in their relationships with and responsibilities to the Field Chairman of ZEMA. It was therefore agreed that an “Administrative Officer” would be appointed in consultation with the Christian Catholic Church of Zion, so that the relationship between the missionaries and the amaZioni would be “born out of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion”. This individual would assist the “Zion Evangelical Fellowship of Africa” (ZEFA) and work with members of its Executive Committee.

## **7. Recent Events : 1996 –2013**

### **7.1. Introduction**

After the events described in section 6, the missionaries took time to re-evaluate and review their ministries, goals and focus.

### **7.2. Name changes**

After the resignation of Edgar Mahon, the missionaries of The Mahon Mission decided to change the name of the Mission in order to differentiate the mission organisation for the missionaries from that for the churches which related to Edgar Mahon. In 1996 the Mahon Mission, USA became known as “Harvest International Ministries” but operating as “the Mahon Mission Missionary Society” in South Africa. The constitution which was revised on 16 November 1993, and reformatted on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1998 stated that the organization was to be known as “Harvest International Ministries (formally Mahon Mission, Zion, Illinois, USA)”.

In the year 2000 the name was again changed to “Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa”. The reason for this change was that there were a number of other major Christian Organizations associated with the word “Harvest”, thus causing confusion among both supporting churches and other Christian organizations. The minutes of the Missionary Conference held from 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> January 2000 states that during the Annual General Business Meeting of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion of Africa held during October 1999 “the name of the Organization was changed to Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa (ZEMA)”. Rev Ken Langley, senior Pastor of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, Illinois, was able to attend these meetings and represent the Church of Zion in the USA.

Lyle Mahon describes the meeting of the missionaries with Rev Ken Langley in his personal notes. He notes that at this meeting it was agreed that the official representative of the ministry among the amaZioni in South Africa should be a body operating under Harvest International Ministries (H.I.M.).

The Constitution of Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa, Zion, Illinois, USA dated July 2002 explains these changes when it states that

The Mission’s purpose, therefore, shall be that of a philanthropic, educational, religious agency, designed to form a Protestant Evangelical missionary order representing churches, societies and

Christian individuals for spreading the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and establishing, developing, and promoting all phases of church work and missionary activity in Southern Africa. We are also committed to the recruiting, sending, and supporting of missionaries to assist in this task.

### **7.3. *Purchase of Properties***

During this time of change the mission went through a time of strategic planning for the future. Ministry was no longer restricted to working among the churches that were related to the Mahons, but was able to serve all churches related to Zion. This meant that the missionaries would accept all invitations from all Zionist groupings.

One of the results of these strategic plans was to focus the ministry in particular areas in southern Africa. At a quarterly Missionary Conference held in Pietermaritzburg from 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> October 1992 it was agreed “that ministry centres should be established and developed in Lilongwe (Malawi), Natal and Transkei” (minute 9.1). This resulted in the purchase of the properties in Mthatha in the Eastern Cape (previously known as Umtata in the Transkei) and near Stanger, in northern KwaZulu Natal. These properties have become important venues for Bible Schools and other ZEMA ministries. Sunbury had previously belonged to the Empangeni Baptist Church and was purchased in 1995. “Sondela” is situated 10 kilometres outside Mthatha on the N2 highway and was officially opened in August 1998. The ministry in Malawi was discontinued therefore no ministry centre was established there.

## **8. Conclusion**

This chapter has followed the progress of the Mahon Mission from its beginnings as a “family mission” led by the Mahon family to its establishment as a small mission agency that today involves missionaries from South Africa and the USA as well as Rwanda and Germany. The latter two countries are the result of two new missionaries joining the organization.

It has also developed from a mission that focused on one group of amaZioni believers, namely those relating to the Mahon family, to focusing on all amaZioni who invite ZEMA missionaries to teach them the Bible. The mission has also changed from being supported by one branch of the original church founded by John Alexander Dowie, namely Grace Missionary Church, to being supported by many churches around the

world, and especially by the original Christian Catholic Church of Zion (today known as Christ Community Church).

Finally the mission changed in its designation from “the Mahon Mission” to other names and then finally to “Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa” as it is known today.

# **CHAPTER 5: The Questionnaire**

## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter will be to examine the ministry of ZEMA's missionaries, especially their ministry through the Zion Evangelical Bible Schools that are held in various places across southern Africa. This investigation will be done by having questionnaires completed by ZEMA missionaries and conducting interviews with some of these missionaries. This research will therefore essentially be empirical in nature. The researcher acknowledges that the process will include both objective and subjective observations. Therefore care will be taken to critically evaluate the responses so that any bias or distortion can be reduced as much as possible.

There is no need for a literature review as suggested by Smith (Smith 2008: 130) as very little has been written on this aspect of the ministry of the missionaries among the amaZioni.

## **2. Use of Empirical Data**

The research method employed will be descriptive which describes its subject matter either quantitatively or qualitatively. Descriptive research seeks to examine a problem using data derived from interviews, questionnaires, surveys or case studies in order to form a conclusion (Smith 2008: 226).

This researcher has decided that the method will be qualitative in nature, rather than quantitative because qualitative research is "highly contextual being collected in a natural 'real life' setting" (Grey 2004:320). This kind of research has the advantage as "qualitative data can provide rich descriptions and explanations that demonstrate the chronological flow of events as well as often leading to serendipitous (chance) findings (Grey 2004:319). Grey refers to Miles and Huberman who hold that "qualitative studies have a quality of 'undeniably' because words have a more concrete and vivid flavour that is more convincing to the reader" (Grey 2004:319).

The researcher has chosen to use questionnaires as his primary instrument of collecting data in order to understand the ways in which the students act and the reasons they give for their actions. Other instruments that could be utilised include observations, interviews and document analysis.

Questionnaires are an “important data gathering tool” but the questions need to be constructed in a way that is “valid, reliable and objective” (Grey 2004: 187). The researcher needs to be aware that the questionnaire reflects “the designer’s view of the world, no matter how objective a researcher tries to be”. (: 188)

A questionnaire was sent to ZEMA missionaries who live and minister in KwaZulu Natal, Eastern Cape (in areas previously known as the Transkei and Ciskei), Gauteng, as well as in Mozambique and Swaziland. In previous years ZEMA also ministered in Malawi, however as there are no ZEMA missionaries working there at present, it will not be included in the scope of the research.

A number of guidelines were followed for drawing up questions to use in the questionnaire (Smith 2008:234) which enabled the questions to be specific, relevant and meaningful without causing confusion. The intention was to give the respondents the freedom to answer the questions as they wanted to rather than requesting specific answers. The reliability of this research was strengthened by referring to a number of different Bible Schools in different countries and that are taught by different missionaries.

Open questions were employed which allowed the respondents to answer however they wish, without prompting. Grey states that “the advantage of open questions is the potential for richness of responses, some of which may not have been anticipated by the researcher” (Grey 2004: 194). This was discovered to be true and enabled the researcher to obtain different responses because each missionary’s experience in the mission field is different due to their geographical locations and physical circumstances. Questions selected were directly related to the ministry in the Bible Schools and the researcher attempted to follow the golden rule “that is should be absolutely clear how the respondent is to complete the questionnaire” (Grey 2004:193). The procedures that were selected to organise and analyse the data will be discussed in chapter 5.

The questionnaires were sent out by email on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2012 after bringing the matter up at the Annual Conference in January 2012. Questionnaires were sent out to Barry Adkins, Richard Akers, Jon Emanuelson, Luan Goosen, Tim Kuehl, and Gregory Seghers. Later questionnaires were sent to Jack Donnell a retired pastor

working with ZEMA, Eric Binion who ministers with him as one of his teachers and Dudley Donaldson (TEAM missionary who is seconded to ZEMA).

Historical records were researched at the Baptist Union Archives located at the Baptist Theological College, in Oak Road, Randburg, Gauteng. Material researched included correspondence concerning the relationship between the Mahon Mission and the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, as well as a variety of newsletters. Their condition was very good and there was no problem with their authenticity. Some of the documents were hand written while those in type had the relevant signatures on them. Further material was researched at the Sunbury Christian Camp in KwaZulu Natal where some of the records of ZEMA are held.

### **3. The Questionnaire**

The research method employed was to use the instruments of the questionnaire and personal interviews. Because of the size of ZEMA as a mission agency, the researcher decided not to test the questionnaire with a sample questionnaire before sending them out. ZEMA is a mission organization comprising of eight families together with four seconded missionaries and four retired people serving as “self-supported” missionaries with ZEMA. There are also short term missionaries and Associate Missionaries serving for two years or less. The questionnaire was developed by analysing what information was required for the research paper and then formulating the questions accordingly. It was constructed with a front page (see Appendix 1) that gives the aim of the study, as well as who is conducting the survey. It also states the name of the Institution involved in the research, therefore giving authentication to the validity of the study (see Appendix 3). The second page of the questionnaire (see Appendix 2) provides a full briefing on how to complete the questionnaire in order to avoid confusion.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to request information about the subject matter (Bible Schools) and other related information that will be used in the analysis of the data (see Appendix 3). Therefore the researcher prepared the questionnaire in order to provide a basic understanding of the major ministry of ZEMA missionaries, namely, teaching the Bible to Zionists through what is called Zion Evangelical Bible Schools (ZEBS).

#### 4. The Resultant Answers

The data collected from the questionnaires was collated according to the name of the respondent. The author will make comparisons and comments in the following chapter. This chapter focuses on the collection of the data itself. Certain respondents requested to remain anonymous therefore they will be referred to by a number from Missionary 1 to Missionary 9. The respondents also requested that the names of individuals referred to in their answers and the actual places where they live remain anonymous. Therefore in certain responses individuals will be referred to as “Mr A” or “Mrs A” to protect their identities. The places where the ministry occurred will be referred to in general terms. The researcher received questionnaires from eight missionaries who requested that they remain anonymous.

##### 4.1. Missionary 1

This missionary joined the mission in 1993 and is presently ministering in the KwaZulu Natal region. His questionnaire was completed on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2012. Because of time restraints in his ministry, he provided only one **report** which was concerning the Zion Evangelical Bible School at Sunbury, near Stanger in KwaZulu Natal. Sunbury is the Christian Campsite and Conference Centre owned and operated by ZEMA. The School was started in 1996 and is held there once a month. The language and culture of this school is Zulu and it is located in a rural area, the percentage of Zionists who attend this school is 50%.

PLACE	LANGUAGE	TYPE	BEGAN	% ZIONIST
Sunbury	Zulu	Rural	1996	50

Table 1

Date (Year) of joining ZEMA: 1993

Date of Completion of Questionnaire: 25<sup>th</sup> of Feb. 2012

1. Name of school according to your records / definition : Sunbury ZEBS
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town): KwaZulu-Natal near Stanger
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Zulu
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? rural
5. What year did it begin? 1996

6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? At this time around 50%
7. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.

The students will share that at their churches they now will share the truth with their churches and their church members will be surprised by the teaching of their leaders now

8. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.

One comment that was made by a Zionists Bishop was that we have brought them the truth and now they must bring the truth to Africa

9. How has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the “Mother Church” in Zion, USA helped your own ministry? Please give a brief explanation.

I always share with the Zion churches that I talk at that I am a representative of the Zion church in the U.S. it immediately gets a response from the church. When I talk with people at places of business and share with them, I tell them that I am a white Zionists from overseas. This also opens a door to share with them what we believe and what we are doing with the Zionists churches

10. How has this historical link posed a problem when working among the amaZioni?

For myself, I have not experienced a problem. I will get requests for financial assistance with their churches or to help them go overseas themselves to visit Zion. This is answered by telling them that we have been commissioned to train the Zion leaders in the Word of God. There is only one Zion church and millions of Zionists in Southern Africa. We are not able to help them all in those ways.

11. Other comments that may be helpful for this research topic

Not at this time.

#### **4.2. Missionary 2**

This missionary joined the mission in 2006 and lives in Mthatha. He is presently ministering in the eastern areas of the Eastern Cape of South Africa. His questionnaire was completed on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2012. His reports concerned the Zion Evangelical Bible Schools at Kanana and Bala (both near Flagstaff), at Bizana and Lusindisweni (near Lusikisiki) and at Sondela (Mthatha). Sondela is a conference centre (mission station) situated 10 kilometres outside Mthatha that is owned and operated by ZEMA. The language and culture of these schools is Xhosa and they are located in both rural and urban areas. The Schools were started at

different times and the percentages of Zionists who attend these schools vary as can be seen by Table 2.

