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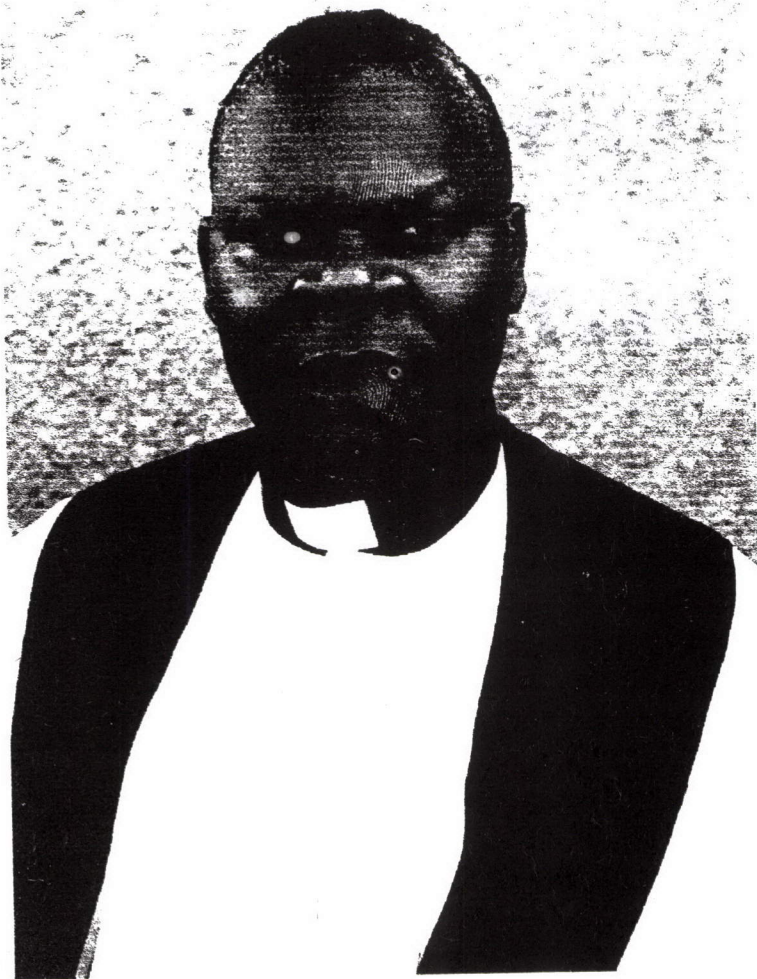
NKST CHURCH

1911-2000



SEFAN GYANGGYANG
General Editor

**HISTORY OF
THE
NKST CHURCH**



**REV. J.T. ORKUMA
NKST PRESIDENT.**

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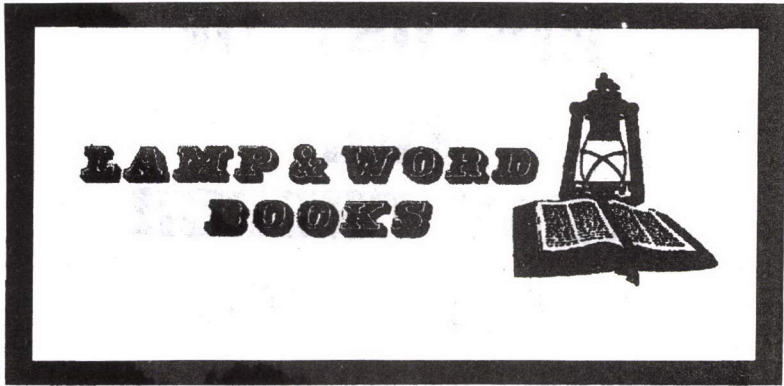
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GENERAL EDITOR

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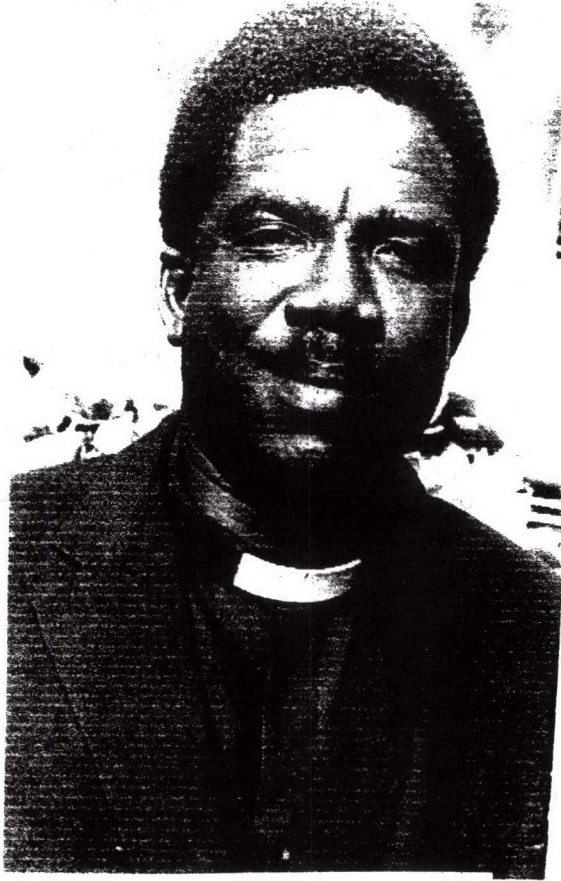
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FOREWORD

The plan to publish a documentary on "**The Church of Christ in the Sudan among the Tiv**" (NKST), has been nursed over a long period. Because of the Church's enormous potentials, the NKST Synod decided to commission a group that 'could do the job of properly presenting her to the whole world at this time. Those who have intimately known the NKST Church over the years may not need this work, but there are millions who do not know her well enough—including, sadly, many of her own members. All of those, and many later students of the NKST Church, will stand to benefit immensely from this highly commendable job done here. It tells the origin, the struggles (and frustrations at times), the yearnings, the accomplishments and the direction of this indigenous Church.

Despite their many other commitments and engagements, members of this editorial committee have worked tirelessly to put out this valuable document in the tight time schedule given them. We greatly appreciate this hard work and dedication to a call to serve the Lord in His vineyard.

It is not that nothing has been written or told about the NKST Church ever since its founding. On the contrary, a lot of precise and valuable information about the entire mission work among the Tiv people and the entire sub-saharan region, has been preserved in written works carried out by white Missionaries who served among us. Examples include Rev. Cassaleggio's *The Land Shall Yield Its Fruit*, Rev. Rubingh's *Sons of Tiv*, Rev. Edgar Smith's *Nigerian Harvest*, and a partial translation of *Akiga's Story*, done by Rupert East from the larger work by Akiga Saai, one of the early Tiv Christians.

These works by non-native missionaries, though meaning very well indeed, have in some cases failed to present a very accurate and sympathetic view of practices and actions of the people they were reporting on. This probably happened because of the cultural difference between them and the people they wrote on. This "**culture in crisis**" sometimes occurs in a sociological work, and the resulting

picture becomes tainted to an extent. This work here, done at the turn of the new millenium, is a one-volume work that seeks to present the picture of the NKST Church in its correct perspective, and also tries to clear the air on some of the misinformation about the Church.

It is hoped that this work will go a long way to helping many to develop a healthy view of the NKST Church, even where another view has already formed, based on other information. We very much deny the allegation that we are "a Tiv Church". Rather, we firmly believe with Saint Paul, that:

There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all [Ephesians 4:4-6].

Wishing you a happy reading.

Rev. G.N. Oragbe,
NKST GENERAL SECRETARY,
(1997-2003).

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CHAPTER 1

PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF MISSION WORK IN TIV LAND

By the beginning of the 1800s AD, many things were happening in Europe and West Africa that came to have direct or indirect bearing on the bringing of the gospel message to Tiv land in the savannah region of the present-day Nigeria. Principal among them was the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade that had been going on along the West African coast for over three hundred years by this time.

EUROPE

In Europe at this time there were many moves to end this obnoxious and thoroughly degrading trade in human lives. Of note are the efforts of the likes of William Wilberforce, Granville Sharp, Fowel Buxton, John Wesley and others, who spoke out very strongly against the practice, urging its abolition. Many preachers also started preaching equality of all men before God and a common fatherhood in Him. Besides, many successions of Popes in the Roman Catholic Church had been condemning the trade, and they even prohibited it.¹

Thomas Fowell Buxton in particular wrote a book titled "*The African Slave Trade and its Remedy*", in which he advocated that the slaves be returned to their homeland and engaged in agricultural development and evangelisation. He felt convinced that "the combined introduction of the Bible and the plough would usher in light and civilisation into the heart of the African continent."^{2, 3}

¹Onwubiko, K.B.C. *History of West Africa A.D. 1000-1800*, Onitsha, 1982, p 279.

²Ibid., p. 282

³E.N. Cassaleggio, *The Land Shall Yield Its Fruit*, Sekwane, 1964, p. 2

Simple as this message was, it had a profound effect on Christian Europe, which at this time was experiencing a large spiritual awakening, especially in regard to interest in mission activity generally. This awakening, called the 'evangelical movement', had led to the formation of many missionary societies like the Church Missionary Society (CMS) by the Anglican Church, as well as the Baptist Mission, the London Missionary Society and many others.^{4, 5}

Buxton's book stirred many churches and missions to look at Africa (also called "the Dark Continent"), with more interest and with a view to evangelizing it. This was more so in the case of West Africa, which was referred to as "the white man's grave". As a result, an expedition was sent to explore the River Niger. This was the beginning of missionary exploits into the West African hinterland in present-day Nigeria. Tiv land was going to have its turn of the visitation much later, but the seed had already been planted.

