

Time Travel, Betania Mission, Nyandezulu

Site

Betania Mission

Goal

To recognize the school and mission as a heritage site

To develop rural communities and a heritage site for schools and tourists

Through the research and interviews have the material to write a book

Target groups

Adult and youth, school children

Tourists

Rural African communities on the South Coast

Facts

The mission in this area started in 1885 when two Swedish missionaries, the sisters of Häggberg and Broberg, maybe belonging to the Baptist Federation, came to region. They got land from the chief and permission to start a mission station with a small church in the village Ingwemabala. They stayed for some years and then moved to Zululand further north. When they died many years later they were buried at the mission station and the grave is still there behind the school.

1898 a Swedish pastor, KJ Johansson, from another Swedish mission group, The Holiness Union Church, came to Ingwemabala and Umhlangeni river, in order to develop the church and start a school. Reverend Johansson changed the name to Betania mission and the place and area was soon known as Betania mission. This school, starting in 1898, was the first rural school on the entire South Coast. Two years later, in 1900, the first local pastor, Mosen Laleni, became the assistant of Reverend Johansson.

The school and the mission developed quite well in the early 1900s. A school building was erected and soon more buildings were added. It attracted learners, not only from the surroundings, but from far away, because this was the only school in the region. The school had both theoretical (reading, writing) and practical (wood work, home economics) training. There was a need for dormitories for girls and boys, which were built close by. Betania mission became a community center with a clinic, later a post office and a public telephone. People gathered here to get help and information. People describe the mission as a blessing and the cooperation between the missionaries and the community as very positive. No racism was developed as it was in South Africa in the end of 19th and beginning of the 20th century.

South Africa was changing a lot after the Anglo-Boer war and the Bambatha rebellion 1906. The Zulus had lost their land to the whites and many of them became workers on the cane fields, the lime quarries, the farms or in the industries. Quite many went to Johannesburg and worked in the gold mines. The Zulu traditions and family life were eroding and many were frustrated and angry. In the rural areas people still had the chance to live on livestock, subsistence farming and small gardens.

In 1910 the Union of South Africa was formed as a self-governing dominion of the British Empire. The racial segregation increased at that time. The Land Act from 1913 restricted the land owned by blacks. The Nationalist Party was founded in 1914 under Herzog to claim the influence of the Afrikaaners. ANC was founded in 1912 to increase the rights of the black South African population. Also in education things became more difficult for the blacks in early 1900s and an attitude of holding back the rights of the blacks to education increased. Later laws were enforced on the educational language, because Dutch, later Afrikaans, and English were the official languages in the Union. Inspectors were sent out by the government to inspect the situation in the schools.

The Betania school was in the 1970s-1990s changed into governmental schools, Ingawemabala High School and Isingize Primary School.

Scenario, School Inspection at Betania mission in 1912

The school at the Betania mission has started off and developed quite well. As the first rural school on the South Coast it attracts many learners from far away but also from the surrounding villages. The first school building was erected a couple of years ago and now there are even hostels for girls and boys. Reverend Johansson from Sweden could be quite satisfied, he has a local assistant, Rev. Laleni and the mission has employed some more teachers. Betania mission has become a center for the community with a small clinic and support for those who need it. The work that the two Swedish sisters started in the 1880s has borne fruits.

But now dark clouds are coming up. The space for black rural schools seems to decrease. The government in the new Union is heading towards a more segregated society. The right to land and the right to higher education are more and more restricted for the blacks. The resources for the schools are concentrated to the white schools and not much is left for black rural schools. They get very little or nothing. And the education must be in line with the official view of what is important and spoken mainly in Dutch, Afrikaans or English. Some persons on the top even doubt there is a need for education for black workers. Can we use governmental resources to educate those who will not have a chance to get a skilled job anyway?

People at the Betania mission are worried. As long as there is support from missionaries it will hopefully be all right, but then? And how will the new laws and new society affect us and our school?

Today is an important day because the School Inspector is coming. He will inspect the school and all the education. His report is decisive for the future of the school. What will he say? Everybody, learners, teachers, community and church members, has to help to prepare the school for inspection, clean the surroundings, brush the floors, have well-conducted lessons. Maybe the learners could even perform a song or a dance and of course the Inspector expects some good food.

There is tension and concerns when everybody connected to the school meet in the morning. May the inspection go well, they pray. In the afternoon they will know the result of the inspection and what will be the future for the school and the whole mission station.

Roles

The learners are learners of the same age in the Betania mission school in 1912.

Adults are community and church members

Teachers

Rev. Johansson and Rev. Laleni

School Inspector

Key Questions

- Is education important? Why? Does everybody have a chance to equal and comparable education on all levels? If not, how can we achieve that?
- How do we learn? By listening and reading? By participating? Reflection?
- Is society going in the right direction in the educational system? Suggestions for improvements.