PLACE	LANGUAGE	TYPE	BEGAN	% ZIONIST
Kanana	Xhosa	Rural	1999	90
Bala	Xhosa	Rural	2004	98
Bizana	Xhosa	Urban	2005	80
Lusindisweni	Xhosa	Rural	2006	80
Sondela	Xhosa	peri-urban	1995	85

Table 2

#### 4.2.1. Kanana ZEBS

1. Name of school according to your records / definition: Kanana
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town): Eastern Cape, Flagstaff
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Xhosa
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Rural
5. What year did it begin? 1999
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? 90%
7. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.

The respondent quotes a student who states that we “now teach truth and not what angels said”

8. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.

A student stated that as a result of attending ZEBS he “was saved, (and had) responded to the gospel”

9. How has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the “Mother Church” in Zion, USA helped your own ministry? Please give a brief explanation.

“The link has been critical in that it has opened doors; it has got us into places because we can say we teach the teaching of Zion”. This answer is the same for all the schools.

10. How has this historical link posed a problem when working among the amaZioni?

The respondent states that “some folk want us at first until they hear of salvation, then they no longer want this new gospel”. What he means is that when the true message of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ is taught and preached there will be opposition from those who do not want this message but who prefer to remain within their traditional beliefs. This answer is the same for all the schools.

11. other comments that may be helpful for this research topic.

He notes that “the schools have built up their own momentum and means of recruiting new students as folk see and hear of the benefit of attending ZEBS”  
This answer is the same for all the schools.

#### 4.2.2. Bizana

1. Name of school according to your records / definition: Bizana
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town): Eastern Cape, Bizana
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Xhosa
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Urban
5. What year did it begin? 2005
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? 80%
7. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.

He refers to a student who testifies that initially his attendance at ZEBS “caused division as the leader sent us then did want this new Gospel, but as an individual I have grown in Christ”.

8. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.

One student states that he has “grown in knowledge of Scripture”

9. How has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the “Mother Church” in Zion, USA helped your own ministry? Please give a brief explanation.

“The link has been critical in that it has opened doors; it has got us into places because we can say we teach the teaching of Zion”. This answer is the same for all the schools.

10. How has this historical link posed a problem when working among the amaZioni?

The respondent states that “some folk want us at first until they hear of salvation, then they no longer want this new gospel”. What he means is that when the true message of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ is taught and preached there will be opposition from those who do not want this message but who prefer to remain within their traditional beliefs. This answer is the same for all the schools.

11. other comments that may be helpful for this research topic.

He notes that “the schools have built up their own momentum and means of recruiting new students as folk see and hear of the benefit of attending ZEBS”  
This answer is the same for all the schools.

#### 4.2.3. Lusindisweni

1. Name of school according to your records / definition: Lusindisweni
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town): Eastern Cape, Lusikisiki
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Xhosa
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Rural
5. What year did it begin? 2006
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? 80%

7. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.

Yes, and other people have come to ZEBS as a result of what they see (in our church)”

8. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.

The respondent refers to a student who testifies that he “now tithes”

9. How has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the “Mother Church” in Zion, USA helped your own ministry? Please give a brief explanation.

“The link has been critical in that it has opened doors; it has got us into places because we can say we teach the teaching of Zion”. This answer is the same for all the schools.

10. How has this historical link posed a problem when working among the amaZioni?

The respondent states that “some folk want us at first until they hear of salvation, then they no longer want this new gospel”. What he means is that when the true message of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ is taught and preached there will be opposition from those who do not want this message but who prefer to remain within their traditional beliefs. This answer is the same for all the schools.

11. other comments that may be helpful for this research topic.

He notes that “the schools have built up their own momentum and means of recruiting new students as folk see and hear of the benefit of attending ZEBS”  
This answer is the same for all the schools.

#### 4.2.4. Bala ZEBS

1. Name of school according to your records / definition: Bala
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town): Eastern Cape, Flagstaff
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Xhosa

4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Rural
5. What year did it begin? 2004
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? 98%
7. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.

He refers to a student who states that we “now preach and people are growing”

8. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.

A student testifies that “drums (are) no longer used to call angels, but as a musical instrument in worship”

9. How has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the “Mother Church” in Zion, USA helped your own ministry? Please give a brief explanation.

“The link has been critical in that it has opened doors; it has got us into places because we can say we teach the teaching of Zion”. This answer is the same for all the schools.

10. How has this historical link posed a problem when working among the amaZioni?

The respondent states that “some folk want us at first until they hear of salvation, then they no longer want this new gospel”. What he means is that when the true message of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ is taught and preached there will be opposition from those who do not want this message but who prefer to remain within their traditional beliefs. This answer is the same for all the schools.

11. other comments that may be helpful for this research topic.

He notes that “the schools have built up their own momentum and means of recruiting new students as folk see and hear of the benefit of attending ZEBS”  
This answer is the same for all the schools.

#### 4.2.5. Sondela ZEBS

1. Name of school according to your records / definition: Sondela
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town): Eastern Cape, Mthatha
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Xhosa
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Peri-Urban
5. What year did it begin? 1995
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? 85%
7. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.

The respondent refers to a student who states that ZEBS has “broadened (his) theological knowledge, so (he) can know (and) teach the truth” and to another student who says we “preach salvation, and (are) not ashamed of Jesus”

8. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.

“stopped ancestor worship”

9. How has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the “Mother Church” in Zion, USA helped your own ministry? Please give a brief explanation.

“The link has been critical in that it has opened doors; it has got us into places because we can say we teach the teaching of Zion”. This answer is the same for all the schools.

10. How has this historical link posed a problem when working among the amaZioni?

The respondent states that “some folk want us at first until they hear of salvation, then they no longer want this new gospel”. What he means is that when the true message of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ is taught and preached there will be opposition from those who do not want this message but who prefer to remain within their traditional beliefs. This answer is the same for all the schools.

11. other comments that may be helpful for this research topic.

He notes that “the schools have built up their own momentum and means of recruiting new students as folk see and hear of the benefit of attending ZEBS”

This answer is the same for all the schools.

### 4.3. Missionary 3

This missionary joined ZEMA in 1990 and first began his ministry in the Transkei and then moved to Nelspruit in order to do ministry in Mozambique in 2007. He completed his questionnaire in April 2012. There are ZEBS at various places throughout Mozambique as shown in table 2.

PLACE	LANGUAGE	TYPE	BEGAN	% ZIONIST
Maputo	Shangaan	Urban	2008	90%
Machaze (Manica)	Shona	Rural	2008	80%
Tete	Nyungwe	Urban	2008	90%
Casa Nova (Sofala)	Shona	Rural	2010	90%

Table 3

Date (Year) of joining ZEMA: 1990

Date of Completion of Questionnaire: April 2012

#### 4.3.1 Maputo ZEBS

1. Name of school according to your records / definition: Maputo
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town): Maputo, Maputo
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Shangaan
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Urban
5. What year did it begin? 2008
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? 90%
7. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.

8. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.

One lady reported that as a result of the teaching on Missions she had for the first time in her life left the province of Maputo to share the Gospel in the Tete Province

9. How has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the “Mother Church” in Zion, USA helped your own ministry? Please give a brief explanation.

“This answer is the same for all of the schools where we are involved: A number of Zion church leaders were looking for ‘their roots’ and around about 1980 the IZAMO denomination (Igreja Zione Apostolo em Mozambique) found an address in the US and wrote asking for help.<sup>8</sup> They were told that there were workers in South Africa and Angola (we have never been able to trace what the references to Angola meant ) and so they redirected their search to South Africa.

Part of the reason for this searching was that sometime in that period, the Government had called the churches of all denominations in Mozambique to a meeting and one of the questions asked was ‘what is the history of your church?’ to which many amaZioni had no answer. It was around 1991 that the IZAMO church did in fact make contact with Edgar Mahon, but soon after making that contact found out that he no longer represented the Christian Catholic Church of Zion, and so while happy to receive his ministry, they continued looking for the ‘real people of Zion’. Soon after Edgars passing, these contacts were put in touch with Lyle Mahon who was able to visit the churches in Mozambique as a full representative of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion and ‘the rest is history’. Once the Churches knew that they now had the real link and once they heard of the history of Zion, they testified that their prayers were heard and they now opened their doors for full ministry from anyone sent by Zion.

Subsequent to that we have met with many other Zion denominations and while some are not happy with ‘white people in Zion’, the majority are very pleased to hear of the history of Zion and wanting to associate themselves with that history and teaching.”

---

<sup>8</sup> Refer to written notes on IZAMO under section 7

10. How has this historical link posed a problem when working among the amaZioni?

Some 'hostile' elements have tried to push the view that Zion is only for Africans and so 'white people' and those who have come from 'outside' have no place in it. Others have said that the 'true Zion' does not have the teaching of Salvation in Jesus. The Gospel has its own power however and so even in these hostile environments we find individuals and sometimes MANY individuals who choose to follow the truth.

11. other comments that may be helpful for this research topic : The answer for all schools was "no".

#### 4.3.2 Machaze ZEBS

1. Name of school according to your records / definition : Machaze
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town) : Machaze, Manica Province
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Shona
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Rural
5. What year did it begin? 2008
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? 80%
7. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.

We visited Chidoko before the school started and found quite a negative response. There were strong leaders and we sensed that we were not going to get a great response to the school. However one of the older Bishops and one of the younger men started attending. At first the older man had many questions and we wondered how long he would last. HOWEVER, he stayed the distance and graduated in 2011, and they have now asked us to come back to visit Chidoko again and according to THEM.....the church has changed. Whereas at first these two men were seen as 'renegades', as they have changed so they have influenced the congregation in Chidoko

8. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.

About 6 pastors from the Esbungabera region started attending the classes. One of the more senior was a very quiet man who seemed to be hesitant to 'put himself forward' as he often felt that he did not have the knowledge or experience to be able to persuade others regarding the truth. Over the four years however he has become far more assertive and attributes this to the fact that whereas in the past, leaders had to be good at 'dancing and shouting', now because of his increased knowledge of the Word he is able to play a greater role in the Church

9. How has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the "Mother Church" in Zion, USA helped your own ministry? Please give a brief explanation. The answer to this question is the same for all the schools as stated in 4.1.1.

#### 4.3.3 Casa Nova ZEBS

1. Name of school according to your records / definition : Casa Nova
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town) : Casa Nova , Sofala Province
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Shona
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Rural
5. What year did it begin? 2010
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? 90%
7. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.

Casa Nova is close to the Chibabava district where the very first Zion church was started in Mocambique in an area called Zeja. The Zeja congregation has strong leaders who have not responded well to the Gospel, but the leaders in Maxungwe which lies geographically between Casa Nova and Zeja have embraced the Gospel and the teaching of ZEBS and that church has been changed completely as they simply implement what they hear at ZEBS.

8. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.

Four of the sons of a Bishop in Manica Province attend the classes in Manica . One of them goes to the classes in Manica and Sofala. It has been an interesting journey for these sons. They have all accepted the Gospel and are determined to follow the Truth. Although they report that they have been 'excommunicated' now from their home Church for receiving the Gospel, their old father did come to the Graduation of one of his sons at Machaze and these four sons tell us that in spite of family disagreement about the Gospel, they are now preaching the Gospel.

9. How has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the "Mother Church" in Zion, USA helped your own ministry? Please give a brief explanation. The answer to this question is the same for all the schools as stated in 4.1.1

#### 4.3.4 Tete ZEBS

1. Name of school according to your records / definition : Tete
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town) : Tete, Tete Province
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Nyungwe
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Urban
5. What year did it begin? 2008
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? 90%
7. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.

"The church at Kajiya was 'lost in darkness', having a form of religion but not the Truth. We visited twice and eventually their two top leaders started to come to the classes and have truly had a remarkable change. They have simply believed the truth and now started preaching the truth. One of the more significant changes is that whereas before they were 'in fellowship' with some Congregations which have not received the Gospel, they have now turned away from these and are seeking to follow and teach the truth of God's Word".

8. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.