THE SUDAN REGION

The geographical region of Guinea, Sudan and Sahel Savanah that stretches right across Africa between latitudes 8 and 13 north of the Equator was generally referred to as "the Sudan". This name derives from an Arab description, which meant "the land of the black people."⁶

In today's Nigeria the region covers the whole of Northern Nigeria, but the area being discussed here corresponds roughly to what is referred to politically as the 'Middle Belt' region. It is the region between the coastal peoples of the south (the Ibos, the Calabar peoples and the Niger Delta tribes in the south and southeast, and the Yorubas in the southwest) on the one hand, and the Hausa-Fulani Muslims in the "far-north".

⁴Ibid., p. 2

⁵Onwubiko, K.B.C., *History of West Africa, 1800-Present Day*, Onitsha, 1985, p. 198

⁶Onwubiko, K.B.C., *op cit.*, p. 11

By the beginning of the Eighteenth Century, the coastal states of the south had received a fair amount of exposure to Christian evangelistic activities, and the far north had already come firmly under the influence of Islam. But this "Middle Belt" region — this "Sudan" — remained untouched either by the Christian gospel message or by the influence of Islam. The area was still totally pagan, being ruled by the powers of darkness, and in dire need of the light of the gospel.

THE SUDAN UNITED MISSION

The religious raids constantly being undertaken by the Muslim governments (emirates) in the northern region of Nigeria on the pagan tribes of the so-called Sudan placed all of them in danger of being overrun and forcibly converted to Islam. This was a nightmare to the evangelical Christians in Europe, especially around this time when Europe was rapidly colonizing Africa generally.

Dr. Hermann Karl Wilhelm Kumm, better known to us as Dr. Karl Kumm, was a German. He became very burdened in his mind about the plight of these peoples in the Sudan region in general, but particularly about those in the so-called "West-Central Sudan", which was the "Middle Belt" region of Nigeria, a territory that was colonized by Great Britain in 1900.

Dr. Kumm deserves special mention for his role in the evangelization of the Sudan. The Lord used this gentleman mightily to bring to bear on the Christians of Europe the urgent need to reach out to this region with His gospel message. His tireless efforts towards this work have today resulted in the Tiv people and many other tribes in this region receiving the gospel message of Jesus Christ. We in this land owe our salvation to the Spirit of the Almighty God and the mighty way He moved in people like Dr. Karl Kumm in order to bring this about.

Dr Kumm campaigned all over Europe and even went down to South Africa looking for support and action to evangelize the peoples in this region. Knowing that Islam had the upper edge in this region, he went to university in Egypt and spent over a year studying Arabic, and generally getting a feel of the African wild life. Later he spent some time in Tripoli familiarizing himself with Hausa language.

We are grateful to God because these campaigns yielded fruit and resulted in the formation of the "Sudan United Mission" in Edinburgh in 1904. This was an international and interdenominational movement co-sponsored by many free churches in England, Scotland and Ireland (initially), and founded on the approved doctrine of "Evangelical Alliance". They resolved thus:

"As a result of the present crisis in West-Central Sudan, the million pagans in the new British Protectorate - a land as large as one-third of India, will go over to Islam if the gospel of Christ is not brought to northern Nigeria⁷ in the following years. Seeing that none of the Mission Societies of the Baptist, Congregational, Methodist or Presbyterian Churches of England or Ireland are at present able to do anything for the evangelisation of the Sudan, we shall be grateful if the Lord will enable the free churches of this country to work together in a United Sudan Mission..."⁷

Dr. Kumm was a member of the first team that was sent by the Sudan United Mission (S.U.M), to explore the region in 1904. While on this expedition he consulted with the British High Commissioner in the Northern Nigeria on where best to start the mission work in the territory.

Travelling in the land in these days was only possible and safe by river, as there were no good roads and no security from bandit attacks on the roads. Based on the advice of Sir Frederick Lord Lugard, British High Commissioner for Northern Nigeria, they set out from Lokoja to Ibi en-route Wase in present-day Plateau State, to scout the land in preparation for starting some mission work there.

They stopped on the way at Abinsi, which was a settlement in Tiv land, and here Dr. Kumm was able to write down a few Tiv words using an interpreter. This was the first contact of the Sudan United Mission with the Tiv tribe.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN MISSION INVOLVEMENT

In 1905 a small tract circulated all over Europe. Titled, "Crisis in Hausaland - Cross or Crescent?" this tract vividly portrayed the danger

⁷Cassaleggio, E.N., op cit., p. 6

of forcible "conversion" to the Muslim faith of the pagan tribes in this region. The message of this tract spread very far, even reaching far-away South Africa. Stirred by the obvious need and urgency in the message, they too formed a local branch of the Sudan United Mission, which was to work together with the parent organisation in Europe. When Dr. Kumm came to South Africa on invitation, he emphasized to them the reality and the urgency of the situation in Northern Nigeria as had been highlighted in the tract.

Prior to Dr. Kumm's visit, at a meeting in South Africa on this very topic, the speaker had pointed at northern Nigeria on a large map of Africa and said, "Here lies the greatest unevangelized territory in Africa." These words struck one young final-year seminary student like an arrow, and he made his resolve even there and then to be a part of the evangelization work in that area. He concluded that it was the Lord God Himself calling him to work for him among the peoples of the Sudan. A somewhat similar incident had occurred with Paul and his entourage on his Third Missionary Journey. Together they concluded that it was the Lord Himself calling them into Macedonia to work the field for Him. They understood Paul's vision of the preceding night in that context, and made no hesitation in answering "the Lord's call" to the Macedonian Mission Field:

During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them." [Acts 16:9-10]

The young man, Rev. J.G. Botha, later became one of the pioneer missionaries to this region, and Tiv land in particular. On graduating, he offered himself for God's services very far from his home...a service we still live to enjoy here today.

While down there in South Africa, Dr. Karl Kumm was asked where he thought the South African Branch of the mission should begin work in the Sudan. Without hesitation, he said prophetically, "The Munshi tribe, that is the Tiv."⁸

⁸Ibid., p. 8

It is very interesting to note that even though the fire to evangelize the Sudan was lit in Europe and co-ordinated from there, yet the Lord used South African missionaries to bring the gospel to us in Tiv land.

WEST AFRICA, AND NORTHERN NIGERIA

After the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1807, many of the Negro slaves were returned to West Africa and freed there. They were returned and settled in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Nigeria. However, many of them were unable to trace their way back home, so they remained there in Sierra Leone and Liberia as well as Badagry in Nigeria, and became natives of these places.

While working with these freed slaves very early in the liberation days (around 1854), a linguist, S.W. Koelle, wrote in his book, "Polyglotta Africana", that he had met a Tiv slave in Sierra Leone and jotted down a few words from that language.⁹

Some years later an expedition team led by Baikie (and which included Ajayi Crowther, one of the freed slaves who later became a leading indigenous missionary), brought the white man face to face with Tiv people in their land. And more than fifty years after this, Dr. Karl Kumm picked up some Tiv words at Abinsi through an interpreter in August 1904 while on a reconnaissance trip up the River Benue. Comparison with the few words picked from the slaves half a century previously matched very well, and it thus became clear that the Tiv people of the Benue valley had also been among the many Africans captured and sold out as slaves in that obnoxious Trade.

The British government had colonized northern Nigeria by 1900, but there were still many large pockets of that vast territory which had not yet been totally subjected to British rule because of resistance from the natives. The Tiv were among those peoples who resisted British rule to the very last, and were actually among the very last to be subjected to British colonial rule. The river-port towns along the Rivers Niger and Benue were the first natives to be influenced by British colonial

⁹Ibid., p. 17

administrative, trading and missionary activities in the hinterland, since river transport was the main form of transportation and travelling into the hinterland in those days.

TIV LAND AND THE TIV PEOPLE

The Tiv were the largest of the pagan tribes in the so-called West-Central Sudan, and they too were in danger of being overrun by Islam. A conservative estimate by the missionaries who had not yet penetrated the land put their numbers at over half a million in those days. They occupied "The Benue Trough", living on both sides of the Benue River above and below the confluence of River Katsina-Ala and the main Benue which flows in from Ibi. As an agricultural people they worked the fertile lands of the Benue valley, growing yams, beniseed, millet and guinea-corn.

One of the many things about the Tiv people that struck the white man was their culture. Unlike all the other tribes in the West African sub-region, the Tiv had a very democratic and non-centralized system of government. They did not have a king or ruler over them who could be counted upon to swerve the people when most of the other Negro tribes in the region did have such paramount rulers.

Cassaleggio writes:

It is an interesting phenomenon that the Tiv preserved the Bantu identity to a large extent, although they are surrounded by a strong Negro element. They kept their democratic way of life even though the Jukun, whose chief is a divine personification, had a controlling influence on the Tiv for many years.¹⁰

They lived in small scattered family homesteads as though they existed mutually independent of each other, and yet should the need arise (like some emergency situation that threatened them), they would rapidly come together and defend themselves. They perfected herbs, which they applied to their arrows, making them very deadly.

Cassaleggio writes:

¹⁰Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p 16.

