



Time Travel, Mthwalume Mission

Goal

Education in local heritage
Develop possible tourist destination
Promote the Time Travel method

Facts

Umzumbe mission

American board missionaries arrived in South Africa approximately in 1818 and arrived at Umzumbe during the early 1840's. Their leader at Umzumbe mission was George Barr Cowles and Bridgeman the builder. Inkosi Ndelu had a good relationship with the missionaries and offered them land to build a church, a shop, and the school. Umzumbe primary school still existing was started as Umzumbe home. This formed the first mission formally called Umzumbe mission. Umzumbe mission church was completed in 1846.

Morrison was a business man who organized a shop and post office to develop the local area.

Other mentioned mission stations along the coast were Amanzimtoti (Adams), Inanda seminary, Ifafa, Ohlange, Stanger, Mthwalume and Mfume.

First Christians from the mission stations:

1. Adams mission (Dr Newton Adam) **Makhanya** 1848
2. Mfume mission (Lindley) **Hlongwa**
3. Ifafa mission (Colton) **Luthuli**
4. Mthwalume mission (Wilder) **Mpahlwa Zama** and **Ngcobo** 1859
5. Umzumbe mission (Bridgeman) **Nomvethe (Cele)**
6. Inanda (Lindley) **Ngcobo**
7. Groutville (Grout) **Luthuli**.

Mthwalume mission

The American board missionaries arrived at Mthwalume in 1855. Frank Fyn allocated the land to the missionaries assisted by his headman (Induna) Mr Khumalo. The first Christian was Mr Mpahlwa Zama. The headquarters of the missionaries was in Adams.

Reverend Wilder, leading other missionaries, first built a church which was completed in 1859. Reverend Colton a building expert from Ifafa came to design and build the church. The community helped in building the church with their cattle to collect some sand, water and some wood. The first Christian Mr Mpahlwa Zama who was later awarded with chieftaincy. He denied the position and conveyed it to his brother Mxinwa Zama.

The first school in the area was Wilder Valley primary school, which catered lot of nearby traditional councils including Kwa Ndelu traditional council. Other schools included Othandweni, Mthwalume primary and Highman school. Mthwalume high school was the product of the above schools. Other development included agricultural (sugarcane farming), which was transported using the goods train to Mthwalume station.

Rev Colton formed Mthwalume bushbuck football team assisted by Mr Ngidi as couch. Colton also formed Adams Pirates football team for Adams mission. Reverend Colton together with other Mthwalume mission members including Bushbuck team members died during the first world war when the well-known ship SS Mandy Wrecked on the way to the war.

The congregation at Mthwalume mission was later called United congregation church of South Africa. UCCSA.

Branches under Mthwalume mission

1. Nomakhanzane branch where Mr Ntobela donated land and the church was built by Stopel Fyn from Ifafa mission in 1921. StopelFyn built a big shack which was both the school and the church. Later Mr Hlophe a church local businessman built a modern brick church in 1978 .

2. Kwa Bangibizo branch where Mr Gwala donated land. The church was also a school.

3. Mnafu branch where the land was donated by Ntsangase family. All the branches have primary schools and High schools as products.

Adams mission (1848) Dr Nembula Makhanya the host.

Most of the schools built by the missionaries are all existing within the mentioned stations. Their head was Adams college which produced heroes like Dr Buthelezi, Dr Nkosazana Zuma, Shembe, Joshua Nkomo, Robert Mugabe, Z.K Matthews to name a few. The college was built in 1853 . Dr Nembula was the corner of Adams mission. John Langalibalele Ngcobo (Dube)was one of the produces from the American board missionaries.

Scenario, The Matwalume mission church is used for the first time; Baptism of Mpahlwa Zama and his family, 1859

It was only four years ago when the first missionaries came to Mthwalume and started the mission station, Reverend Wilder and his colleagues. Land was handed over by Chief Frank Fynn. But those families who lost a piece of land were not quite happy, although they had to accept.

Reverend Wilder immediately started with Christian studies and Sunday services. Mpahlwa Zama and his family were some of those who gathered under a tree, together with some other local people, to learn about the new faith and new traditions.

The missionaries have handed out food and clothes to the needy and gifts at Christmas to the children. A school has started, both for children and adults, to learn to read and write. The congregation has slowly grown.

After a year or two it was discussed to construct stone buildings at the mission station: a school, a shop and a church. Last year land was bought next to the mission for a church building and the work could start. It is very strenuous for the community and the congregation to erect a church. The locals have to bring sand, water, wood and stone. And they have to donate cows and sheep to pay the professional builders, led by Reverend Colton from Ifafa Mission.

Not everybody is happy with the mission station. Some have lost pieces of land. They feel that the missionaries want them to change their culture. Christian community members are not

allowed to keep many of their rituals or pray to their ancestors. The men are allowed only one wife. The missionaries give them other clothing and there might even be a uniform for the members of the church. If they are baptized they are given a new name. Several claim that the missionaries are together with the colonialists. “We stay with our traditions and our way of life”, they say.

But others are happy to come to the mission station. They learn a lot in the school, reading and writing, but also agriculture, constructions of huts and cooking. More women than men are attracted. The chief and his family are eager to grasp the new ideas.

For many months people have been working on the church building, masons and carpenters, together with locals. Finally, the church is finished. There are still quite a lot of details to work on, especially paintings and sculptures for the decoration of the church.

And after intensive studies the first family can be baptized as Christians, Mphahlwa Zama and his family.

Many people have gathered at the church to make the last preparations before the official opening by the Bishop on Sunday. Reverend Wilder is happy. His efforts have paid off. Several of the community members agree with him, but not everybody. Zama wants more converts like him, but others say that it is better to stick to the traditional beliefs and rituals.

Roles

Children and adults in the local community. Some are part of the congregation (positive), others are not (hesitant or negative). (Ngcobo, Mngadi, Msani, Maphumulo, Mzimela, Luthuli, Chiliza).

Staff of the Mission station: teacher - *Lorenz*, Lello businessman

Reverend Wilder - *Ebbe*, Mphahlwa Zama - *Zama*

Builder Reverend Colton - *Mdu*

Everybody keeps their age and sex

Key Questions

Impact of Christianity and the Mission station

- What is the impact of Christianity, for me and for the community? What do we have to change? Can we still keep some of our traditional beliefs?
- What is the impact of the Mission station in the local community? Benefits, problems. Power?

Activities

- Cleaning of the church. Games - *Kindness*
- Make an illustration for the church (make cross) – *Mnqobi, Mdu*
- Making bead necklaces – *Thabani, Gulshera*
- Write with ink and pen – *Lorenz, Ebbe*
- Make food, fruit etc. - *Winnie*
- Plant in a vegetable garden –, *Babashinga*

- Dancing

Time Plan

08.00 Prepare the site

09.00 Welcome, introduction, name tags, clothing

09.30 Initiation

09.40 Activities and discussions

10.30 Procession into the church. Songs and reading. Discussions. The new painting

10.50 Ending ceremony

Reflection

11.30 End

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Port Shepstone Twinning Association

Bridging Ages team