“Soon after the classes started there was a split in the Church where the classes were held. Classes continued in the church but often with some ‘tension in the air’. The split has led to court cases and is still unresolved. HOWEVER the local pastor who was appointed to take over as ‘Provincial leader’ in the place of the previous leader was a very quiet unassuming man who was truly not able to ‘exert his authority’. He attended the ZEBS classes however and over a period of about two years we began to see how, as he grew in knowledge and understanding, so he grew in boldness and assertiveness. “

9. How has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the “Mother Church” in Zion, USA helped your own ministry? Please give a brief explanation. The answer to this question is the same for all the schools as stated in 4.1.1

#### **4.4. Missionary 4**

This missionary joined ZEMA in 2001 and lives in King Williams Town, Eastern Cape. He ministers in this region of the Eastern Cape which has Xhosa as its language and culture. The questionnaire was submitted on the 5<sup>th</sup> May 2012. The Schools were started at different times and the percentages of Zionists who attend these schools vary as can be seen by Table 4.

PLACE	LANGUAGE	TYPE	BEGAN	% ZIONIST
Mdantsane (East London)	Xhosa	rural	2003	80
Zwetitsha (King Williams Town)	Xhosa	rural	2007	90
Queenstown	Xhosa	urban	2008	90
Peddie	Xhosa	rural	2011	90
Port Alfred	Xhosa	urban	2010	80

#### Table 4

Date (Year) of joining ZEMA: 2001

Date of Completion of Questionnaire: 5 May 2012

##### 4.4.1 Mdantsane ZEBS

1. Name of school according to your records / definition: Mdantsane
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town): East London, Mdantsane
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Xhosa
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Semi- rural
5. What year did it begin? 2003
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? About 80 percent
7. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.

Yes, several of the people attending share the gospel in their context at church where many of the leadership within their church are still unsaved and practice ancestral worship.

8. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.

Yes, Mrs. B: she has grown to become a fiery evangelist among the women. She preaches on the train and is encouraging people to go study God's Word at the Bible school.

9. How has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the "Mother Church" in Zion, USA helped your own ministry? Please give a brief explanation.

It gives a sense of credibility among many of the groups and so opens doors for the gospel to be heralded within these unreached groups which remain closed to many "outsiders".

10. How has this historical link posed a problem when working among the amaZioni?

Some of the groups do not know the historical link so it is sometimes seen as a tool to manipulate doors to open. Several people say Zion is a biblical word and the therefore the first and only Biblical church (Hebrews12). Its origin is thus from Scripture.

11. other comments that may be helpful for this research topic. The answer was no.

#### 4.4.2 Zwetitsha ZEBS

1. Name of school according to your records / definition: Zwetitsha
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town): King Williams Town
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Xhosa
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Rural and urban mix.
5. What year did it begin? 2007
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? About 90 percent
7. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.  
Yes Mr B has had great influence upon his church leadership so much so that the church structure has changed to a more biblically based one. Church programs and the general running of the church has improved greatly. Sadly due to the preaching of the Truth many have left but others have joined.
8. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.

Yes Mr B has grown tremendously spiritually. He has so matured that he is now helping teach some of the Bible classes and he has a godly and flawless character.

He is also a very trusted treasurer. His children are also obeying him more and are more of a pleasure and his wife has matured too.

9. How has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the “Mother Church” in Zion, USA helped your own ministry? Please give a brief explanation. As per above

10. How has this historical link posed a problem when working among the amaZioni? As per above

#### 4.4.3 Queenstown ZEBS

1. Name of school according to your records / definition : Queenstown
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town): Queenstown
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Xhosa
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? mixed
5. What year did it begin? 2008
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches?

About 90 percent

7. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.

Yes Mr U. He has come to Christ and fearlessly proclaims the gospel within his church. Change is slow but sure and the appropriate place of God's Word is given – first place within the church service. The gospel message also appears to be a central element in the preaching.

8. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.

Yes Mrs E. she is a passionate evangelist who at risk of losing her life continues to persistently shine the light in dark places both locally and many kilometres away from home. Sometimes she does not know where she will sleep. PREACHING ON STREET CORNERS AND IN TOWN IS NOT UNKNOWN TO HER. She greatly loves Christ and desires that others too know her Lord.

9. How has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the “Mother Church” in Zion, USA helped your own ministry? Please give a brief explanation. As above
10. How has this historical link posed a problem when working among the amaZioni? As above

#### 4.4.4 Peddie ZEBS

1. Name of school according to your records / definition : Peddie
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town) : Peddie

3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Xhosa
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? rural
5. What year did it begin? 2011
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? About 90 percent
7. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.

Yes Mr P - a preaching of the Truth is now central and there is a plea for others to place their faith in Christ for salvation.

8. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.

Yes, Mr M has grown greatly in knowledge and passion for God, and there is a maturity which has come with studying God's Word.

9. How has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the "Mother Church" in Zion, USA helped your own ministry? Please give a brief explanation.

As above

10. How has this historical link posed a problem when working among the amaZioni? As above

#### 4.4.5 Port Alfred ZEBS

1. Name of school according to your records / definition : Port Alfred
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town) : Port Alfred
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Xhosa
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? mixed
5. What year did it begin? 2010
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? About 80 percent
7. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.

Yes, Mr P has taken huge strides away from traditional practices which grieve the Spirit such as ceremony and tradition. This has resulted in a change of the name of the church, but the growth of the leader is apparent and his love for Christ appears to be evident.

8. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.

Yes, Mr M has grown greatly in his character – there is humility, hard work and a joy in the Lord despite many hardships which he and his family face for following Christ.

9. How has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the “Mother Church” in Zion, USA helped your own ministry? Please give a brief explanation. As above

10. How has this historical link posed a problem when working among the amaZioni? As above

#### **4.5. Missionary 5**

This missionary joined the Mission in March 1986 as the first missionary sent out from the Christian Catholic Church of Zion. Previous missionaries had been sent out through Grace Missionary Church. He lives in Randfontein, Gauteng Province but teaches in different provinces, holding schools in the Free State and North West Provinces as well as Gauteng Province. The questionnaire was submitted on 16 September 2012. The Schools were started at different times and the percentages of Zionists as well and the languages used by those who attend these schools vary as can be seen by Table 5.

PLACE	LANGUAGE	TYPE	BEGAN	% ZIONIST
Virginia, (Free State)	Xhosa, Sotho	Rural	2006	100
Mohlakeng, Randfontein	Different	Urban	2005	75
Dube, Soweto	Different	Urban	2003	85

Rustenburg, North West Prov	Xhosa, Tswana	Urban	2007	90
Katlehong, Johannesburg	Xhosa	Urban	2010	90

Table 5

Date of submission of questionnaire: 16 September 2012

Date (Year) of joining ZEMA: March 1986 – 26 years

Unequivocally this is a true statement, Bruce Britten is the perfect example of the power of the historical connection.

Yes, there is still a great desire for Bible training among the amaZioni. In just this past year, I have received two requests for us to send missionaries where we now have none – the North West Province; and the country of Lesotho. ZEMA is unique 1) we have a historical connection with the history of the Zion movement; and 2) we work within the Zion movement, attempting to renew the movement from within rather than a strategy of extraction which is centred on removing people from the movement.

Yes, ZEMA missionaries have seen a tremendous amount of fruit over the past 20+ years. I have personally seen transformed lives, churches and even whole denominations through the simple 'method' of Bible teaching, teaching positive truth. One example is our Zion Evangelical Bible School which has grown from 2 in 1995 to 60 as of September 2012.

#### 4.5.1. Virginia ZEBS

1. Name of school according to your records / definition: Virginia ZEBS
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town): Meloding, Virginia, Free State
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? The majority of the students were Xhosas working in local mines with the rest being Sotho.
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Rural (mining community)
5. What year did it begin? 2006
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? 100%

7. Church change: Pastor A “I used to have pity on my congregation because [before ZEBS] I didn’t know what to teach them.” When asked what his congregation thought of his attending ZEBS he said, “Before we didn’t know the way but now we see that you found the right way.”
8. Personal change: Pastor B “When we grew up we were taught keep the rules, go to church, you’ll go to heaven. Now we know that it is only through faith in Jesus Christ alone that we are saved.”
9. The initial contact came when we were recommended by one of our ZEFA members to one of the pastors in Virginia who then contacted us in Gauteng. ZEFA is, by definition, the medium that connects local amaZioni churches to the ‘founding’ church in the USA.
10. The only negative that we have come across is a general one, when the amaZioni churches realize the American connection \$\$\$ sometimes comes into things
11. None

#### 4.5.2 Randfontein ZEBS

1. Name of school according to your records / definition: Randfontein ZEBS
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town): Mohlakeng, Randfontein, Johannesburg, Gauteng
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Mixture of many cultures – i.e. Zulu, Sotho, Tswana
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Urban
5. What year did it begin? 2005
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? 75%
7. Church change: Pastor C was giving a testimony during the annual graduation service. The speaker at graduation was talking about rightly handling the word of truth and shared about an independent African church in Kenya called the Zacchaeus Church who had tree climbing as part of their weekly services. When Pastor shared, he said “before ZEBS I was that man, we were that church.”
8. Personal change: Pastor D After two years in ZEBS, pastor raised his hand during class and said, “I just want to tell everyone that I have turned away from belief in the ancestors and have given my life to Jesus Christ only.”

About a month later, he was so excited about his new relationship with Jesus that he asked me to pray for him as he was going to call all of his extended family together so he could share with them about Jesus and why they should turn away from the ancestors.

9. The local Zion Bishop who helped us start this school was an old friend from our years in KZN. He had moved to Gauteng about the same time we did. He had originally come to us due to the historical connection.
10. The only negative that we have come across is a general one, when the amaZioni churches realize the American connection \$\$\$ sometimes comes into things
11. None

#### 4.5.3 Dube ZEBS

1. Name of school according to your records / definition: Dube ZEBS
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town): Dube, Soweto, Johannesburg, Gauteng
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Mixed African cultures
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Urban
5. What year did it begin? 2003
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? 85% (if you include Mahon churches which have the historical connection to Zion)
7. Church change: The quality of leadership has deepened in the Mahon Churches due to many of its leadership attending the ZEBS ... Mr. E, chairman of the board, highest position in the Mahon denomination graduated from ZEBS; Mr. F, took over local Zion church as pastor after graduating; several pastor's wives were able to get Bible education (their husbands had gone to full-time Bible colleges) making them better helpmeets, workers in their local churches, and one helped her pastor husband to plant a new church.
8. Personal change: Mrs. G, coming from a Zion home where her husband would burn her Bible each time he found it, found the strength to carry-on in her marriage and to start a children's ministry in her neighbourhood.

9. A Mahon church in Soweto offered it's building as a venue if ZEMA would start a school there.
10. The only negative that we have come across is a general one, when the amaZioni churches realize the American connection \$\$\$ sometimes comes into things
11. None

#### 4.5.4 Rustenburg ZEBS

1. Name of school according to your records / definition: Rustenburg ZEBS
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town): Rustenburg, North West Province
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Mostly Xhosas working in the mines with some Tswana
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Urban
5. What year did it begin? 2007
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? 90%
7. Church change: Several of the graduates of this school are part of a denomination that is training the third generation of pastors. This denomination has radically changed from one end of the continuum to the other. Their head Bishop H, a graduate of the first ZEBS, recently said to us, "Keep teaching the truth. The Bible has transformed our church. I now require all of my pastors to attend ZEBS before they can be leaders."
8. Personal change: After graduation one year, the students stopped by our house and cleaned us out of our stock of Bibles as they wanted to get Bibles into all of their congregation's homes.
9. A Gauteng ZEFA member, part of a denomination that sought us out 20+ years ago solely based on the history, had some church members move to Rustenburg who wanted teaching.
10. The only negative that we have come across is a general one, when the amaZioni churches realize the American connection \$\$\$ sometimes comes into things
11. None

#### 4.5.5 Katlehong ZEBS

1. Name of school according to your records / definition: Katlehong ZEBS
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town): Katlehong, Johannesburg, Gauteng
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Mixture ... Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Urban
5. What year did it begin? 2010
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? 90%
7. Church change: Bishop I, a bishop of a large denomination spread throughout Gauteng, KZN, and Swaziland, is very faithful and enthusiastic. He has expressed how much he didn't know about the Bible but now he is learning. He is recruiting for new students all the time.
8. Personal change: One student had a diabetic crisis and afterwards told us that they were depending on Jesus for healing, calling on the teachers for prayer, instead of 'traditional' methods.
9. Several new Zion groups have visited this ZEBS due to their curiosity regarding the 'white Zionists.'
10. The only negative that we have come across is a general one, when the amaZioni churches realize the American connection \$\$\$ sometimes comes into things
11. None

#### 4.6 **Missionary 6**

This missionary joined ZEMA in 2004 after serving as the Pastor of a Baptist Church in Pietermaritzburg for a number of years. He continues to live in Pietermaritzburg, the capital of Kwa-Zulu Natal Province and teaches in three different venues. His questionnaire was submitted on 10 January 2013. The Schools were started at different times and the percentages of Zionists as well and the languages used by those who attend these schools can be seen in Table 6.