The Europeans who did not know the Tiv and their language had this impression for years. Years after Baikie, A.F. Mockler, a ferryman wrote in his book, "Up the Niger" in 1892 as follows: "The Mitsjihs are a difficult people to negotiate with, since they do not recognize anyone as paramount chief. They fear no one, but are feared by all. The fear of their poisoned arrows keeps them almost free from attacks. Their poison, it is asserted, is one of the most effective in Africa."¹¹

Many things were said about the Tiv people, which have tended to give a negative impression about them, but lots of them were not necessarily so. One such impression was that they were a fierce, warlike people. In 1854, Baikie wrote about the people and his brief encounter with some of them on one of his expeditions. Before this he had heard them described as "a lot of lawless cannibals." He made an impression about them, saying,

"...As far as we can judge, they are wilder and less intelligent than the other tribes with whom we came into contact, except the Baibai-Jukuns."¹²

Thanks be to God, history has proved all of that to be untrue. Today, less than one hundred years since the coming of white civilization into Tiv land, there have emerged very many academics and professionals in virtually every field of human professional endeavour (even including atomic physicists working with NATO in Canada etc). This proves convincingly that this initial impression about them being retarded was baseless and unfair.

Cassaleggio writes in this regard:

When the white man arrived among the Tiv he found a high standard of skilled handcraft among them. Among the best known are pottery and weaving of beautiful durable cotton cloth. They grow the cotton themselves, spin and dye it with various fast

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Cassaleggio, E.N., op cit., p 17

colours. They also had their own iron welding works, and lived in neatly built round huts with clay walls and strong grass roofs.¹³

Concerning the allegation that they were a "fierce, warlike people", Dr. Herman Gray, a one-time missionary medical practitioner at Mkar writes:

Opinions vary as to the nature of Tiv culture. They were later recognized as cheerful and fiercely independent yam farmers.¹⁴



**CHIEF SAAI DEAKPE,
Missionaries first settled
in his village**

¹³Cassalegio, E.N., op. cit., p 17.

¹⁴Gray, Herman (Dr.), "The Tiv Church in Nigeria", A paper presented to the Christian Reformed Ministers of Southern California, Nov 8, 1966 and to fellow students at teh School of World Missions, Fuller Theological Seminary, Nov 25, 1966.

CHAPTER 2

MISSION WORK IN TIV LAND

The first team from South Africa that came under the auspices of the Sudan United Mission included Rev. George Botha and Mr. V.H. Hosking. They first went to England for a period of about eight months where they undertook a crash-programme medical course lasting six months and a short study course of Hausa language. After this, Dr. Kumm escorted them on this first trip to Nigeria.

The South African Branch of the Sudan United Mission had been advised by Dr. Kumm to come and start work among the Tiv, but this did not turn out to be the case initially. In the interim the American Branch had already arrived on the scene and started work in Jukun land just next-door, and indicated a willingness to go on and work among the Tiv people as well.

There existed a very good understanding among the various branches of the Sudan United Mission on the field in those days. Member branches were expected to work within specified areas in co-operation with all the other member branches, and unless one was called to help out, one respected and kept to one's own territorial borders. Cassaleggio writes:

Apart from the R.C. (The Roman Catholics) the Protestant Missions respected the different areas of work of one another, and there was always a good spirit of co-operation.¹⁵

As a result, the first South African team that came out to the Sudan with Dr. Kumm was led to Dili Hill in the southern part of present-day Plateau State to begin work among the Mbula people. The British Magistrate in Yola, Mr. G. Barclay, suggested this to them. Dr. Kumm left them and went on ahead with his explorations, and later Mr. Carl F. Zimmermann came to join them.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 27

They arrived at their station on December 4, 1909. The Mbula had an estimated population of less than 10,000, and work among them started very slowly because the neighbouring Muslim Fulanis who had been relating with them over time threatened them with regard to dealing freely with the Christian missionaries.

Here among the Mbula people the Lord God gave this small team a vital orientation course on meeting with, and living among a people totally foreign to them even as they tried to communicate with them about His love.

Although unknown to them at this time, this orientation was preparatory to their moving to their place of primary assignment which, by divine planning, was among the Tiv people. The ever-faithful God took care of them and helped them even through the rough times with malarial fever bouts, native hostility and all. What is more, some of the initial mistakes they made were to be corrected by the time they got over to the Tiv field. Again Cassaleggio writes:

After a lot of wandering about and seeking the Lord's will in prayer, they were led back to the Tiv to whom their thoughts had turned when leaving South Africa.¹⁶

After they had been at this station about seven months Mr. Hosking attended a Conference of all Protestant Missions in Northern Nigeria at Lokoja in 1910, and there it was resolved that:

"It is the opinion of the Conference that it is not desirable except under exceptional circumstances, with an eye to the translation of the Bible, to start work among a tribe where the population does not exceed 50,000."

Because the population of the Mbula people was estimated at not more than 8,000, the South African team had to find an alternative to go and work. They made frantic attempts to locate another working place, but it seems the Lord God deliberately closed all other ways till He led them back to Tiv land, where they too had hoped to come and work

¹⁶Ibid., p. 9

when they set out from home. This came through a letter from the American Branch of the Sudan United Mission, giving them the go-ahead to start work among the Tiv because they had by now discovered that working among the Jukun was going to keep them very busy for a long time yet. Another possible reason was a fear of the Tiv people, based on their reputation that the missionaries had received.

The letter from the representative of the American Branch read as follows:

"I am sorry that you have found Mbula unsatisfactory. In conference with Messrs Maxwell, Cooper, Whitman and myself, it seemed good to us and the Holy Spirit to lay before you the claims of the Munchi (Tiv) people as your field.

1. The towns along the Takum Road and to the East are now open.
2. The Government is anxious that we should centralize our work.
3. The Munchis are an agricultural people. This would give your Branch special favour with them, as you favour industrial work.
4. As far as I know the country, there is some excellent farmland near Salatu. I think that horses, cattle and other livestock could be kept there.
5. It will be a doorway to a tribe numbering from 200,000 upwards.
6. It will bring us closer together and will give the cause of Christ a strength that it will not have for years if we remain so scattered.
7. Our Branch cannot hope to open work among the Munchis for some years to come. If we man Wukari, Donga and Takum and work the Jukun district, it will keep us quite busy for some years to come. It is a shame to let this large, virile tribe go over to Islam.

Speaking as the representative of the American Branch, I welcome you to this field. You need not fear that there will be any difficulty as far as our Branch is concerned. Personally I should like to begin work in that tribe, but we dare not even think of it, because we have an obligation to the Jukun people among whom we are now working. According to the ruling of Lokoja Conference, we could not hesitate to let the C.M.S come and begin work if they wished to. Why should there be a question if you come?

I trust that this will receive your most prayerful and careful consideration. If you think it best, come down and examine the field, or have Botha do it before you settle anything definite. I think I could get away for a week or so, and in that time we could get some idea of the lay of the land."¹⁷

This scene is probably similar to the time when in the Bible Samuel was made at last to understand that it was the Lord who had been calling him all the time.

Then the Lord called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am." And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call you; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down...

Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord. The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him...

The Lord called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So he told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.' [1 Samuel 3:4-5, 7-9].

After investigating they agreed with the American Branch representative and decided to set up their first station near Saai, the village of Chief Saai. The name Salatu was a Hausa distortion of the Tiv name "Saaiutu", meaning "(not), unless by the forces of the night."

When it came to arriving at Saai on the "D-Day", being April 17, 1911, it was Mr. Zimmermann alone who was there, for Rev Botha had to proceed on furlough, and Mr. Hosking had to do relief work in the British camp at Rumaisha. Cassaleggio writes:

...This was a momentous task entrusted to him. It meant going to a strange area, to a people he did not know, and to plan a station by himself somewhere in the wilds between Takum and Wukari.¹⁸

¹⁷Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p12

¹⁸Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p. 13

It appears he too was very afraid, probably based on the reports about the Tiv people that they had heard. Cassaleggio went on:

The following morning George mounted his little blue horse and rode off. When he disappeared around the corner, I said to myself, 'Carl, now you stand-alone. Stand on your feet and get on with your work!'

But no, he was not alone, for "the hosts of heaven" themselves had gone on ahead and prepared the way for him, even though at this moment he could not have known this.

"...I sent the hornet ahead of you, which drove them out before you — also the two Amorite kings. You did not do it with your own sword or bow." [Joshua 24:12]

"See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and bring you to the place I have prepared." [Exodus 23:20]

Carl Zimmermann arrived Saai on the 17th April, 1911. Up till today, this day is faithfully commemorated each year in the whole NKST with a thanksgiving church service during which offering is collected for the furtherance of mission works embarked upon by the church. Rev E.N. Cassaleggio called it "the day of the favour of the Lord" ...how true!

"The Gospel had come to Tiv land, and to stay!"

TIV RECEPTION

Despite reports to the contrary, the reception of the first missionaries into the Tiv home was very "normal". Carl Zimmermann was not molested or ignored, nor was he pampered by a false welcome arrangement. If the reception was not as warm as they had expected it must be because what they were bringing was entirely foreign to the Tiv man. The missionary claimed he was coming to talk to them about "God", and that greatly amused the Tiv. With his wits still about him,

the Tiv man asked to know what was there about God that needed speaking on.

In the beginning a certain white man came...to Saai on his way to Takum. When he arrived at Saai he sat down at the roadside and sent one of his men into the compound to call Saai...When many people had gathered, he said to his guide that he should greet the Tiv and tell them that he was not a government officer. His work was rather to travel about the countryside and when he had seen the land, he would go back and send other white men who would speak to the people about God. When the Tiv heard this they said, "How would someone go about speaking to the people about God?"¹⁹

The Tiv man through his religion felt he had always known God and had always been close to him. Yet despite this conflict at heart, he did not suspect the white man to the point of attacking him or antagonizing him. This is a clear sign of maturity of thinking, a true sign of "civilization". It is not the way of the cannibal, as the Tiv man had been feared to be.