Activities

- Teaching in classroom
- Gardening
- Cooking
- Bead work
- Textile work
- Wood work
- Singing and dancing

Time Plan

10.00 Introduction, facts, scenario, characters, dress up
Rules, initiation

10.45 Time Travel begins, Service in Church

11.00 Activities

11.40 Tea

Inspector arrives

12.00 Activities continues

12.40 Meal, discussion

Inspector's report

13.30 Time Travel ends, hymn

Reflection

14.00 Learners leave

9 March 2012

Nyandezulu Time Travel Group

Port Shepstone Museum

Ebbe Westergren and Helen Eklund, Kalmar County Museum, Sweden

The Betania Mission

Facts about Betania Mission

The first missionaries came to Betania in 1885.

They first consulted the Inkosi and the Induna of the village.

They were granted the land with an intention to help people with various help.

The mission came as a blessing to the villages

Betania Missionaries came from Sweden.

It was the first school and church in this part of the region.

The two sisters were Botcat sisters

The purpose of the mission and activities at the mission

The mission served as a: Church,

School and a Sunday school

Post Office

A Clinic

Call centre

A college

A hostel etc

The mission was a **life saving station**.

The girls at the hostel were taught other various jobs that were going to help them and the community for living. **These were cooking, baking, sawing, gardening, ironing etc.**

The church and Sunday school

The villagers were taught the word of God

Church became an important part of their lives. The church was not only on Sundays, but even some of the weekdays and on Sunday morning there would be a Sunday school for children.

There was no specific uniform for the church or school until the recent times, but in early 1900 there was a uniform for girls “volunteers”. These girls were purified virgins, never been touched. These girls were not allowed to attend traditional ceremonies and weddings.

The school/college/hostel

The school would start from the first grade and each year they would add the next grade until the birth of Ngwemabala School.

The first Primary was built in 1905. This primary was Izwelihle Primary School.

This school was the only school in this region. It attracted many people in different part of the country to come and attend.

The missionaries also built the hostels for students to board. It was a hostel for boys and a hostel for girls. They were many activities in the hostel for girls than for boys.

After 1975 the hostel for boys was stopped. This was a result of many problems that emerged, e.g. pregnancy rate and the political violence that took place.

They decided that the boys must go and live with the community.

The mission also served as a college because after completing at Ngwemabala students would come for different training course. They learn skills. This includes wood work, sawing, baking, shoe care, brick layers.

The hostel current situation

The girls hostel currently house the disabled elders and children, men and women, it is also a house for pensioners, a house for HIV/AIDS affected and infected and also orphans. The other buildings are abandoned but not demolished.

Names of the Mission Pastors:

Pastor Anderson

Pastor Siren

Pastor Johansson

Pastor Palma

Pastor Gumbi

Pastor Ndlovu

Some names of the teachers: Mrs. Hlophe, Mr. Yeye, Mrs. Mzizi, Mr. Dladla, Mr. Thusi.

Challenges with research

Inconvenience to reach interviewees

Long distances by foot in extreme hot weather

Committee members not being reimbursed their travel fee.

Lack of commitment from other members

This in an old time period, so interviewees can not remember the dates.

Lack of support and communication from the drivers of the Time Travel.

All the above have jeopardize our research.

Important

Our last interviewee is a daughter of the last Swedish Pastor, Pastor Palma.

She still carries the work of her Parents caring for the vulnerable.

She promised to look for more information on the old books that she had at home, especially the dates and names. She is looking forward to meet the Sweden team.

Interview with Mr. Gumede

Mr. Gumede was born in 1963 in Betania

The first missionaries came to Betania in 1885. There no schools in Betania. The first school was Betania. The villagers were informed there were people that were going to visit the village. These people were going to help people of the village with various help such as biblical studies, education, health or first aid. Among the men they spoke to there was a man called skole “school” who was born in 1885, he was born when the villagers had a meeting with missionaries about the school in the village.

During the arrival of the of the missionaries, local people would not look for jobs, but there making living through subsistence farming, they their livestock and gardens. There was no poverty yet the missionaries came with a different kind of living.

Socially, people would gather for different reasons e.g. traditional weddings, Izimbizo and other traditional ceremonies and practices.

The Botcat sisters were the one who started the mission focused on church and Sunday school. Because of the children who attended the church they saw the need for a school. The original name for Betania as a village is Ingwemabala, but because of the mission called Betania, the village automatically became Betania.