PLACE	LANGUAGE	TYPE	BEGAN	% ZIONIST
Pietermaritzburg	Zulu	Urban	2005	90
Copesville	Zulu	Urban	2011	90
Hammarsdale	Zulu	Urban	2012	90

Table 6

4.6.1 three ZEBS in Midlands, KwaZulu Natal

1. Name of school according to your records / definition: Pietermaritzburg; Hammarsdale; Copesville
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town): KwaZulu Natal
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Zulu
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Urban
5. What year did it begin?
  - Pietermaritzburg 2005
  - Hammarsdale - 2011
  - Copesville - 2012
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? 90%
7. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.
 

The respondent refers to an event that occurs “in one Zion church (where) the pastor would call the students forward on Sunday morning service and ask them to share what they were taught at ZEBS on Saturday.”
8. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.
 

This missionary quotes a student named Dudu who states that “I was always a cheeky person and rude to others in my family, church and community.

Since attending this Bible School the Word of God has convicted me and Jesus has given me a humble spirit”

9. How has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the “Mother Church” in Zion, USA helped your own ministry? Please give a brief explanation.

The response to this question was that “the history of Zion and the ministry of ZEMA has helped me to establish a solid foundation in each Zionist Church I have visited.” He continues to explain that “this is their roots.”

10. How has this historical link posed a problem when working among the amaZioni?

He notes that “without exception, every Zionist church were (sic) happy to embrace this connection with John Alexander Dowie and the Zion Church in the U.S.A.”

#### **4.7 Missionary 7**

This missionary joined ZEMA in 2009 as a seconded missionary from TEAM (The Evangelical Alliance Mission). He lives in Manzini, Swaziland and teaches at fourteen different venues. The Bible School ministry in Swaziland are called Zion Bible College (ZBC). The teachers are divided into two teams and share the responsibility for teaching at all the schools in turn. His questionnaire was submitted on 10 January 2013. The Schools were started at different times and the language that is used at all the schools is siSwati, the national language of Swaziland.

1. Name of school according to your records / definition : Zion Bible College
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town) : various places in central and southern Swaziland.
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? siSwati
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Some are urban and others are rural
5. What year did it begin? The first school began in 2005 and more were added over the past 7 years.
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? About ninety percent

7. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.

One amaZioni pastor, who is a graduate of Zion Bible College of Swaziland, has used his Bible education to make numerous changes in his church, despite some opposition. Pastor Dlamini and his wife (also a ZBC graduate) have made deliberate decisions to change the way their church worships. The church happens to be a *headquarters* church for their denomination. This means theirs is the main church of a group of branch churches. As a result of Pastor Dlamini's training at ZBC, theirs is the only church in their headquarters that preaches the Word of God. Theirs is the only church with a Sunday School. And theirs is the only church with a gospel-oriented youth program.

Pastor Dlamini meets with the youth on Sunday afternoon, following a three to four-hour church service. The youth decided they wanted to study the Bible during these times. So, Pastor Dlamini began a Sunday afternoon Bible study with the youth. It became so popular that the rest of the church also wanted to attend. So, the study was moved to Sunday morning, before the service, so that everyone could attend.

The church wanted even more Bible teaching, so they began night services every Wednesday and Friday night. Other amaZioni churches have services during the week, but they are more designed for singing and fellowship. These services are for the purpose of learning God's Word.

The Dlamini's are also reaching out to the people in their community. Mrs. Dlamini is a caregiver for people who are HIV-positive. She visits them in their homes and does all she can to help them. She also encourages them to come to church with her. Pastor Dlamini formed a group of three young men to do evangelistic work in the community. They identify all the homesteads where they know the families are not believers and do not attend church. Then they go to see those families and ask if they can come and have a service at their home on a given Monday night. In Swaziland it is a high honour to have a Christian service at your home, so they almost always say, "yes." The next Monday evening, the men arrive at the homestead. They lead the singing of songs, then each one preaches a salvation message from God's Word. After the preaching is finished, they give an invitation for the family members to trust Jesus Christ for salvation. Then they take time to collect

an offering. They explain this is also a form of worship. All the preachers give to the offering, along with the family members. Then they turn the offering over to the family. This godly couple is having a tremendous impact in their community.

In the midst of this, the pastors and leaders of the other churches in their headquarters express their opposition whenever they have a joint service. They have been publicly admonished for not doing things the “old way.” They have been told they must stop Sunday School and youth work. They must follow the traditions. But because of their training at ZBC, they know that they are doing God’s will and they are committed to continuing no matter what.

8. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.

Before the start of one of our ZBC classes, we had time for the students to stand and tell how studying God’s Word had changed them. One older pastor stood and said, “I wish I could have attended Zion Bible College when I was younger. I would have gotten married the right way. I have three wives because that is the traditional way of marriage. I got up in front of my church and apologized to them for teaching them what was not true. Now I know the truth and I am teaching it to my church.”

At the end of one of our ZBC classes, an older pastor raised his hand and said, “Where do you come from?” What he meant by this was made clear as he continued. “Where have you been? What has taken you so long to come here to teach us? We needed to learn this a long time ago.”

We were teaching about God’s forgiveness through Jesus Christ. The lesson spoke of Christ’s final sacrifice for sin—Christ died once for all! We discussed the truth that when a person trusts Jesus alone for forgiveness of sins, *all* his sins are forgiven— all past sins, all present sins, all future sins. As a result, we do not fear death if we trust Christ. After class, a pastor was so grateful for this lesson. The common belief in the amaZioni church is you must confess your sins every day so you can go to heaven. If you die before you confess your sins when you pray at night, you will not go to heaven. He never knew he could be forgiven of all sin for all time. He could not wait to tell his church this good news!

This missionary did not supply answers to questions 9, 10 and 11 due to time constraints.

#### **4.8 Missionary 8**

This missionary joined ZEMA in 2010 and is presently residing in King Williams Town where he is on probation and undergoing training and language study under the supervision of a senior missionary. The language and culture of this area is Xhosa and as a new missionary he shares about his experiences as he works with a more experienced colleague.

Date (Year) of joining ZEMA:2008

Date of Completion of Questionnaire: 4/5/2012

1. Name of school according to your records / definition : Zion Evangelical Bible School
2. Region where school is situated (Province and Town) : Eastern Cape, King William's Town area
3. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? Xhosa
4. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? Urban
5. What year did it begin? 2004
6. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? About ninety percent
7. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.

The first year the school began, Mr. Tobani began attending. He graduated in 2008. According to him, the historical connection to mother church in Zion is positive. "It came in a humble way", he said referring to when Luan Goosen began ministering in this region. Referring to the amaZioni, he said, "They are willing to accept this teaching and to change their lives knowing that this message comes from Zion in America. He believes this is the case for most of them who hear it. He said that the historical connection is very important because the amaZioni want to remain amaZioni. He said that most do not want to join another church denomination. "We still want to be Zionists", he said. He also added, "It is important to know our history because mainline churches often

criticize us because we don't know our background. People criticize us for being uneducated." Referring to the arrival of the ZEMA's ministry to the King William's Town area in 2003, he said, "It brought a lot of changes to our churches. People are no longer criticizing us as Zionists. They are recognizing us as educated leaders of the amaZioni."

8. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.

9. How has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the "Mother Church" in Zion, USA helped your own ministry? Please give a brief explanation.

"I am amazed at the opportunity it gives us to really speak with the Zion leaders. It is a critical factor to reaching the amaZioni and winning them to the original Zion message, God's offer of eternal life through faith in Christ as presented in the Bible."

10. How has this historical link posed a problem when working among the amaZioni?

I am not aware of any problems that have arisen due to the historical link. As long as we remain humble and true to God's Word as representatives of Zion, I believe its effects will only be positive.

11. other comments that may be helpful for this research topic

Thank you for your enthusiasm and interest in this topic. I also have a passion for it. I think this will be a helpful tool when convincing new missionaries of the importance of the link with the church in Zion, Illinois, USA.

#### **4.9 Missionary 9**

This missionary has been a member of the ZEMA Field Council as a co-opted member since 1997 and is a missionary with The Evangelical Alliance (TEAM) a mission that has a secondment agreement with ZEMA. He is a lecturer at the Union Bible Institute, Sweetwaters, outside Pietermaritzburg and is involved in the ZEBS at Pietermaritzburg. There is another ZEMA missionary (Missionary 6) responsible for this school which began in 2005 . The school is in an urban setting and the language is isiZulu. About 90% of the students who attend are amaZioni. This

missionary did not respond specifically to any of the questions but shared his opinion regarding the ministry of ZEMA. Missionary 9 states that “one of my frustrations is that I don’t know the students personally. I don’t even know their names. This is a problem I think we need to address. More follow-up with small groups of alumni would be great.” This missionary states that the teachers of ZEBS “use the Zion logo on our shirts, zipper cases, satchels, brochures, etc, so I’m sure that helps.”

## **5. Written testimony concerning Bishop Titos Ndlovu <sup>9</sup>**

In Mozambique, Zion churches were introduced during the colonial period by the Mozambican miners returning from South African and Rhodesian mines. However, as Cruz e Silva (2001) argues, its proliferation became significant especially since the decade of 1980s, with economical liberalization policies, and after the end of the civil war in 1992. In fact, with the weakening of the socialist policies, it developed a more opened political space and the weakened State started to entrust more responsibility to the civil society as NGOs, churches, and associations.

What follows is a testimony concerning Bishop Titos Ndlovu of the IZAMO church in Mozambique written by Zacarias M. Muiambo who serves as the interpreter for ZEMA ministries in Mozambique and is one of the leaders of IZAMO under Bishop Ndlovu.

Muiambo states that the Portuguese colonialists brought with them ideas about God, especially from the perspective of the Roman Catholic Church. However Roman Catholicism was confused with the Portuguese settlers and therefore it was difficult for the local people to understand the difference. In 1932 the American Board Mission arrived in the land of Musapa and many people joined the new church and followed their teachings.

It was customary to travel to South Africa for labor as it was the only method available for people to find employment. While in South Africa the migrant labourers from Mozambique came into contact with the Gospel message and many were converted. Among these were Paulo Moyana, Noah Sitole and Amon Chikoti. They then brought the Gospel message back to the Musapa district on their return. The name of this new church was the Christian Catholic in Zion Church. However,

---

<sup>9</sup> The researcher has made essential spelling and basic grammar corrections

Muiambo notes that it was difficult for the local people to pronounce the full name properly and so the local people called it the “Zion Church”.

Titos Quicice Ndlovu was born in 1929 in the Musapa area in the Machaze district of Mozambique. During those years it was difficult to attend school as only those who allied themselves with the Portuguese received an education for their children. Ndlovu was related to the evangelist Noah Sitole. He was converted as a boy in 1936 and attended church with his cousins. Being uneducated Ndlovu could not read or write but was educated by his uncle.

In 1946 Ndlovu went to Johannesburg and first worked for Iscor (a steel company). In 1953 he married Luiza Muhlanga. Sadly their first two children died. As the result of a spiritual experience when God spoke to him through a dream Titos received the gift of healing and started praying for the sick people.

In 1956 he was elected pastor of the church at Tukutuko, the area where he lived. He studied the Scriptures and only allowed that which was according to the Word of God to be done in the church. In 1972 the church committee chose him to serve as president for social affairs.

As usual there were people in the church who did not like to hear the truth and they therefore caused confusion in the church where Ndlovu preached and taught. This also occurred at the compound church at Iscor in South Africa. In the compounds employers respected the Christians for they were moral and more educated. They were allocated their own dormitory where they would hold church services. However the opposition to the biblical teachings of Ndlovu was because he would not allow the Believers to follow their ancestral traditions.