Cannibalism was no unusual phenomenon among the neighbouring tribes of the Tiv. Rev Malherbe wrote that with their arrival on the field in 1915, they had become acquainted with an assistant magistrate in Nigeria, Mr Maltby by name. Six months later they had met Mr Maltby again at Zaki Biam. He was on his way to the Montoli tribe. About a week after his departure news reached them that the Montoli had murdered him. The government sent a punitive expedition and the chiefs were taken prisoners. They were then told to produce the corpse. Only the head could be shown. When asked what had become of the corpse, the soldiers were told that they had eaten it. That was as late as 1915.²⁰

¹⁹Rubingh, E., *Sons of Tiv*, Grand Rapids, 1969, p.93. An excerpt from Akiga Sai's *The History of the Tiv under the section Mnyer u Mbatesen hen Tiv*.

²⁰Cassaleggio, E.N., *op cit.*, p. 1^o. Emphasis by the writer.

As one can see clearly, this report was not about the Tiv tribe.

PET NAMES FOR THE WHITE MISSIONARIES

The Tiv man felt so relaxed with his visitors that in a short while he started nick-naming some of the white missionaries who came to work among them.

Selwyn Hughes, a very popular contemporary English international writer of daily devotional readings known as "Every Day with Jesus", wrote in his June 22 issue in 2000:

African people can be very shrewd, and a friend of mine who spent some time in Africa tells how the Christians he mixed with observed how he went about his business for the Lord. As is traditional, they gave him a new name — Reconciler. He felt so humbled by this that it sent him to his knees.²¹

Mr Carl Zimmermann they named "Ortese Kuregba," because of the massive curls of his hair. "Ortese", which means "teacher," became the standard name and word for all missionaries. "Kuregba" could be likened to a goat, which has been affected by a skin ailment that eats away large chunks of its body hair, leaving uneven patches. In a similar vein, "Atese" became the female equivalent of a word and name for the female missionaries and missionary wives.

Some of the other missionaries that the Tiv named in Tiv language included:

²¹Hughes, Selwyn, "Every Day with Jesus", May/June 2000, p. 22 June.

Name	Tiv name	Meaning
Mr. Judd	Ortese Bato	--
Rev. W.A. Malherbe	Ortese He	New Arrival
Rev. A.J. Brink	Ortese Agee	Strong Man
Rev. J.L. de Lange	Ortese Loho	Message
Mrs. J. de Lange	Atese Iveren	Blessing
Rev. De Groot	Ortese 'Alugbem	He should remain
Dr. Hermann Gray	Orimese	Left
Rev. W.M. Scott	Ortese Beni	Peacemaker
Rev. W.D. Gerrits	Ortese Teghlee	Slow Mover
Rev. J.J. Bates	Ortese Mhôn	Merciful One
Rev. E.N. Cassaleggio	Ortese Ishôso	Animal pets
Rev. van der Merwe	Ortese Iyua	Gift/generosity
Mrs. Brink	Atese Iyolshila	Smooth-skinned
Miss R. Moolman	Atese Rumun	Agree
Miss G.W. Schumann	Atese Jighjigh	Faith or Honest
Miss M. Dupreez	Atese Kemyol	Movement to avoid something
Rev. J.F. Orffer (Jr)	Ortese Adikpo	Born at Adikpo
Mrs. J. Orffer (Snr)	Atese Ician	Holy
Mrs. M. Loedolff	"Aya"	Grandmother
Miss J. Kellerman	Atese Erdoo	Grace
Rev. J. Van Zijl	Ortese Gbonggbong	Healthy
Mrs. J. Van Zijl	Atese Kumashe	Pretty
Rev. Pieter de Wet	Ortese Saan-saan	Happy/Cheerful
Mrs. Basson (Miss A. Greef)	Atese Sar-sar	Cheerful

Rev and Mrs Basson had two children named Tivcii (all the Tiv), and Shangevngohol (Shangev people have accepted).

Many of the missionaries knew these names and their meanings, and accepted them as a sure sign of their acceptance among the people they lived and worked with.

It is noteworthy that this spontaneous pet naming of missionaries virtually ceased when the original mission in Tiv land, the South African Dutch, left the field. Could it be that the new entrants did not enjoy as much warmth and cordiality as the South Africans had? And if so, why?

MISSIONARY RELATIONS WITH THE TIV

We have heard and we believe as true the stories of terrible atrocities of discrimination committed against black people back there in the home of the missionaries who came to teach us about God here in our land. However, the Tiv man did not see much of that as he related with the white missionary here. Some of the minor actions could in retrospect be seen as such, but the overall atmosphere out here in the field was that of a true brotherhood. This was borne out by Rubingh when he wrote:

Here there was, of course...no need to face the segregation issue in the formation of the Church. This air of freedom was of the greatest significance for the DRCM work in Nigeria. Furthermore, the DRCM were the children of the evangelical revival and came to Tiv land fired with a passion for the souls of the Tiv. Whatever stolidity and impassiveness characterized the Boer in South Africa, in his relationship to the Tiv the missionary was driven with evangelical fervor. This warmth and love for the Tiv comes to light again and again in the reports of the early missionaries...The obvious reserve of the DRC in South Africa regarding a warm relationship with the African was thrown aside in Tiv land; the missionaries slept in Tiv huts, ate Tiv food, lived into their sorrows and literally embraced them in their joys.²²

How can we ever thank God enough for a ministry like this one, presented in such pure love of God even as here reported?

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again...[1 Thessalonians 3:9, 10].

You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of

²²Rubingh, E., op cit., p. 99

God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory. [1 Thessalonians 2:10-12].

Can anyone blame the Tiv for falling in love, as it were, with the South African missionaries...those first missionaries they knew, who showed them this unqualified Christian love and acceptance?

And when for reasons not understood by the Tiv man their good friends from South Africa had to pull out of the field and hand them over to "strangers", there was a big nostalgic sense of loss.

Again, Rubingh reports:

The Tiv Church did not view these proceedings with equanimity. The idea that the "Mother Church" should now desert the "daughter" and give her to a foster parent elicited little happiness among the Tiv.²³

The newcomers were probably not sensitive or patient enough to see and allow for this nostalgia — this very "normal" reaction in the Tiv. Instead they felt rebuffed and kept on the outside. They were of the opinion that the Tiv "felt that the same respect [which they had given the DRCM missionaries] was not due to the newcomers." According to Edgar Smith, this "puzzled and sometimes frustrated" them.²⁴

Probably in the "puzzlement and frustration" they imagined that the Tiv were jealous of the status of the next-door peoples among whom their "new mother" had been working. They felt that negative tribal feelings by the Tiv were responsible for this.

However, it was clear that the South African "friends" had not been training the Tiv in order to hand them over to another Mission later. Rather, as noted by Rubingh (who, by the way, was a writer from that other Mission that took over the Tiv Field from the South Africans):

²³Ibid., p.169

²⁴Smith, Edgar, *Nigerian Harvest*, Grand Rapids, 1972, p. 146

On the foundations put down in the long years of initial contact and communication, was rising a vigorous self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating Church.²⁵

Cassaleggio also writes with reference to Rev. Botha and his ministry:

In the latter years of his service he devoted himself more especially to the building up of an independent, indigenous church among the Tiv.²⁶

Rev. Botha left the field finally in May 1935, many years before the field was handed over to the new mission.

GOD IN ACTION

The ministry started off rather slowly at Saai, and this was a cause of concern for the missionaries. The church services were strange to the people, and they could not see why one had to totally abandon all he ever knew and valued in order to follow the white man and his God. This too is "normal", and only when the Holy Spirit has convicted can one take off "the old nature", and put on the new.

We thank God very much that even though the missionary was exasperated at times by the seeming unfaithfulness of the Tiv man, yet the Holy Spirit of God was undaunted and not at all troubled by the progress, for He was firmly in control. We like to say here that men of God who are actively serving Him, should learn to trust the Holy Spirit's control of all things that are going on. For only then would they become relaxed in His able hands, and be full of praise for His wonderful judgments and works.

²⁵Ibid., p. 129

²⁶Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p49

THE WORK AT SAAI

It is true that the Tiv generally at this time, not just the people of Saai, were unwilling to work for the white man, for they felt it was a waste and a degradation to Tiv manhood. Yet despite all this, God's own seed was being planted, and His grace was proving sufficient. Cassaleggio writes:

After Mr. Zimmermann had completed the huts, he went to Saai and asked him for about thirty carriers to fetch his loads from Wukari. Surprisingly, so many people turned up that he could take his choice of the number required. He arrived on horseback the following day at Wukari. Mr. Guinter was dumbfounded at seeing such a crowd of carriers. It was known that the Tiv refused to carry loads for white people as they considered it humiliating.²⁷

The grace of our Lord is marvelous. When He leads us in it, beautiful doors are easily opened to us, which would otherwise have remained, closed. Cassalegio reports:

One day he [Mr. Zimmermann] went to the chief [Saai] and requested him to give him one of his children to come and work for him. Saai considered the matter, wanting to get out of the predicament with the least possible loss to himself. To give a child of his to the missionaries was as good as reckoning him as lost. His gaze lighted on the neglected Akighirga. His mother had left Saai, but had left the child with the father. One of his eyes was blind, and part of his foot was eaten away by ulcers. Among all his children, Akighirga was of the least value to him. He decided to give him to the missionary. So Akighirga found his way to Mr. Zimmermann's house to begin the lowly job of a houseboy.²⁸

²⁷Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p 19.