When the school began, it was called Betania. It started from SSA ‘first grade’ and resulted to SSB which was the second grade onwards. When we speak of development in Betania, we can never exclude the role of the mission. There was nothing, every thing came with the mission. They grew up fetching water at the mission. There was a Post Office called Victor dale where the community could fetch their letters, there was a public phone at the Mission where the community could make and receive calls. That’s how helpful was the mission. When the enrolment increased at Betania, there was a need to divide to form a primary called **Intsingizi** and a high school called **Ingwemabala**, under Principal Thusi and Principal Mdldla. Intsingizi and Ingwemabala were at the same pace at Betania mission. Lower grades were done at churches then to do other grades in Betania.

To be continued

Nyandezulu Project “The Mission”

Interview with Mrs. Khomo

Born in Betania, grew up in Betania in 1932, she was born when the Mission was already existing. Their parents used to tell them stories about the mission and Sunday school. The land was divided into white village and native village. There were very few houses, no buses or taxis. The Pastor during this time was Pastor Johansson.

The house where the two sisters lived is still there. They used to walk some distance to a shop nearby and accompanied by a lady. One of the two sisters was hit by the train and it is assumed that she intended to do that, the other sister died afterwards of natural death. The graves are still there.

During the world war two, there was a calm of Pastors, they could not come because of the war. Betania Missionaries were all from Sweden.

Living was fine, they had their gardens, no obvious poverty. People could help each other. They ate meat, mealie meal, vegetables and fruits, money was not an issue.

Pastor Johnson came for the second time, he came after Anderson, Johnson came after world war two. Pastor Palma came after Johnson's death. Pastor Palma also died afterwards and the mission was taken over by village people.

The local residents failed to manage the mission. There was no specific dress code that time at the church or school. Volunteers (virgin girls) could wear white clothes, but this practice happened in earlier 1900. These girls were not allowed to attend traditional ceremonies or weddings. Ngwemabala high school was built by the missionaries and later government intervened.

Why did they choose Nyandezulu? The missionaries could go anywhere, they go where there are villages. They would speak to the chief, they were very good in negotiating and could speak very well and eventually they would be given land to perform their activities. Villagers loved joining the mission school and church. In a church people would be baptized in a river nearby and it was called Jordan but it is assumed that the original name of the river is Izotsha.

Nyandezulu Project.

Monica Moodhouse

Who is Mrs. Woodhouse?

Mrs. Woodhouse is a missionary's daughter, born in Switzerland, 1959. her parents had been working as missionaries and they started working at komartiport in 1976 they moved to Betania Mission to carry the work of the hostel. The hostel was still in the hands of the Mission. Since then Monica has been working missionary work, caring for children and the community.

The name of this church is Holiness union church (Amaswidi). Her parents came from Sweden in 1949, before them were the Johansson and before them were the Andersons. Amakhosazana were there before the Priests.

She believes that the Andersons were the first to manage the mission.

The first church was built of corrugated iron. The Izwelihle Primary school was built as a result. The principal was Mrs. Xaba

The Mission was a life saving station; people would go to the mission for many reasons, a Post office, phone, ambulance, money, food, water etc.

There were big Easter camps in Betania Mission. There was also a kitchen to assist the needy.

They taught the girls cooking, sawing, baking, gardening ironing etc.

People were drawn all over the region to the mission and services.

Mrs. Woodhouse also has his father's original bible which he used at the mission. It is written in Swedish. The bible was given to him by his mother in 1927.

Showing of pictures.

Mrs. Woodhouse current work started with caravans in Betania, caring for people, vulnerable women and children. After 1975 there was no hostel for boys.

Pastor Ndlovu took over after Palma.

NYANDEZULU HERITAGE COMMITTEE PROJECT DRAFT

Bridging Ages KZN Project (TIME TAVELS) **The first draft of the time travels project**

STEP 1

Period – 1885

Site

- Betannia Mission or Swedish Mission
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Goal

- To develop rural communities
- To bring the gospel of education in rural communities
- To recognize the school as a heritage site
- To make a heritage site for the tourist resulting in job creation

Target

Adult and youth
Tourists
Rural African communities of the South Coast

Facts

The first mission building is still there.
Churches that were established by those missionaries are still operating.
Schools that were established by those missionaries are still operating.
The graves of the first Swedish missionaries in Nyandezulu are still there.

Key questions

Who are these people?
How long are they going to be here?
Who gave them the permission to stay here?
Why was education introduced?
What was the reaction of the community?
Why did the missionaries settled at Nyandezulu?

Scenario

Missionaries visit communities telling them about gospel and education also asking the communities to come and join them. The missionaries were carrying bibles in their hands and sweets to beg kids. Adults and youth are coming to attend the church and education sessions. A group of missionaries visit different villages preaching this gospel.

Once people join the church then they were baptized at a nearby river, which was then called Jordan River. Some people were busy with their daily activities, which were farming.

Activities

Home visits by missionaries
Education and bible sessions
Fencing and cleaning of the mission
Crop field activities at the neighborhood

Time frame

1885-1905

Drafted by Nyandezulu Heritage committee.