The people with whom he quarrelled in the Johannesburg compound were his fellow-countrymen from the Musapa area. Even at the end of their contracts they did not leave the problems in South Africa when they returned home. He was even poisoned at one time but the Lord cured him of his sickness. This situation was told to Bishop Paul Moyana and he encouraged Ndlovu by telling him that even the owner of this ministry (Jesus Christ) suffered the consequences of opposition. His unsaved relatives also opposed his ministry as he would not join them when they consulted a witch doctor regarding family problems. They reported him to their

local chief Tukutuko but he supported the work and ministry of Titos Ndlovu because his own wives attended Titos's church.

Unrest began in 1969 between the Frelimo Party who was fighting against the Portuguese government and the Renamo forces that were allied to the Communist countries. In Rhodesia the ZAPU party was also struggling for the independence of Zimbabwe. Zambia and Malawi had recently gained their independence. The Portuguese government decided that the churches that did not belong to the state were the ones to blame for the revolutionary riots. The Portuguese Investigation Police force (PIDE) was sent to Manica and Sofala Districts to investigate the Zion churches because its origins and existence were unknown and therefore the leaders considered suspect.

Meanwhile, the Zionist church had grown and had splintered into many denominations. Those who were converted in the Zion churches in South Africa, Rhodesia, Malawi and Zambia did not want to join Paul Moyana who had started the work in the Manica and Sofala Districts. They planted new churches and named them something else but however all these names carried the word "Zion" on them. There were the Zion City Church, the Jerusalem Zion Church, the Zion Thandaza Phuzo Church (the Zion church which is allowed to drink alcoholic beers), the Zion Apostolic Church of South Africa, and many others.

When the government asked about the origin of the Zion Church many different answers were given by those who were converted outside of Mozambique. Only Paul Moyana's church was able to explain that this church came from South Africa through the ministry of Daniel Bryant on behalf of John Alexander Dowie, the founder of the church of Zion in Chicago, United States of America in 1896. Then Moyana was given the title of archbishop of the Zion Church by the Portuguese government and was seen to the representative of all the amaZioni churches. Their name was changed into Portuguese "Igreja Zion Apostolo em Mozambique" IZAMO (the Apostolic Church of Zion in Mozambique) and Moyana was considered to be the founder of this church by the Portuguese government.

After some time Titos Ndlovu wrote a letter to the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, Illinois, USA to ask for help. He was looking for someone who would bring the teachings from the mother church as the Zionist church in Mozambique had moved

away from its biblical foundations and followed traditional African beliefs. This included the teachings of “false prophets”, individuals who professed to have power through the spirits of the ancestors and who took money in exchange for their messages and prayers for healing. They resorted to using traditional medicine in the church services and encouraged the people to consult witch doctors. The local people also became drunk through the drinking of different brews which was associated with the various traditional African ceremonies. Polygamy was also tolerated among the amaZioni. Power was attributed to the robes that were worn by the amaZioni and they were encouraged to wear ropes and bead arm bands to give them powers.

As a result of this letter the Christian Catholic Church in Zion contacted the Mahon Mission and Edgar Mahon began travelling into Mozambique to teach these Zionist church leaders. Later Lyle Mahon travelled into Mozambique and more recently Richard Akers has been active in this ministry.<sup>10</sup>

This account written reveals the historical connection that exists between the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, Illinois USA and the Zionist churches of southern Africa. This is an important aspect of ZEMA’s ministry and has given ZEMA missionaries the opportunity to minister among the amaZioni without being regarded as coming from the outside.

## **6. Conclusion**

This chapter has focused on the completion of questionnaires by ZEMA missionaries. The following chapter will focus on a critical evaluation of the work of ZEMA missionaries among the amaZioni in different parts of South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique using the results of the questionnaires and interviews in order to investigate the effectiveness of ZEMA’s ministry in using the historical link that ZEMA missionaries enjoy with the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, the ‘founding church of Zionism’.

It has encouraged the researcher to receive these questionnaires and to read that there is value for the missionaries to use the historical link that they enjoy with the Christian Catholic Church of Zion in Illinois as a method of being accepted by the amaZioni churches and leaders.

---

<sup>10</sup> Refer to his answers to the questionnaire in 4.3

# **CHAPTER 6 : The Analysis of the Questionnaire**

## **1. Introduction**

This chapter is a critical evaluation of the results of the questionnaire that was sent to the ZEMA missionaries as recorded in chapter 4. The purpose of this evaluation is to investigate the teaching ministry of ZEMA missionaries among the amaZioni in different parts of South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique according to the empirical data that was collected and recorded in chapter 4.

In this chapter the researcher will analyse the data received from the respondents who are actively involved in ZEMA's ministry among the amaZioni of southern Africa. It will therefore be necessary to review the methods that the early missionaries used in their ministries among the amaZioni in order to understand the current method that is being used today. Following this, the researcher will examine the background to the current method of ministry and then will examine the actual ministry of current missionaries itself

The questionnaire will be analysed by considering the four questions that were asked of the respondents after summarising the first six introductory questions.

Finally a conclusion will be reached which will summarize the findings and present an opinion regarding the results of the questionnaires and informal interviews with some of the respondents and other individuals who are connected with ZEMA.

## **2. Methodology**

The empirical data that was collected and reported in chapter 4 will be analysed and interpreted which will enable the researcher to comment on the statements that were made by the various students and by the ZEMA missionaries and possible reasons for them. It will also evaluate through these responses the effectiveness of the method of using the historical link with Zion as a tool to gain access and acceptance among the amaZioni.

Although it will be difficult to form a definitive or conclusive hypothesis, it is anticipated that the research will show that the teaching ministry of ZEMA missionaries has made some impact upon the students and according to the testimonies of various students, their churches and their personal lives have undergone changes.

“One of the major issues in qualitative research is the extent to which data should be analysed.” (Grey 2004:319) Authors differ regarding whether the data should be merely presented (Strauss and Corbin), or considered as descriptive storytelling (Westcott) or be described in “as detached and objective a way as possible”, or if the data should be interpreted in order to build concepts and categories that can be fitted into a theoretical framework (Grey 2004:320). The weakness of the first three approaches, namely, merely presenting the data, telling a story or presenting objective descriptions, is that the readers will need to evaluate the data themselves without the help of another. Although the writing of history involves recording historical data, there needs to be an evaluation and analysis of the data that is gathered. The researcher will go beyond merely presenting the data but will seek to interpret, understand and explain the data so that insights can be gained concerning the amaZioni and ZEMA’s ministry among them.

According to Grey (2004:320) there are a number of approaches to analysing qualitative data. One of the common approaches to analysing qualitative data is through content analysis. This approach involves the making of inferences about data by systematically and objectively identifying characteristics within them.

Another approach is grounded theory which is more inductive. Grey refers to Strauss and Corbin who define grounded theory as “a theory that is discovered, developed and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon.” (Grey 2004: 329). It doesn’t begin with assumptions although the research begins with a defined purpose and with a realization that this purpose may need to be modified or even radically altered during the research process.

The researcher has chosen to use the first approach, although there is not much difference between the two approaches. The researcher acknowledges that the process will include both objective and subjective results. Therefore care will be taken to critically evaluate the responses so that any bias or distortion can be reduced as much as possible. In the analyses and interpretations, similarities and differences between responses will be identified according to the four questions that will be asked.

The conclusion of the evaluation of the questionnaires should reveal that ZEMA is strategically placed to reach the millions of amaZioni within southern Africa because of its unique historical link with the Zion church in the USA. This gives ZEMA missionaries an unusual acceptance by the amaZioni that is not found in other mission organizations and agencies.

### **3. Early Methods of Ministry**

Before analysing the data itself, it is necessary to establish the background so that the information can be better understood. In the early days of the mission the missionaries spent most of their time among local amaZioni with the intention of evangelising the lost and then establishing biblically based evangelical churches. These Zionist churches were then affiliated with the Mahon Mission or related to them directly through the founder, Edgar Mahon. The ministry of these early missionaries also involved assisting with the identification of church leaders and then training them, with the erection of church buildings, preaching and teaching in Zionist services and holding annual training meeting for church leaders which occurred at Ethembeni.<sup>11</sup>

The regular bi-monthly publication of the news from the missionaries was called “The Zulu and Basutoland Missionary”. It contained reports from the various missionaries. For example in the May-June 1969 edition Gerald and Elsie Lee report of the recently held Annual Workers Conference and on their ministry with the Correspondence Lessons as well with providing Sunday School lessons for the churches. In the same edition Lyle Mahon reported that they had held tent meeting in the African townships around Johannesburg.

In 1970 the name of the publication was changed to “The Mahon Mission Focus” but it continued to give reports on the various activities of the missionaries which included erecting church buildings, holding services in tents at places where there were no buildings.

### **4. Change in Method of Ministry**

Changes that occurred in the 1990’s brought about a new name, namely Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa (ZEMA) and a new method of ministry was also

---

<sup>11</sup> Refer to chapter 3 point 2.3

adopted.<sup>12</sup> A document entitled “*Zionist Church Ministries*” was written and printed in 1992 explaining how the Mission wanted to focus on other amaZioni and not only those who trace their history to Edgar Mahon (senior) and who became part of the Mahon Evangelical Church of Southern Africa in 1996. As the missionaries met with these various groups of amaZioni it became clear that the greatest need was for teaching the Bible.

It has already been stated that the amaZioni became syncretistic in their beliefs and therefore needed to be taught the truth. The reasons for this syncretism includes the neglect by the early missionaries to disciple the young believers. Another reason is that the amaZioni reacted against the colonial churches and did not want to be affiliated with them. ZEMA missionaries therefore use teaching the Bible as their basic methodology in order to bring the amaZioni that they relate to back to the teachings of the Bible.

The reasons for these changes in methodology has been explained by one of the missionaries, Rev Richard Akers who states that when he arrived in the Transkei in 1991 “not one of the approximately 200 amaZioni leaders met in the first year had any form of Bible training, and so the Zion Evangelical Bible School was established by ZEMA in 1995” (Akers R 1999:110). Akers then formulated the basic syllabus on which Zion Evangelical Bible School used in the following years up to the present moment. In the minutes of the January 1996 Mahon Mission Missionary Society it states that Richard Akers proposed the establishment of Zion Evangelical Bible Schools (ZEBS) which began in the Umtata region using the premises of the Umtata Baptist Church.

This need for quality pastoral and leadership training is also encouraged by Rev Vernon Light. He was principal of the Bible Institute of the Eastern Cape (Port Elizabeth) and taught a number of students from the Zionist churches. In his thesis he describes the evangelical church in Africa as “superficial in their Christian understanding and experience” (Light V 2009:12).<sup>13</sup> He includes the African Independent Churches and therefore the amaZioni in his description, although he does concede that some would disagree that they should be labelled as “evangelical”. He notes that “many evangelicals would dispute the claim that African

---

<sup>12</sup> These were discussed in chapter 3

<sup>13</sup> The Evangelical Church in Africa: Towards a Model for Christian Discipleship (2009)

Independent/Initiated Churches (AICs) are evangelical” (Light V 2009:18). He refers to Tshelane (2000:150) who holds that there is much legalism, keeping rules from the Old Testament, from the life of Christ, and from the African prophets and healers (Light V 2009:18). However, Light believes that behind the different degrees of syncretism in the AIC churches there appears to be a basic evangelical position. Light also refers to Balcomb (2001:7-8) who also believes that members of the African Independent Churches (AICs), especially the Zion Christian Church, as evangelical, and notes that they constitute large numbers in South Africa (Light V 2009:18). He acknowledges “the prevalence of syncretism” which he describes as “combining elements of Christianity with folk [traditional] beliefs and practices in such a way that the gospel loses its integrity and message” (Hiebert, Shaw and Tienou cited in Hesselgrave 2006:71). He states that “African Christians generally cling, at least inwardly or subconsciously, to their traditional beliefs” also referring to Daneel (cited in Baur 1998:498)<sup>14</sup> who concludes ‘that many independent churches are moving from the periphery to the heart of Christianity’ (Light V 2009:18).

Light concludes that “there can surely be no doubt that the most urgent need in Africa is the discipleship of all Evangelical Church members to maturity, a ministry long overdue” (Light V 2009:18). This researcher agrees with Light and believes that these observations are one of the reasons for establishing ZEBS in various places across southern Africa to teach the leaders of the amaZioni churches.