²⁸Cassaleggio, E.N., op cit., p. 19

But what God Himself has prepared, no one should call unworthy. Our God proved this amply in this "worthless" gift to the cause of His work. God blessed Akiga (the shortened form of the full name "Akighirga"), with great intelligence, and he became the first Tiv man to be able to read and write. His written work on the coming of the missionaries into Tiv land and on Tiv people and their culture which he wrote in Tiv language has no equal till date, and every writer on the Tiv people just has to quote him to add weight to his writing.

The first-ever letter written by a Tiv man (Akiga), read as follows, and was written in Tiv:

MO SU WE SHA U CHI U KA SE KWA AONDO.
 ASUMA ASE DO KPISHI. U UNGWA DE? DE KA
 HUNISHIMA GA. MO SU WE KPISHI JE DO GA.
 DOM JE. U UNGWA VE? MO FA U KA MIMI
 AYANGA AYANGA. U NGU KA SE AYANGA JE SA
 MO HEN DIDO. U UNGWA DO DO?

KA MO AKIGA

A literal translation of the above letter (done by the Missionaries) says:

"I greet you because you tell us good things of God. Our hearts rejoice greatly. Do you hear? Do not let your heart grow weak. I greet you very very much. It is good to me, do you hear? I know you speak truly day after day. You are telling us daily until I learn thoroughly. Do you hear me?
 It is me, Akiga."

Akiga was the first Tiv man to publicly confess Jesus as Lord of his life, and also the first Tiv evangelist. Later on, he left the mission and joined politics where he became one of the advisers at a constitutional conference in London and a member of the Northern Region parliament. He also started a Tiv language newspaper, called "*Mwanger u Tiv*".

CHAPTER 3

SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE IN TIV LAND

The first person to be baptised in Tiv land (one Mr. Adamu) was not a Tiv man, but he was baptised at Saai by full body immersion in the "Galagh", a stream that flows through the Saai settlement area. Mr. Guinter of the American Branch, the person who had written the letter handing over the Tiv mission field to the South African team, performed this ceremony.

Eight months after they had been at Saai, the missionaries got the go-ahead from the colonial government to move freely into all of Tiv land east of the River Katsina-Ala. By this time Messrs Hosking, Flemming, and Judd were manning the station at Saai. The Tiv nicknamed Mr Judd, "Ortese Bato". Mr Judd had great talent as a writer and composer. He wrote the first reader in Tiv, called *Zua u Tiv* (Tiv Language) in 1914, and translated many hymns into Tiv as well.

After they had scouted around in that part of Tiv land they decided to open their next station at Zaki Biam. By this time (1912), Rev. Botha had returned from his furlough and joined the team along with Rev. A.J. Brink (nick-named "Ortese Agee"), and others.

Rev. Botha and Rev. Brink were sent to Zaki Biam to start the new station in April 1913. The reception over there was not very different from the one at Saai. Yet the Lord kept on with His work. Even though eyes of the flesh could not see it, yet He was very busy moving forward. Today with the benefit of hindsight, we too can see it and appreciate Him very much. We wish to praise Him very loudly for His wonderful works.

Slow Progress:

By the year 1915, three years after starting the work in Tiv land at Saai, only two Tiv converts had been won to Christ. It was also in this year that the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa decided to take over all the evangelism work in Tiv land. But it was not until July 1917 that the first Tiv converts were baptised. They had had to undergo years of sound catechumen teaching before they were presented for baptism. They included Akiga, Alam, Teiyor and Mrs Kime Alam. Rev. Strydom baptised them.

However, the joy of their baptism was short-lived, as they all "backslid" and had to be placed under church discipline one year later. All this had a very dampening influence on the missionaries, who were working very hard and were very eager to see good fruit for the Lord. But since it is the Lord alone who gives growth, not Paul or Apollos, they could not speed things up to suit their expectations. Akiga and Alam were restored into full communion with the church in 1920, and it took another four years after this first four before another batch of three persons received the holy baptism. These included Akiga's wife and two other men. Our God's time, simply, is the best.

The third station east of the River Katsina-Ala was opened in 1920 at Sevav, and for two years student-evangelist Alam and his wife Kime manned the station. In 1922 Rev. and Mrs. Malherbe came to take up full residential work there. The Tiv named Rev Malherbe "Ortese He", meaning "new person".

The aim of any Mission in a heathen land is to establish through the teaching of the Gospel, a Christian Church which supports, governs and propagates itself. After six years since starting at Saai, only four people were baptized in the field in 1917. These were Benyamin Akiga, Yosev Teiyor, Yohane Alam and Mrs. Roseta Kime Alam. The fifth person to be baptized was Yerima Kanyam, and this was four years after the first four. This was followed in 1922 by the baptism of Mrs. Dina Yangana Akiga. After this for a period of eight solid years during which not a single soul was baptized in the whole of Tiv land.

But just when the missionaries were beginning to wonder if their seed was falling only on rocky soil and by the wayside for birds of the

air to finish it up, the Lord opened way and by 1931 alone 19 more people received the Holy Baptism in the land. Ten years from then the number had risen steadily to 214. The Lord showed that He was very much at work even during the "silent years", putting things in place for a big launch later.

At Sevav the mission decided in 1931 to open the first girls' school in the land. This school was a deliberate attempt to train young girls along the ways of Christ. The stated aims for establishing the school were:

1. To lead the girls to the Lord as their Lord and Saviour
2. To cultivate a good Christian character by:
 - a. Instilling principles of obedience, regularity and willingness to help, and
 - b. Training them in certain branches of housework.

No Longer Good Enough?

In 1921, the General Council meeting deliberated on moving out of Saai for "logistic" reasons, since Saai was said to be too far on the edge of Tiv land. In May 1926, it was firmly decided to **close down** that first missionary station in Tiv land at Saai for the following stated reasons:

1. Salatu is comparatively near Zaki Biam, so it would not be difficult to work Salatu as an outpost from Zaki Biam.
2. The population there is not so dense as it is in other parts where for example, no station has been opened.
3. The station is situated on the boundary of Tiv land and therefore not central.
4. The work there was up to the present time **very fruitless**. (This, despite the production of first-generation evangelists like Akiga, Alam, Akaaer and others from Saai, who were very busy working with the missionaries and following them along).

However, when leaving the Saai station "for good", *the missionaries even demolished the church building there*. Their reason

was that "Hausa tradesmen might come round and misuse the building". They said in their 1927 Council minutes that:

"As it appears the people are leaving Salatu more and more, so that the station will not even be suitable as an out-post, and because of the expenses that will be connected with its upkeep, it was decided to give up the lease." Even the church building was demolished to avoid it being misused by passing Hausa traders.²⁹

However, our Lord does not look at things the way man does. When things did not look very good at the station, the missionaries failed to remember that it was the Lord God Himself who had led them to that humble place to start...and that for His own very good reason. They summarily wrote off the station that had ushered them into a very big ministry for the Lord.

It was time for the Lord God to show them His way. Although they were here to tell people about the Lord God and His ways, yet they themselves needed to be shown God's ways every once in a while. Cassaleggio writes:

The word of the Lord is however powerful. About four years after the departure of the missionaries, the Tiv in the village of Saai started to come together again on their own to teach school and hold services. Later still, Ishoribo, son of Saai, became anxious about his soul's state and began to take the lead to hold services for his people. Thus the workings of the Holy Spirit were powerfully revealed after the missionaries had already given up their work there for several years. It strikes us that after all human means and plans had been given up, the Spirit of God broke through powerfully into the hearts of the Tiv without the immediate intervention of missionaries.³⁰

This pattern was repeated generally in the whole of Tiv land over and over again, and it is this more than anything else that makes us want to praise our God and rejoice in Him for His wonderful works

²⁹Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p 33.

³⁰Cassaleggio, E.N., op cit., p.33

among us. The Holy Spirit proved the truth in His written word, the words of Prophet Zechariah, where He said:

This is the word of the Lord to Zerubabel: "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord Almighty. [Zechariah 4:6].

He showed clearly during the work of the missionaries that He was the one doing it all through them. Cassaleggio reports a similar observation in connection with the village "Bible Schools" that later sprung up spontaneously all over Tiv land:

While a slow falling away came among the Christians on the stations, a flame was kindled deep in the bush, which bore witness to the powerful penetration of the Holy Spirit into the hearts of the Tiv. Here was the first true revival in Tiv land with which the beginning of the Bible schools coincided...

This revival was not limited to one area but extended across the whole of Tiv land. The Holy Spirit convicted many a heart to sin. Where the light began to penetrate, the people began to gather in their villages, started classes and services without the help of missionaries, just on their own. Those who could read started to teach others and to preach the gospel to their own people. Men, women and children gathered together around the Word of God searching for light.³¹

³¹Ibid., p.49

CHAPTER 4

TAKING ON THE WHOLE OF TIV LAND

MKAR:

The opening of the whole of Tiv land for mission work brought various responses from communities, depending on whether they had heard about the missionaries before or not. Many of the people ahead had by this time heard of the white man and his schools and attendant development benefits, and were eagerly waiting to benefit from it in their land as well. Thus when the missionaries crossed over and came to Mkar the reception for them was much better. The young people eagerly helped the white man with his work and attended school in very large numbers too.

The first station on the western side of the River Katsina-Ala was Mkar. This was opened in March 1923 with Rev. A.J. Brink ("Ortese Agee"), as the first resident missionary. The name given Rev. Brink by the Tiv suggests that the Tiv observed that he was a very strong person.

The central location of Mkar in Tiv land and the cordiality of its people encouraged rapid development of facilities over there. In a very short time a boarding primary school was built at Mkar — the first such one in Tiv land.