This change in ministry is further described In the Purpose Statement of the Mahon Mission drawn up in 1991, the document states that the mission’s purpose is

to work within existing Zionist church structures in evangelism, discipleship, Bible teaching and leadership training to develop biblical, reproducing, Zionist individuals and churches; and to promote fellowship among them.

The missionaries agreed that their methodology of ministry would also include visiting Zionist churches whenever and wherever they were invited, preaching the message of the gospel. The missionaries also considered the use of literature in their ministry through the selling and distribution of Bibles in the particular language of the amaZioni of their region and other relevant Christian writings.

---

<sup>14</sup> Baur, J 1998 (revised edition), *2000 years of Christianity in Africa*. Kenya: Paulines Publications.

One of these writings was the publication written by the Christian Catholic Church in Zion entitled “This We Believe”. This book explains and elaborates the basic beliefs of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion and was used to teach new members about the church. In order to make this booklet available to the amaZioni of southern Africa it was translated into the major languages spoken and read in southern Africa, namely, isiZulu, isiXhosa, siSotho for South Africa and Chichewa for Malawi also Shona, Shangaan and Portuguese for Mozambique. This book was taught to the church leaders and a certificate was presented at the conclusion of the course. The teachings from this book served as a useful introduction for establishing Bible Schools (ZEBS).

In 1996 Lyle Mahon referred to these this book and to the new changes in the method that the missionaries were going to use. He states that

A basic teaching guide called “This We Believe” has been extensively used in an attempt to get back to the original teaching of Zion. In 1996 a more intensive Bible study method was introduced, namely the Zion Evangelical Bible School.<sup>15</sup>

The aforementioned Purpose Statement document further elaborated on the methodology by explaining that the missionaries work through the umbrella organization of Zion Churches called “The Christian Catholic Church in Zion of Africa” which is linked to the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, Illinois, USA. This method of ministering to the amaZioni continues today although the organization was renamed “Zion Evangelical Fellowship of Africa”<sup>16</sup>

## **5. Zion Evangelical Bible Schools**

The main method of ministry used by ZEMA missionaries among the amaZioni is through Bible Schools known as “ZEBS” (Zion Evangelical Bible Schools). In Swaziland these schools are referred to as Zion Bible College because there is another distinct church organization in Swaziland known as the Conference of Churches that constitutes the “evangelical churches” of Swaziland in contrast to the League of Churches that constitutes the Zionist Churches. Therefore to avoid confusion the word ‘evangelical’ has been omitted in Swaziland.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Paper presented to the Annual Conference of the CCC October 1996 by Rev L B Mahon as part of the Centenary Celebrations

<sup>16</sup> Refer to chapter 3 section 7

<sup>17</sup> Refer to Donaldson’s report in chapter 4.7

This ministry of teaching is supplemented by visiting churches of students and of other amaZioni who invite the missionaries to preach the Bible, to promote the Bible schools and to share about ZEMA's ministry among the amaZioni. Missionaries also attend funerals, weddings and other special events. However, the questions in the questionnaire were specifically focused on the ministry of the Bible Schools (ZEBS).

ZEMA missionaries use these Bible Schools to teach a basic syllabus which provides elementary knowledge of the Bible, Christian theology and church related teachings. These schools are not meant to be academic in nature and therefore are not registered as a "further education training" (FET) centre. One of the reasons why the missionaries do not require any academic qualifications is that a number of amaZioni leaders are illiterate or have little formal education, especially in the rural areas and among the elderly leaders. The purpose of ZEBS is to use these classroom environments to discuss issues specifically relating to the issues that the amaZioni are struggling with in their churches and communities and to train the church leaders to be more biblical in their ministry.<sup>18</sup>

The lessons that are taught cover the following subjects:

1. Basic introduction and overview of the different books of the Old and New Testament;
2. The minister (pastor) as well as other church leaders
3. Church administration and Church activities, such as worship, Lord's Supper, baptism, etc.
4. Comparative religions
5. Basic systematic theology covering the elementary Christian doctrines, including the doctrine of God, the Scriptures, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.
6. Bible characters
7. Preaching (Homiletics)
8. Hermeneutics
9. Christian maturity
10. Evangelism

---

<sup>18</sup> This is evident from the responses to the questions

11. Exegetical studies in I Timothy and Romans
12. Missions
13. Christian disciplines
14. Sunday School
15. HIV / Aids

The importance of teaching these subjects is verified by the comment of R Akers, one of the ZEMA missionaries who first began teaching these lessons. He states that "Today in southern Africa there is a broad spectrum (of beliefs) among the amaZioni. there are groups who have held fast to the pure gospel message as found in the Bible and taught in the *Leaves of Healing*, but there are many who could only be described as 'quasi-Christian', deeply syncretistic', 'Messianic (holding that their leader is a Messiah figure), or even 'demonic and occultic'" . (Akers R: 1999: 108)

The official website of ZEMA in the USA supports this view of the amaZioni when it states that

God has given ZEMA one of the great open doors in Christian Missions today: the Zionists of the African Independent Churches in Southern Africa. Membership in "Zion Churches" is thought to be as high as 15 million, divided up into more than 4000 Zion church denominations. These churches took the word "Zion" not from Israel, but from the town of Zion, Illinois, USA which sent literature and missionaries to South Africa at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, thus founding the Zionist movement. Unfortunately, most Zion churches have become syncretistic, combining what they know about Christianity with traditional African religious beliefs, to basically form a new religion. Today many amaZioni (the Zulu word for "Zionists") have a great desire to study and follow the Bible. Because ZEMA has a formal connection with the history of the Zion movement, ZEMA personnel are blessed with acceptance among the amaZioni. In light of the great desire of the amaZioni for Bible training, and the fact that many of the millions of Zionists are looking to ZEMA to provide that training, it is not an overstatement to say that if ZEMA had 20 new missionary couples arriving on the Field today, they would be needed in the work. (ZEMA.org accessed 14<sup>th</sup> June 2011)

These Bible Schools have proven to be an effective tool in meeting the needs of the amaZioni. The answers in the questionnaire will testify to the way in which this teaching model has assisted many ZEBS students and their churches in gaining more knowledge of the Bible and has changed their own spiritual lives.

## 6. Analysis of the Questionnaires

### 6.1. Preliminary Results

The data collected from the questionnaires was collated according to specific questions for comparison and comment. Table 1 is an analysis of the first questions according to the name and the location of the missionary, the culture that they minister within and whether it is rural or urban. The analysis also gives the year that the particular school began and the percentage of amaZioni within the school.

The researcher received nine responses from ZEMA missionaries who minister among different cultural groups of amaZioni across southern Africa. Two missionaries did not supply breakdowns of their schools and two responses were combined, therefore these three responses are not listed in Table 7.

NAME	PLACE	CULTURE	AREA	YEAR	% ZIONIST
Missionary 1	Sunbury	Zulu	Rural	1996	50
Missionary 2	Bala	Xhosa	Rural	2004	98
Missionary 2	Bizana	Xhosa	Urban	2005	80
Missionary 2	Lusindisweni	Xhosa	Rural	2006	80
Missionary 2	Sondela	Xhosa	Peri-urban	1995	85
Missionary 3	Maputo	Shangaan	Urban	2008	90
Missionary 3	Machaze	Shona	Rural	2008	80
Missionary 3	Casa Nova	Shona	Rural	2010	90
Missionary 3	Tete	Nyungwe	Urban	2008	90
Missionary 4	Mdanstane	Xhosa	Rural	2003	80
Missionary 4	Zwelitsha	Xhosa	Urban	2007	90

Missionary 4	Queenstown	Xhosa	Rural	2008	90
Missionary 4	Peddie	Xhosa	Rural	2011	90
Missionary 4	Port Alfred	Xhosa	Urban	2010	80
Missionary 5	Virginia	Xhosa Sotho	Rural	2006	100
Missionary 5	Mohlakeng	Mixed	Urban	2005	75
Missionary 5	Soweto	Mixed	Urban	2003	85
Missionary 5	Rustenburg	Xhosa Tswana	Urban	2007	90
Missionary 5	Katlehong	Xhosa	Urban	2010	90
Missionary 6	Pietermaritzburg	Zulu	Urban	2007	90

Table 7

Reports that were received described twenty different Bible Schools with the following general information resulting from the answers.

6.1.1. The average number of amaZioni attending is 85.4% which is evidence that the majority of students in the various Bible Schools are amaZioni.

6.1.2. The results show that fourteen out of the twenty schools are from the Xhosa culture and language. This could be because ZEBS began in the Transkei under the leadership of Richard Akers.

6.1.3. The results show that 9 of the schools are situated in rural areas and 10 are situated in urban areas (one of them peri-urban which is the School at Sondela about 10km outside the town of Mthatha). This data reveals that amaZioni are found in all areas and the missionaries are ministering among all amaZioni whether they are in the rural communities or in the built up urban areas.

6.1.4. ZEBS began in 1995 in the erstwhile Transkei (today part of the Eastern Cape). Adkins continues to teach at the School that was begun by Richard Akers in 1995.<sup>19</sup>

The above results should reveal that ZEMA's ministry is relatively widespread across southern Africa. However, there are areas where there are no missionaries which reinforce the great need for more missionaries to teach the amaZioni through establishing more ZEBS.

## **6.2. Answers to Specific Questions**

The figures given in the first six questions were collated and presented in graph form (see Table 1). The following four questions that were asked were dealt with in turn. Finally, an analysis was done of the four main questions as a conclusion was reached.

### **6.3. Question 1 “*have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School?*”**

The purpose of this question was to ascertain if the teaching ministry of the missionaries has had any noticeable effects on the lives of the amaZioni. This question focuses on the Zionist churches while the following question will focus on the individual students. Although it will be impossible to state categorically that the teaching of the Bible has caused these changes, the responses refer to testimonies by various students who believe that the teaching of the Bible has changed their own lives and the life of their churches. An analysis of the responses will indicate that the predominant answer to this question is that "the truth is taught "in the churches. This truth is the teaching of the Bible by ZEMA missionaries.

The following are comments from various students categorised according to the relevant missionary which supports this conclusion.

6.3.1. Missionary 3 reports that “the leaders ... have embraced the Gospel and the teaching of ZEBS and that the church has been changed completely as they simply implement what they hear at ZEBS.” He also describes the effects of teaching the Bible as “they have simply believed the truth and now started teaching the truth”.

---

<sup>19</sup> The Adkins family moved to Port Elizabeth in 2013

6.3.2. Missionary 5 confirms this when he refers to church leaders who testify of seeing and experiencing positive changes in their churches which according to the leaders are the result of being taught the truth from the Bible. One student reports that after completing the course (ZEBS) his congregation said, “Before we didn’t know the way but now we see that you found the right way.” The same result, personally experienced, of teaching the truth can be found in a student who was a leader of an independent African church based in Kenya, called the “Zacchaeus Church” who had tree climbing as part of their weekly services. This practice is no longer done as a result of learning about the Bible at the ZEBS classes. A Zionist bishop, who is a graduate of the first ZEBS encourages us to “keep teaching the truth (because) the Bible has transformed our church”. These testimonies reveal the importance of discovering the truth according to the Bible and in turn and teaching the truth to the Zionist churches.

6.3.3. Again we find the importance of being taught the truth from the response from Missionary 1 who states that “the students will share that at their churches (that) they now will share the truth with their churches and their church members will be surprised by the teaching of their leaders now”.

6.3.4. Missionary 2 refers to a number of replies from various students at the different venues that indicate the importance of being “taught the truth”. A student responded “we now teach the truth and not what the angels said”. This comment refers to a practice among the amaZioni where the leaders will turn rely upon other spirits (also called angels) in an attempt to find some teaching for their churches. Another student said “we now preach (the truth of the Bible) and people are growing”.

6.3.5. Missionary 4 substantiates this finding when he states that “several of the people (students) attending the classes share the gospel in their context at church where many of the leadership ... are still unsaved and practice ancestral worship.” Another student testifies that “the church structure has changed to a more biblically based one”. Another student “has come to Christ and fearlessly proclaims the gospel within his

church”. Goosen notes that “the gospel message also appears to be a central element in the preaching.” Another student is describes as one whose “preaching of the Truth is now central and there is a plea for others to place their faith in Christ for salvation.”