ADIKPO:

At about the same time that the Mkar station was being opened another one was also opened at Adikpo toward the south-east, toward the land of the Obudu peoples. This too was on the east of the River Katsina-Ala. However, the station did not thrive very well initially, and it was abandoned a few years later. The missionaries said that they had intended opening the station at Kunav, and only resorted to settling at Adikpo when the chief of Kunav was not very co-operative. Even though Adikpo was admittedly a relatively very cosmopolitan set-up,

having one of the largest markets in the then Tiv land, and was a confluence of many important routes, yet these factors did not seem to weigh very much in its favour, and the station was closed down.

Cassaleggio writes:

Here we have the strange occurrence that although a thriving church was built up at Adikpo, the station was given up after a few years in favour of the Kunav station.³²

Probably because of Adikpò's five-day market set-up, which they could not change, and many other smaller reasons, the Adikpo station was closed down "permanently", according to Cassaleggio, in 1927. Instead the Kunav station at Mbaakon was developed, as well as the Turan (Jato-Aka) station.

Here too, as was characteristic of the Holy Spirit's workings in Tiv land, He did not allow His work at Adikpo to stop with the closure of the mission station there. Instead the work continued to grow, and more and more Christians were being won there, and it was not very long before there was a need to re-open station activity there again. Again the good Lord showed clearly that what He had already prepared must never be called worthless.

We praise our God for repeating Himself over and over again on this point, in order to impress His ways on us. In the Bible He told Samuel that He does not look at the things man looks at...such things that man uses to judge. From His workings among us even when His human agents thought and acted otherwise, we have now come to know and appreciate the God we have put our trust in — a God who loves more than He judges.

Rev. J. Orffer (Snr) was the resident missionary at Adikpo up till the time the station closed down in 1927. A son, Francois, was born to the Orffers at Adikpo on 25th February 1927. This young man grew up and later went back home to school in South Africa. After his seminary training, he remembered the place where he had been born, and came back there to serve God and to complete the work his father had begun. While he was serving there Adikpo grew steadily till it was

³²Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p 31.

was organized into a full-fledged church again in 1952. His life and work endeared him in the hearts of the Adikpo people, and they named him "Ortese Adikpo", meaning the Adikpo Pastor. The people considered him an "indigene" of the town, seeing that he was born there. Later in 1960 one of the first indigenous Tiv converts at Adikpo, Tar Shande, successfully completed the training as a pastor and was ordained as resident pastor for that consistory, taking over from young Rev Francois Orffer.

KUNAV:

We learn that this was the favoured site for a station when the missionaries moved towards the south-east. They had planned to place their next station here, but the chief of the Kunav people at that time (called Moji), did not welcome them. Moji, it is said, was afraid that the missionaries who knew the Tiv language thoroughly, would "expose" him. Because they could not get to the Kunav location, they started a station at Adikpo in the interim. As soon as they could get there following the deportation of Moji by government and his death in exile, they closed down the Adikpo station and moved to Kunav in 1927.

The Kunav clan in Tiv land was very densely populated and comprised many well-exposed people who had dealt with the neighbouring Udam and other tribes in trade, and were reasonably "enlightened". Work at Kunav progressed very well on most fronts, especially education and medical care.

A new dimension in the field of education was tried here too, this time in the area of disabled persons, especially the blind. The Blind School was started here by 1938. A blind man from Ibi named Ilisha came round to start it, but was greatly handicapped by his inability to speak Tiv.

However, a young blind Tiv man named Iyorgyer from Saai made very impressive progress at the school, learning how to read Braille within just a few weeks. The mission sent him to Vom to study under a missionary tutor there. He came back and became the Blind Teacher at the Kunav Blind School. During this time the four gospels were written in Braille in Tiv. After a few years however, this young man left the school and went back home, apparently dissatisfied with

conditions of service. He later joined government service. With time the school could not continue, so it ceased to function in 1947.

In the area of health care much did take place at Kunav, and the Mbaakon Hospital remained very busy even up till the handover days. Many people were treated there successfully, and many received Jesus in the corridors of the hospital there because of the good Christian help being offered there.

In 1944 the first church in the cruciform architectural pattern was completed at the Kunav station. It was built largely through funds and materials gathered by members of the local church. On completion it was capable of accommodating a thousand people comfortably. Over the years this architectural pattern has become the blueprint for all NKST churches.

TURAN (JATO-AKA):

When the Saai station was closed down in 1926, the resident missionary there, Rev. Botha, was transferred to Jato Aka to start the new station there. He moved in with a great wealth of experience, having known the land, the people and the language very well. Here he introduced the idea of school fees in the new school he started. Though this was hard for the many interested children to swallow, yet it started a very much-needed training for an indigenous church in the future. It also prepared the Tiv Christians for the life principle of working to earn a living, as Paul had advocated in his letter to the Thessalonian Christians:

For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." [2 Thessalonians 3:10].

This general principle was officially allowed in the whole Tiv land mission field in 1927 when the collection of offering was introduced in the worship services as a way of raising money to fund the running of the church. From then till today, this is the main source of funding for the NKST church as a whole. Annual Harvest and Thanksgiving was also introduced in the churches in this year.

Rubingh writes on this point with regard to Rev Botha and his firm teachings on this point:

Discipline was strict and entrance into the church difficult. Furthermore, the policy of self-support was an integral element of the day to day strategy. A financial dependence on the Mission, which would in later years be difficult to sever, was stringently avoided.

...One of the missionaries in Tiv land, Rev Botha, was so convinced of the evil of such a consequence that he remarked that where the indigenous church had not been taught to stand on its own feet, it would be best to break down everything that had been with so much difficulty built up in order to begin all over again.

These practices were not calculated to bring in large numbers of Tiv in the early years, but they followed a firmly believed philosophy of Mission. This policy is today paying dividends in the understanding of indigeneity on the part of the Tiv Church leaders.³³

Similarly in the area of education, the "Mission Schools" were for many years the only fee-paying schools in the land. On the other hand, all the Government Schools were free and their students were paid allowances while they studied. However, by God's grace many of those Mission School-trained people have proved to be very responsible individuals in various places of endeavour and work in Benue State and Nigeria generally.

THE LATER STATIONS

The strategy given to the missionaries by the Holy Spirit in planting the initial stations all over Tiv land was such that at the end of the first fifty years of their ministry, they had managed to penetrate virtually all of Tiv land. All their stations were within a manageable distance from anywhere at all in Tiv land. When the spread of all the stations is observed on a map of Tiv land, it becomes obvious that they were so

³³Rubingh, Eugene, o. cit., p 121

placed that they provided a very effective cover of all the land, no place in the land being more than thirty miles from one.

The newer stations that were opened west of the Katsina-Afa River included Makurdi, Apir, and Shangev (Mbaakpur and Uavande).

MAKURDI AND APIR:

The main reason for opening the station in Makurdi was because of the growing cosmopolitan nature of the town, for Government was intending to build a very large bridge here over the River Benue to carry rail transport from the south to the north. In addition to this fact Makurdi was a very important river port and a confluence of many important routes, and many other churches had already begun work there in earnest, among whom were the Roman Catholics and the CMS (the Church Missionary Society — the mission arm of the Anglican Church). Makurdi was also a base for the Air Force. It was clear that strategic placing in this town by the Mission would be quite advantageous. Consequently, the station was opened in 1931.

However, evangelization work did not prove easy here at all, and the response was not impressive. Many missionaries were stationed there over time, but not much fruit was reaped. In the end the Mission had to abandon its efforts there, and some of its structures in the town were sold out to other missions. Things remained this way for almost ten years or more before they started picking up again.

On the other hand, the gospel message took root very well at Apir, situated about 8 miles on the outskirts of Makurdi. Here the people responded eagerly to the Word and to school. Even though it also had its difficulties, yet the gospel bells continued to ring out from there clearly till Rev. Ishoribo Saai, one of the first four indigenous pastors was ordained there in January 1957 to head the consistory. From here the work of evangelization continued into the Masev and Ihyarev districts (though not always very rapidly and effectively).

The Hausa Community Ministry was started through Rev. Ishoribo Saai while he was resident pastor at the Apir station, for he was very fluent in Hausa language. This ministry was aimed at the Hausa-speaking peoples in the Makurdi Township. It has continued ever since then, and today there are a number of Hausa-speaking independent

consistories in the NKST, known as EKAN (Ekklessiyar Kristi a Najeriya). Two such consistories in Makurdi today are the result of this pioneering effort in that direction, and many other towns with significant numbers of Hausa speakers are also at various stages of development in moving towards this. Such Hausa-speaking consistories have their own pastors to look after them and to represent them in the **NKST Classis and Synod meetings**. They remain an integral part of the NKST, but are catering for this special people group.

SHANGEV TYEV

This station was started in 1935, some four years after the Makurdi station. The Shangev station was sited towards Tiv land's southwestern edge, near the border with the Idoma people. This area was quite thickly populated but was not yet evangelized. Even though some other churches tried to obstruct a smooth take-off and running of the station, yet our God gave His blessings, and the station was nursed till it became strong and effective. Rev. Scott (Ortese Bem), was the first resident missionary there, and was assisted by Akiga, who was an evangelist. They also treated many sick people here, especially leprosy patients.

They had lots of hardship here, but the Holy Spirit helped them get over it all. At one time the whole station got burned down in the night, but with God's help it was rebuilt.

From here the station developed into neighbouring Gaav area and a branch station was later opened there at Ikyaaave (Korinya) in 1957. The good Lord continued to bless His work at the hands of His children, and many accepted Him and gave Jesus Christ their lives to live for them.

By this time the South African Mission had made advanced moves to hand over a significant part of their mission field to the American Branch of the Sudan United Mission (known as the Christian Reformed Church).