6.3.6. In conclusion, the comments and statements that emanate from the personal experiences of students show that the ministry of teaching the Bible to the amaZioni has, from the point of view of the students and the ZEMA missionaries changed the hearts of the students. This process of change which then changes the manner in which the students lead their churches takes many years as the course covers four years, although some students take longer to complete the course. The changes continue after the students graduate and implement the teachings they have received.

**6.4. Question 2 “have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School?”**

The purpose of this question is similar to the previous question which to ascertain if the teaching by the missionaries has had any noticeable effects on the lives of the amaZioni, but focuses on changes in the individual student’s life. This has been made evident both by the testimonies from various students and from comments made by the missionaries.

6.4.1. Missionary 3 refers to a student who has left her province in Mozambique to share the gospel in another province. He also reports about a student who “because of his increased knowledge of the Word (he) is able to play a greater role in the Church.” Other students have “accepted the Gospel and are determined to follow the Truth”. Another student has grown in “knowledge and understanding, (and has grown) in boldness and assertiveness. “

6.4.2. Missionary 4 refers to a student who “preaches on the train and is encouraging people to go study God’s Word at the Bible school” and another student who “is now helping teach some of the Bible classes and has a godly and flawless character”. Goosen also notes that this student is also a very trusted treasurer in his church. Another student is “a

passionate evangelist” while another student has “grown greatly in knowledge and passion for God, and there is a maturity which has come with studying God’s Word.” A student in the Port Alfred Class has “grown greatly in his character – there is humility, hard work and a joy in the Lord despite many hardships”.

6.4.3. Missionary 5 refers to a student who testifies “when we grew up we were taught keep the rules, go to church, and then you’ll go to heaven. Now we know that it is only through faith in Jesus Christ alone that we are saved.” Another student is described as having “turned away from belief in the ancestors and given (his) life to Jesus Christ only.” Another student found the strength to carry on in her marriage even though her husband would burn her Bible each time he found it. One student had a diabetic crisis and testified that he was depending on Jesus for healing, requesting the teachers to prayer, instead of resorting to ‘traditional’ methods.

6.4.4. Missionary 1 quotes a local Zionist Bishop who states that “we have brought them the truth and now they must bring the truth to Africa”

6.4.5. Missionary 2 reports on a student who according to his personal testimony has “stopped ancestor worship” and another student who shares that he no longer “uses drums to call the angel, but uses them as a musical instrument in worship”. Another student states that “we grow in the knowledge of Scripture”.

6.4.6. These comments and statements again reveal that the ministry of teaching the Bible to the amaZioni has in the minds of the missionaries changed the hearts of their students and their churches. By focusing on the power of the Word of God to change lives, the missionary discovers that it is the Spirit of God that does the work of changing lives and churches. “We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.” (I Corinthians 1:12-13 NIV). This is substantiated by the fact that after

completing the course, a number of graduates continue attending classes in order to continue studying the Bible.

**6.5. Question 3 “how has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the “Mother Church” in Zion, USA helped your own ministry?”**

The purpose of this question is to establish whether the use of the relationship that ZEMA enjoys with the Christian Catholic Church in Zion has proven to be effective and successful. All respondents comment that in their personal experiences among the amaZioni, this historical link has provided opportunities for ministry. A common statement is that this “opens doors”.

6.5.1. Both Missionary 1 and Missionary 2 respond by stating that it “opens doors”. Missionary 1 states that “I tell them that I am a white Zionist from overseas. This also opens a door to share with them what we believe and what we are doing with the Zionist churches”. Adkins states that “the link ... has got us to places because we can say we teach the truths of Zion”

6.5.2. Missionary 4 focuses on the aspect of credibility when he states that “it gives a sense of credibility among many of the groups and so opens doors for the gospel to be heralded”

6.5.3. Missionary 3 states that this historical link helps because “a number of Zion church leaders were looking for ‘their roots’”. He continues to explain “they now had the real link and once they heard of the history of Zion, they testified that their prayers were heard and they now opened their doors for full ministry from anyone sent by Zion.”

6.5.4. Missionary 8 is “amazed at the opportunity it gives us (as ZEMA missionaries) to really speak with the Zion leaders. It is a critical factor to reaching the amaZioni and winning them to the original Zion message, God’s offer of eternal life through faith in Christ as presented in the Bible.” As a relatively new missionary on the field he refers to the testimony of a Mr Tobani who states that knowing the historical connection to the mother church in Zion is a positive aspect of ZEMA’s ministry. He reports that the amaZioni “are willing to accept this teaching and to change their lives knowing that this message comes from Zion in

America.” Tobani adds that “it is important to know our history because mainline churches often criticize us because we don’t know our background.”

6.5.5. Missionary 5 notes that the initial contact for the school in Virginia came through a recommendation from “one of our ZEFA members to one of the pastors in Virginia who then contacted us in Gauteng. ZEFA is, by definition, the medium that connects local amaZioni churches to the ‘founding’ church in the USA.” He states that “the local Zion Bishop who helped us start the Mohlakeng, Randfontein ZEBS was an old friend from our years in KZN. He had moved to Gauteng about the same time we did. He had originally come to us due to the historical connection.” He also refers to a Gauteng ZEFA member, who is part of a denomination that sought us out more than 20 years ago solely based on the history, had some church members move to Rustenburg who wanted teaching. This missionary remarks that “several new Zion groups have visited the ZEBS at Katlehong due to their curiosity regarding the ‘white Zionists’.”

6.5.6. Missionary 3 states that “this answer is the same for all of the schools where we are involved: He explains how a number of Zion church leaders were looking for ‘their roots’ and around about 1980 the IZAMO denomination (Igreja Zione Apostolo em Mozambique) found an address in the United States of America and wrote asking for help.<sup>20</sup> They were told that there were workers in South Africa and so they redirected their search to South Africa. Part of the reason for this searching was that sometime in that period, the Government had called the churches to a meeting and one of the questions asked was ‘what is the history of your church?’ to which many amaZioni had no answer. It was around 1991 that the IZAMO church did in fact make contact with Edgar Mahon, but soon after making that contact found out that he no longer represented the Christian Catholic Church of Zion, and so while happy to receive his ministry, they continued looking for the ‘real people of Zion’. Soon after Edgars passing, these contacts were put in touch with Lyle Mahon who was able to visit the churches in Mozambique as a full representative of

---

<sup>20</sup> Refer to the written testimony of Bishop Ndlovu in chapter 4.5

the Christian Catholic Church of Zion and ‘the rest is history’. Once the Churches knew that they now had the real link and once they heard of the history of Zion, they testified that their prayers were heard and they now opened their doors for full ministry from anyone sent by Zion. Subsequent to that we have met with many other Zion denominations and while some are not happy with ‘white people in Zion’, the majority are very pleased to hear of the history of Zion and wanting to associate themselves with that history and teaching.”

6.5.7. In conclusion the comments from the respondents reveal the relationship that ZEMA enjoys with the Christian Catholic Church in Zion has provided many opportunities (open doors) for ministry among the amaZioni of southern Africa.

**6.6. Question 4 “how has the historical link posed a problem when working among the amaZioni”**

The purpose of this question is to establish whether the use of the relationship that ZEMA enjoys with the Christian Catholic Church in Zion has proven to be an obstacle or a hindrance among the amaZioni of southern Africa.

6.6.1. Missionary 5 makes the comment that “the only negative that we have come across is .... When the amaZioni churches realize the American connection \$\$\$ (i.e. dollar signs) sometimes comes into things”.

6.6.2. Missionary 2 refers to opposition that arises from “those who do not want this message but who prefer to remain within their traditional beliefs”. This statement reveals spiritual resistance to the truth.

6.6.3. Missionary 3 refers to an opinion held by some amaZioni in Mozambique who believe that Zionism is for the Africans only and that white people are outsiders. He also refers to the belief among some amaZioni that “true Zion’ does not have the teaching of Salvation in Jesus. This belief is corrected when the missionaries tell the history the Christian Catholic Church founded by John Alexander Dowie and of the subsequent visit by Daniel Bryant to South Africa.

6.6.4. Missionary 4 states that “some of the groups do not know the historical link so it is sometimes seen (by them) as a tool (of the white man) to

manipulate doors to open.” This statement is evidence of the ignorance concerning the true history of Zionism which reveals the importance of combining biblical teaching together with teaching about the history of the Zionist movement so that there is less misunderstanding and resistance to the missionaries and the message of salvation and truth in Jesus Christ that they bring.

6.6.5. These responses from ZEMA missionaries reveal that any problems that were referred to are mostly caused by lack of knowledge of the history of the amaZioni and due to personal resistance to the teaching of the truth found in God’s Word. This again reinforces the need for biblical teaching in the power of the Holy Spirit who alone can change the heart of church leaders and church members.

## **7. Conclusion**

It has been the intention of the researcher to show through the answers to the questionnaires that ZEMA missionaries use ZEBS as a basis for teaching the Bible to the church leaders among the amaZioni of southern Africa. According to the testimonies of various students and observations made by the missionaries, this teaching of the truth from the Bible has changed the lives of students and consequently changed the churches. This method of teaching the Bible in a systematic fashion in a scholastic environment can be justified by the comments made by Richard Akers who states that

for many decades ... the amaZioni have felt ‘second rate’. They were looked down upon by the mainstream Churches, and often their leaders were despised because they were ‘untrained’.... They felt they were outcasts and have become very insular, not easily accepting outside help. (Akers R: 1999: 110)

When ZEMA missionaries approach the amaZioni as representatives of their “mother church” and teach the history of Zionism they are given a unique opportunity to present the gospel message of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ and then are invited to teach the Bible because it is an effective method to disciple these churches and church leaders.

## CHAPTER 7 : Conclusion

### 1. Introduction

The Church and believers need to be aware of the “harvest field that is ripe” among the amaZioni of southern Africa. There needs to be a change in attitude towards this group of African Independent Churches. When relating to the amaZioni of southern Africa, Kritzinger encourages the church not merely to “write them off, ignore them or make them objects of ridicule”. He also warns that any investigation or studies of the independent churches (including the amaZioni) must not only superficially “expose weaknesses and faults in the established churches” nor should it only “glorify the independent churches as the only authentic expression of the Christian gospel” (Kritzinger 1980: 191). This has been the attitude of ZEMA missionaries over the years, including that of the researcher during the time that he has spent time among the amaZioni. ZEMA missionaries attempt to avoid a paternalistic attitude by spending time developing relationships of trust with church leaders and empowering those with teaching gifts by using them as ZEBS teachers. Some teachers are teaching at ZEBS classes that have been handed over to them by ZEMA missionaries and some have started their own schools.

Kritzinger ( 1980: 191) continues to explain the need for this attitude when he states that

the time is past when the established churches can afford to take up any of the following traditional attitudes towards the independent churches (including the amaZioni):

1. warning are issued against the “false” prophets, a hostile approach arising from feelings of fear and uncertainty;
2. they are regarded as “interesting rarities” and their peculiar characteristics become objects of mockery;
3. an attitude of complete indifference is the general attitude.

This statement should therefore challenge the church in southern Africa to examine its attitude towards those who are different from themselves. The evangelical church especially needs to realize the great potential that is among the amaZioni who are urgently needing to be taught the truth of God’s Word in a manner that is relevant and appropriate. The knowledge of ZEMA’s history gives churches an insight into how to effectively reach the amaZioni.

## **2. The Importance of Bible Teaching**

ZEMA missionaries follow the example of Jesus Christ. The New Testament reveals that Jesus is “pre-eminently the teacher”. He is given the titles “master” and “rabbi” which indicates that the most prominent function of Jesus’ active ministry was that of teaching. The Lord’s “principles and methods of teaching constitute the standard by which all true pedagogy is measured, and the ideal toward which all subsequent teachers have toiled with only partial success” (Dement 2004: np)

Unger (Unger 2004: np) describes the Great Commission of Jesus to his disciples as recorded in Matthew 28:18 – 20 as “the work of Christianity (is) presented in educational terms” . Jesus states in Matthew 28: 18 – 20, “then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." From these words of Jesus it can be stated that teaching is an important task that Christ gave to His apostles before His ascension.

The office of teacher is also related to the creation of a missionary atmosphere as indicated in Acts 13:1 which states that “in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers”. Teaching the truths of the Bible is necessary to the development of Christian character and the highest efficiency in service.