Right from the outset there was an S.U.M. committee in America comprised of individuals of various denominations, including the CRC, who desired to spread the Gospel in the Sudan. Rev Guinter of the Evangelical Brethren Church in the US was among the first to come to the Wukari area and start missionary work. Later, a division of

the Nigerian mission field among some of the American SUM missions was arranged. The CRC branch did not feature in its own right at the onset, but later on continued in the Jukun Mission field. It is very tempting to conclude that it was the SUM-CRC who had started mission work in the Jukun lands before the South Africans got there, but this is not exactly correct.

UAVANDE:

We have already heard that the South African Mission had opened a school for girls at Sevav in 1931. This was aimed at bringing up Christian girls in the fear and love of the Lord, and teaching them to serve Him in various positions, especially in the home as Christian mothers and wives.

By 1950, it became clear to the South African Mission that they would have to hand over a significant part of their field to another mission. When it was obvious that Sevav would be among the "property" to be so handed over, they decided to build a full primary school for girls in the part they were not planning to hand over yet. This move was very much welcomed in many quarters, and the Lord helped them to raise the required funds to construct and furnish it, a lot of the support coming from government this time around.

Upon the completion of this project in 1956, the Sevav School was phased out and the staff and students moved to this new site. Miss Marie van Zyl was the first principal, and many other teachers joined later, including Miss Carstens and Miss Voster, as well as Miss G. Vanden Berg, who later also served as Principal of W.M. Bristow Secondary School in Gboko. Miss Vanden Berg was the first American Mission (CRC) staff to join the Uavande team, for by now it was becoming increasingly obvious that the South Africans would have to pull out of Nigeria in the very near future.

Uavande was the last station to be opened by the South African missionaries in Tiv land. Shortly after that they handed over all of Tiv land mission field to the American mission, and all left the field.

CHAPTER 5

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIGENOUS CHURCH

As has been said before, right from the start the South African missionaries were grooming the Tiv converts to become an independent indigenous church one-day, not just to convert a number of Tiv people and then go home. This is the overall aim of evangelism. J. Herbert Kane says:

It must be emphasized that evangelism is not an end in itself. Rather, it is a means to an end. The immediate purpose is the conversion of the individual to Jesus Christ. The ultimate purpose is the establishment of strong, spiritual, indigenous churches.³⁴

Therefore very early during their stay in the land they set the machinery for achieving this ultimate goal in motion. They started schools and taught the pupils in Tiv language. Their theological teaching and training was not simple and superficial, but was quite deep and thorough. These, coupled with the many other aspects of grooming that they had initiated, helped to make a future transition very possible.

Cassaleggio writes that:

The pioneer stage of the Mission work was ending by 1934. The Church was taking over its management. The missionaries who came while the country was still wild and waste and even closed to the Gospel were leaving the field one after another. They came to a land of paganism, they left behind them and indigenous church for their successors to build upon and enlarge.³⁵

³⁴Kane, J.H.; *Understanding Christian Missions*; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids Michigan; 3rd Ed, 1982; p 299.

³⁵Cassaleggio, E.N., *op cit.*, p 47.

1. EVANGELIZATION:

The missionaries trained evangelists in the schools they set up, and thereby laid a good foundation for continuity in training. The training was done entirely in Tiv language, and no foreign facilities were utilized such as would prove to be a barrier to indigenous training later. It took over two years to train the first set of evangelists, and after this they went back for re-training again and again.

Cassaleggio writes:

...The Mission from the earliest years made use of indigenous manpower in the spreading of the Gospel among their own people. Not only were teachers, evangelists and pastors trained, but also practically every Christian was linked up in the great task of evangelism. The Bible Schools, one of the greatest evangelization avenues in the Sudan, owed its existence to a purely indigenous spiritual movement among the Tiv themselves. This process is still continuing.³⁶

The use of the vernacular for training and communication made understanding much easier and more thorough for the Tiv. Most of the other tribes in the Nigerian Sudan were being evangelized and trained in Hausa, which was a common language for many northern communities, although it was not their own mother tongue. After understanding the teachings and concepts in Hausa language the students (or the pagans being preached to) needed to translate those concepts into their local languages themselves mentally. The process whereby the uneducated receiver had to translate the message from another language was very cumbersome, and did not allow for a very good comprehension and understanding. Rather, it made for a watering down of the core content of the message received.

It is a basic concept in communication that the process involves two principals — the **sender** and the **receiver**, and the message is the **vehicle** to be carried. This carrying involves a medium (in this case, the language of communication). Where a sender is not able to send a clear

³⁶Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p 100.

message, or where a receiver is unable to accurately decode the message sent, or even where the message itself is not clear, the result will be an inaccurate understanding and appreciation of the message.

Not so the case with the Tiv here. The missionary studied the language very carefully, and was always learning continually, so he was able to pass his message across to the Tiv man in his own language. At the receiving end the Tiv man did not have too much difficulty with understanding the concepts because the message was given to him in his own native language, and there was no missing of the message.

The Holy Spirit demonstrated this long ago at Pentecost, when He made the Apostles to communicate with each person in the large crowd gathered there in Jerusalem on that day in such a way that though very many, each of them was hearing them **in his own language**. And they all marvelled at the beauty of having the Holy Spirit communicate with them in their own native languages; it removed all possibility of misunderstanding.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?... we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" [Acts 2:5-8, 11-12].

By this mother-tongue communication strategy it was possible that the Tiv people in those days, though possessing minimal formal education, were able to accurately understand the difficult teachings and concepts given them. To this day many others find these concepts very difficult to follow because they have been presented to them in a foreign language.

As time went on the "local material" that had been trained was increasingly relied upon to help do a lot of the work — a sure sign that they were good enough. Alam and his wife Kime for example, had started the Sevav station and manned it for about two years before Rev. Malherbe came there as resident missionary in 1922.

As we shall note again later, the so-called "Bush Bible Schools" started and ran exclusively by local input from zealous young people whom the Spirit of the Lord touched and used to spread His evangelistic work among the rural Tiv. They communicated effectively with their kith and kin — even much better than the Missionary could ever have hoped to do. Their mother-tongue communication set the whole of Tiv land on fire...on fire for the Lord!

Given such a background it was not difficult for the NKST to carry on from where the missionaries left off when they came to take over the mantle of leadership of the church. They had been adequately trained and equipped for the task of evangelism by the missionaries and by the Lord God Himself. We will continue to praise our God who made it all possible.

a. Preaching:

It may be necessary to look at developmental strides in this direction because the local strategies adapted in this area had far-reaching effects in the evangelization of Tiv land. Preaching, generally, refers to the giving out of the living Word of God to others, whether it is through prophesying, teaching, expounding or otherwise. It belongs, in the description of evangelism, to that type of evangelism called "proclamation evangelism." Here the missionary is not content to live the correct life for others to copy, but goes a step further and tells them the Gospel message. The aim is to convert the individual and to build up a strong, spiritual and virile church of Christ.

Many of the works of the various departments interwove towards achieving this sum total ministry in Tiv land. First of all, the schools that the missionaries had started helped in no small way to make the people generally literate, even if only to a small extent. The main thing is that this created a hunger in them for more learning, especially about "the beautiful words of Jesus". Since they were being taught in their own language, this meant that more vernacular literature had to be generated rapidly.

When a spontaneous revival swept across Tiv land via the so-called "Bush Bible Schools", there was a great thirst for more and more reading material. The Holy Spirit took care of this situation in a positive

way for the progress of the Lord's ministry in Tiv land by setting up a printing press on the field. This innovative foresight which was unique because by this time no other mission in the Sudan field had yet contemplated setting one up.

Many of the young Christians today who grew up at this time will testify that the innovative tracts that kept rolling out of the press in their own native language helped them in no small way to appreciate Jesus Christ and His love and salvation.

The printing press was set up at Mkar in July 1950. Among the materials being published were Tiv hymnbooks, Catechism, Psalms, New Testament Bible, and small tracts. Statistics of the sales in those days were very impressive indeed. Cassaleggio reports that between 1948 and 1958 (beginning from a time just before the setting up of the press in Tiv land), 30,000 hymn books were sold, 6,000 copies of the Tiv catechism, 10,000 of the Tiv version of "Pilgrim's Progress", and 17,000 copies of the New Testament. All of these were printed in Tiv language.

In addition to all this, over 200,000 copies of Tiv language tracts were rolled out and distributed. This was a very powerful tool in the evangelization work in Tiv land. Even though many were not yet very conversant with the word of God, still they found it easy to share a tract they had enjoyed with friends...and so the gospel message continued to spread.

Someone has this to say about the enormous power of tract distribution after it has been printed:

There are those who object to tract work because they have seen discarded tracts on sidewalks...A tract on the ground is not necessarily wasted. A man...while walking to work one morning picked up a wet, dirty tract from the sidewalk. "As I read it," he wrote, "I thought of ten persons to whom I would like to give a copy. Would you please send me some extra copies?" That discarded tract led to an increased circulation of itself.³⁷

³⁷ "Winning Souls with Tracts", Grace and Truth, in USA.

b. Spiritual Growth:

The first missionaries sought to build a good spiritual life for the Tiv Christians through regular morning devotions with members in the churches, and also by the publication of good daily devotionals, which the Tiv people could continue to use even privately for spiritual strengthening. Even before transfer of the mission field to the American Mission, the South African Mission had published a Tiv language translation of the in-depth devotional book, "Come Ye Apart" for use by the Tiv Christians. For a long time Tiv Christians used this "*Luun A Yesu*" and other similar works to cultivate a daily devotional habit and life in the small churches and homes. Evangelists and pastors patiently taught the church members in the daily devotional gatherings the deep things of our God. This was in consonance with the declared role of the apostles, which included ministering the word of God and prayer, as can be seen in Acts 6:2-3.