## **3. Recommendations**

ZEMA is a relatively young mission compared to other mission societies that were founded during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although it can trace its history back to Edgar Mahon (senior), its new structure and methodology of teaching can be traced back to 1996 when it became ZEMA. At that time there were only four missionary families, namely, Lyle and Sandy Mahon, Tim and Luann Kuehl, Richard and Geraldine Akers and Greg and Carlene Seghers. In 2013 there are eight families serving as fully supported ZEMA missionaries together with other categories of missionaries, including retired missionaries who assist ZEMA, short term-missionaries, associate missionaries and seconded missionaries. As a young mission ZEMA needs to continue the process of developing policies and practices as the ministry grows, changes and develops.

This research paper has shown that ZEMA is what could be termed “a specialist mission agency” because its focus is on a specific church group in a specific area, namely the amaZioni of southern Africa. The research has also given evidence that ZEMA missionaries are given “an unusual and unique” welcome by amaZioni church leaders which results in invitations to teach them the Bible. Therefore ZEMA needs to be made known among other mission agencies and organizations. It is worthwhile to note that SIM International and TEAM have already entered into secondment agreements with ZEMA.

The researcher has noted that Zionism originated out of the “desire for liberation from white domination, both ecclesiastically and politically”.<sup>21</sup> This has also been observed in the responses from some of the amaZioni who refer to negative reactions from their churches and church members because they do not want “white people in their churches” nor do they want to leave their African traditions and practices. ZEMA missionaries are resolving this potential problem by working together with the Zionist church leaders and by using local national Zionists not only as interpreters but also as teachers. Selected students who graduate from ZEBS are sent for further training to Bible Colleges across southern Africa to equip them for further ministry. It is the desire of ZEMA to have local national South Africans join ZEMA as missionaries, and the leadership is actively working at ways and means to achieve this.

#### **4. Concluding comments**

In conclusion this thesis has shown that ZEMA is strategically placed to reach the millions of Zionists within southern Africa because of its unique relationship with the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, which gives it an unusual acceptance by the amaZioni.

This brief, critical study of the history of ZEMA has revealed how ZEMA missionaries use their historical link with John Alexander Dowie and the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, USA. They use this historical link to gain acceptance by the churches and leaders of the amaZioni of southern Africa which then results in invitations from churches to begin Bible Schools in different areas. This thesis has shown the value of knowing the history of the Mission and using that history as an effective tool to

---

<sup>21</sup> See pages 23, 24, 34

reach the amaZioni of southern Africa, a people who are closed and suspicious of other believers, churches and missionary organizations.

The researcher has traced the history of ZEMA from its beginnings as the Mahon Mission to the present day as Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa. He has investigated the history of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, USA, established by John Alexander Dowie and has investigated the beginnings of Zionism in southern Africa. He has also researched the history of the Mahon Mission showing its relationship with the Christian Catholic Church in Zion.

The thesis has also investigated the ministry of ZEMA missionaries through the use of questionnaires and personal interviews. It has shown that the primary ministry of ZEMA missionaries is that of Bible Teacher. However they are also involved in the ministries of evangelism and other church related activities. They do not become actively involved in church planting as do other mission agencies, but rather focus on the discipling of the believers and the developing of strong biblically based churches.

It is the hope and prayer of the researcher that missionary agencies and organizations will discover the value of using ZEMA who will be able to assist them in providing the opportunities to reach the many millions of amaZioni living in southern Africa.

## Appendix 1

### Letter to ZEMA Missionaries

Andrew Sullivan  
PO Box 534  
Piggs Peak  
Swaziland  
H108  
Email address: [hunny.heather@gmail.com](mailto:hunny.heather@gmail.com)

16 February 2012

Dear Missionary Colleague,

#### **Re: Questionnaire/Survey with regard to Masters Thesis**

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I reported at the Annual Conference in January that I have registered for a Masters degree with South Africa Theological Seminary (SATS). The working title of my thesis is "A Brief Critical History of Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa (ZEMA) with special reference to its ministry among the amaZioni of southern Africa and its relationship with the Christian Catholic Church (Christ Community Church) in Zion, Illinois, USA"

Because of the practical nature of this study it is important to collect empirical data in order to establish how different people interpret various aspects that relate to the given topic. Therefore part of my thesis will involve a critical evaluation of the way we do ministry. I am especially interested in the use of our historical link with Zion in the USA. So I need to conduct a survey, which will assist me in this evaluation.

I really appreciate your willingness to participate in this survey, which includes the completion of the attached questionnaire. If at all possible I would love to have the answers by the Annual Conference in January 2012, so you are welcome to give the answers to me at Conference. I'm happy to accept any suggestions or comments and to answer any questions you may have regarding this thesis.

May the Lord richly bless you!  
Yours together in His service,  
Rev Andy Sullivan

## Appendix 2

### Instructions on how to complete the Questionnaire

1. You may choose **up to five** schools to report on, if you have more than five schools.
2. Please complete a **separate questionnaire** for each Bible School
3. If you so wish, you may remain anonymous. Simply leave out your name, but fill in the rest of the data required.
4. Please answer the questions in the space provided
5. If you cannot give an exact answer for some of the statistical questions, please provide me with an estimated answer.

I appreciate your willingness to participate in this survey.

Blessings in Jesus

Andy Sullivan

### Appendix 3

#### QUESTIONNAIRE

Survey amongst the Missionaries of Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa  
Conducted by A. L. Sullivan in association with  
the South African Theological Seminary (SATS)  
as part of a Master in Theology Thesis.

Name: .....

Date (Year) of joining ZEMA: .....

Date of Completion of Questionnaire: .....

11. Name of school according to your records / definition

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Region where school is situated (Province and Town)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. What is the culture or language of the area of this school? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Is this Bible School in a rural or urban area? \_\_\_\_\_

15. What year did it begin? \_\_\_\_\_

16. What percentage of students are from Zionist churches? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their churches as the result of attending this Bible School? If so, please briefly share one experience.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

18. Have any students had significant experiences of change in their personal lives as the result of attending this Bible School? If so please briefly share one experience.

---

---

---

---

19. How has the historical link that ZEMA enjoys with the “Mother Church” in Zion, USA helped your own ministry? Please give a brief explanation.

---

---

---

---

20. How has this historical link posed a problem when working among the amaZioni?

---

---

---

21. other comments that may be helpful for this research topic

---

---

---

**Please note:**

The answers reflected in this questionnaire are for research purposes only, and will be kept in strict confidence.

## Sources Consulted

- Akers R S 1999. *Working among the amaZioni in Southern Africa*. South African Baptist Journal of Theology, Volume 8. Cape Town: Cape Town Baptist Seminary.
- Anderson A 1992. *Bazalwane: African Pentecostals in South Africa*. Pretoria: UNISA
- Bosch D 1991. *Transforming Mission*. Mary-knoll: Orbis Books.
- Burton W 1961. *When God makes a Missionary (revised)*. Minneapolis: Mahon Mission.
- Cairns E E 1974. *Dowie, John Alexander*. In J D Douglas (ed.) *The new International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Cavallo, Guilia 2011 *Healing the Past: Zion churches in Maputo, Mozambique*. <http://www.nai.uu.se/ecas-4/panels/121-140/panel-125/Giulia-Cavallo-full-paper.pdf>  
Uppsala: The Nordic Africa Institute
- Cazziol R J 1987. *The Swazi Zionists, an indigenous religious movement in southern Africa*. Kwaluseni: Swaziland University
- Christian Catholic Church 1993. *This We Believe*. Darnall: Christian Catholic Church in Zion of Africa.
- Cook P L 1996. *Zion City, Illinois. Twentieth Century Utopia*. Syracuse: University Press
- Daneel M L 1971. *Old and new in the southern Shona Independent Churches, Vol. I. Background and rise of the major movements*. The Hague: Mouton
- Daneel M L 1971. *Old and new in the southern Shona Independent Churches, Vol. 2. Church growth – causative factors and recruitment techniques*. The Hague: Mouton
- Daneel, M.L. 1987. *Quest for belonging: introduction to a study of the African independent Churches*. Gweru: Mambo
- Dement B H 2004 “*Teacher*” in the International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia. Electronic edition: Wordsearch 7, [www.wordsearchbible.com](http://www.wordsearchbible.com)
- Froise, H. 1989. *Zion Christian Church: A Study to Evaluate the Theology and Practice of South African Zionists with a View to designing a Strategy to Win them for Christ* Columbia: Columbia Graduate School of Missions
- Grey, D G 2004 *Doing Research in the Real World*. London: SAGE Publications

- Grundman C. H. 2006. *Heaven below here and now! The Zionist Churches in Southern Africa*. International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church
- Hope N V 1992. *Dowie, John Alexander*. In Douglas D and Comfort P W (eds.) *Who's Who in Christian History*, Electronic edition: Wordsearch 7, [www.wordsearchbible.com](http://www.wordsearchbible.com)
- Jongeneel J A B 2006. *Missiological Encyclopaedia Part 1: the Philosophy and Science of Mission in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. Bangalore: Centre for Contemporary Christianity
- Kritzinger J J 1980. *Guide 1 for MSA 100-3 and MSR 501-T (Introduction to Missiology)* Pretoria: University of South Africa
- Light V 2009 *The Evangelical Church in Africa: Towards a Model for Christian Discipleship* thesis
- Mahon EH 1986. *The Formation of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion and its earliest contacts with South Africa* in Religion alive. Studies in the new movements and indigenous churches in southern Africa. Johannesburg: Hodder & Stoughton
- Maxwell D 1999. *Historicizing Christian Independency: The Southern African Pentecostal Movement*. Journal of African History. Cambridge: University Press JSTOR
- Mouton J 2001. *How to succeed in your Master' and Doctoral Studies*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Ngada NH & Mofokeng KE 2001. *African Christian Witness*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications
- Neil S 1990. *A History of Christian Missions*. Harmondsworth: Penguin
- Oosthuizen G C 1987. *"The Birth of Christian Zionism in South Africa"*. KwaDlangezwa: University of Zululand.
- Oosthuizen G C (ed) 1986. *Religion alive. Studies in the New Movements and Indigenous Churches in Southern Africa*. Johannesburg: Hodder & Stoughton
- Oosthuizen G C 1968. *Post Christianity in Africa*. London: C Hurst & Company
- Roy K 2000 *Zion City RSA*
- Roy K & Hudson-Reed S 2001. *No Turning Back. A history of Baptist missionary endeavour 1820 – 200 in southern Africa*. South African Baptist Historical Society

- Smith K G 2008 *Academic Writing and Theological Research: a guide for students*. Johannesburg: South African Theological Seminary Press
- Steyne P M 1978. "The African Zionist Movement" in *Dynamic Religious Movements* D J Hesselgrave (ed.) Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.
- Sundkler B 1976. *Zulu Zion and some Swazi prophets*. London: Oxford University
- Sundkler B 1961 *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*. London: Oxford University
- Tucker R A 1983. *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*. Grand Rapids: Bondservant
- Unger M F 1988 The New Unger's Bible Dictionary Electronic edition: Wordsearch 7, [www.wordsearchbible.com](http://www.wordsearchbible.com)
- Walls A F 1977. "African Independent Churches" in the *Lions History of Christianity* T Dowley (ed) Herts: Lions Publishing House
- Winter RD and SC Hawthorne eds 1999. *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*. Pasadena William Carey Library

### **Unpublished Documents**

- Mahon L B 1996. Presentation to the Annual Conference of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, Illinois in October 1996 as part of the Centenary Celebrations
- Mahon L B 2007. (10 January) *Auto Biography Lyle Burton Mahon* Presentation given to the 2007 ZEMA Annual Conference (unpublished)
- Mahon L B 2007. (25 September) Interview by the author in Bethlehem, South Africa (unpublished)
- Ndlovu T Written testimony received while in Mozambique

### **Correspondence**

- Dowie JA 1903 *General Instructions given to Overseer Daniel Bryant and his wife Elder Emma D Bryant by the General Overseer in the presence of Overseer J Excell November 5, 1903*
- Bryant D (nd) *Beneath the Southern Cross*
- Bryant Daniel P (son of Daniel Bryant) *Letter dated 4 January 1974 to Bengt Sundkler*

### **Publications**

- The Mahon Mission Messenger* Ethembeni: Mahon Mission Press)
- The Zulu and Basutoland Missionary (Volume 16 (May and June 1929))*
- Leaves of Healing* Volume CXXXIII (January – March 1996)