However, as time went on, sadly, this very important strategy for developing a strong spiritual life was no longer encouraged, and it eventually fell by the wayside. Before long it was completely forgotten and ignored, and today the NKST is again going through very painful birth pains to re-inculcate the daily Bible reading habit in its members. Many (even including pastors), who did not enjoy it in the olden days are very suspicious of such a move today, imagining that it is an attempt to corrupt the NKST with "other church" influences. A Christian ministry that no longer builds on developing a strong spiritual life for its members over and above all else is bound to run into trouble in the end.

2. ADMINISTRATION:

One ought to fear that in a local church where not a single person possessed the equivalent qualification of secondary school education, it would be virtually impossible to carry out the complicated work of administration for a whole network of churches like the NKST. Of course, it was not easy, but the Lord our God helped equip the Tiv Christians — illiterate as they were — and also richly blessed them. He blessed them so well that when one looks back at the very many difficult

and complicated administrative decisions and courses of action that the "illiterate" Tiv elders and Church Councils were able to undertake, one cannot help but marvel and say, "To our God alone be all the glory!"

The Lord raised from among them people He Himself equipped with the administrative wherewithal to carry on the work. Even though they had absolutely no training or experience to fall back on, yet the good Lord continued to lead them (almost blind on many occasions), into taking decisions He Himself had taken for them.

Many problems surfaced or came just under the surface in matters of administration, especially when the Tiv Christian Field was handed over to a new Mission with a different vision. The new Mission that took over had hoped to merge the Tiv (or the part of Tiv land east of River Katsina Ala) with other tribes in the Upper Benue valley to form one united and "beautiful" church for Christ. This was a very noble and godly idea indeed.

But the Tiv did not agree, and they subtly but firmly resisted all attempts in that direction. This earned them a reputation as a cheeky people filled with tribalistic bias; and for a long time since then that impression has stuck in the minds of many.

Edgar Smith wrote:

"It [the transfer] would mean that the whole vast area stretching from the Katsina Ala River to the French Camerouns in the East would become our missionary responsibility. One envisions the several tribes of this area as coming to the unity of the faith in one Reformed Church... This did not materialize. Tiv Christians in the transferred territory continued under the jurisdiction of the Tiv GCC [General Church Council], which always met west of the River.³⁸

To this day some that have believed this impression have done a lot to, or have refused to do as much as they could have done for this young church, sometimes with harmful consequences to the NKST.

The Biblical when Sarah, obviously out of jealousy, asked her husband Abraham to drive away Ishmael and his mother so that there

³⁸Smith, Edgar H., *The Nigerian Harvest*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan; 1972, p. 144.

will be no threat to her son's inheritance. This grieved Abraham because it was unfair, but the Lord urged him to listen to his wife, for it was He who was leading. To his credit, Abraham obeyed the Lord unconditionally, and that the Lord kept His promise in connection with Ishmael's children as well.

But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac."

The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring."

Early the next day Abraham took some food and a skin of water, and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulder, and then sent her off...[Genesis 21:9-14].

When a child of God is listening to the Lord, he is in a position to know His mind and to follow Him, instead of trusting his own reasoning.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight. [Proverbs 3:5-6].

Although unknown to the Tiv Christians at that time, they did advocate exactly what God had planned for them, and the other proposal, although sounding very good humanly, was not God's plan for the people...at least, yet. Today we can see what God was leading us to become, and we are full of praises to Him.

We do not claim that our founding fathers, the first generation Tiv Christians, were always right. We know this was not the case in very many instances. Yet despite that, the Lord has continued to keep us in Him. The Apostle Paul writes in the Holy Scriptures:

Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were

influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of this world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before Him. [1Corinthians 1:26-29].

Again we read this from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself:

At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was Your good pleasure..." [Luke 10:21].

3. ORGANIZATION:

If the Lord had not sent His missionaries specifically to the Tiv to preach His gospel to them, even promising that He Himself will be with them and help them, we probably would not be together as we are today as one loving family. Laura and Paul Bohannon wrote:

Tiv egalitarianism is more concerned with whittling everyone down to the same size than with giving everyone the same chance.³⁹

This is very true even today...for the unregenerate Tiv, and there are still very many like that today. However, by being united in Christ, the Tiv Christians (same with Christians anywhere), were able to learn to live together in love and pursue a common goal for His glory, forgetting the hateful nature of their old lives. Paul says:

And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. [1 Corinthians 6:11].

³⁹Laura and Paul Bohannon, *Tiv of Central Nigeria*, London International African Institute, 1962; p. 31.

The church organization adopted by the NKST followed after the pattern of their mentors, the South African Reformed Church. When the Reformed doctrine was explained to them and put into practice for them to see, the Tiv accepted it and decided to live by it. Whenever a problem arose, they always said, "The Dutch Missionaries taught us [or did not teach us] this way, or that way."

Even though they did not really understand what the Reformed faith stood for or said, yet because they had watched it in practice, they were able to use what they had seen and heard as reference whenever the need arose. This is a tested method from the experience of the apostles:

But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." [Acts 4:19-20].

This is what The Lord Jesus Christ Himself urged us to do — to live lives that will positively affect others and make them want to come and praise our Father in heaven.

In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. [Matthew 5:16].

We need to know that handing over was not something the South African Mission woke up one morning and decided it was time to do so. Rather, it was the target they had been aiming at ever since their arrival in Tiv land. And while they lived and worked among us, they kept on working towards the day when they could hand over the running of this young church to the natives and go back home, rejoicing in the Lord because they had accomplished their mission in Tiv land. This informed their life among the Tiv, as well as all their teachings. The Apostle Paul said to Timothy:

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy

Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. [2Timothy 3:14-15].

There is a key somewhere in here in the words of experienced Paul to young Timothy. First is the fact that there is something to be learned and to become convinced of, and there are people from whom it came. We must not miss this. But more than that, there is **great comfort when such a teaching fully conforms to the Holy Scriptures. The Word of God** is the only thing to make one wise toward salvation. Education and any other type of experience cannot. We praise God for His word!

At a later date the NKST found it difficult to go on training all her pastors in a seminary that did not hold fast to the "Reformed" teachings they had received from the South African Dutch. They felt that they needed to defend and uphold this teaching, and became very worried that this was being compromised in that seminary, which was actually a combination of many shades of teachings. Because of this the NKST asked for her own seminary which would ensure that the basics and fundamentals of this faith were clearly emphasized to their pastors.

Unfortunately, this too was viewed as another clear demonstration of Tiv tribalism and conceited intolerance of other peoples. This and many such things helped place the Tiv in a poor light indeed.

But the NKST is not the only Reformed Church that has been worrying over the years about tendencies that threaten to creep in from other places to compromise the truths that their faith stands on. Many other national churches also have their own seminaries where they emphasize the teachings of their faith to their trainee pastors who on graduating, keep on teaching it to their members. Others publish magazines that are sworn to defend their faith. We believe therefore, that the NKST was not asking for a wrong thing.

4. EDUCATION:

Education was one very important tool, which the missionaries used to help the Tiv people appreciate and receive Jesus in their lives. Cassaleggio says that it would be impossible to develop an indigenous church in primitive surroundings (as was the case in Tiv land at the

arrival of the missionaries), without setting up schools. If it is intended that such a church should ever become self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating, then the command of the Lord Jesus Christ ("and teach them"), must be obeyed even through the medium of formal teaching.⁴⁰

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 age. [Matthew 28:18-20].

The South African Mission made education of the natives an important part of their evangelization work. They aimed at helping the people to be able to read the gospel message themselves and truly appreciate it because what one only hears can easily be forgotten or become distorted in memory after a short time. But in the case of books one can read them over and over again accurately, and ponder over them till he masters the information therein himself.

The first school in Tiv land was started at Saai in August 1911. The missionaries had not yet mastered the Tiv language very well by then, and they started teaching in Hausa language. However, this was not popular with the Tiv, and not many children enrolled. Of course, many other factors also militated against the general acceptance of schools at this time.

As time went on and the missionaries got more and more fluent in the language, they started teaching in Tiv language. This greatly simplified the communication process for the Tiv, and they welcomed it eagerly. By the time they crossed the Katsina Ala River and came to the other side, they were already very fluent in Tiv language and familiar with Tiv culture, and thus were able to communicate much more effectively. This could also help explain the increased interest in school in the latter years of the mission work among the Tiv people.

⁴⁰Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p. 87.

TEACHING IN TIV:

A lot has been said about the exclusive use of Tiv language as the medium for teaching in the schools. Many feel that by this the missionary sought to keep the Tiv Christians in an educationally sub-standard condition so that he could continue to manipulate them indefinitely. Without denying this, for we cannot know the missionary's motives, yet we see that this has worked mightily to the advantage of the Tiv convert. His knowledge of the gospel has become very sound because of the mother-tongue instruction. It has also helped him to obtain the whole Bible in his language very far ahead of many other tribes in the country. And afterwards he had much less difficulty understanding other foreign concepts that he learnt in other languages, for he had learnt to comprehend in his own vernacular. Today education experts are advocating that initial instruction of children be carried out in the mother tongue or the language the child has learnt at home before coming to school. This helps to develop the faculty responsible for meditative thinking as opposed to learning by "cramming"

Wherever they went the missionaries included school in their package for evangelism. Initially the response to schooling was cold. In fact the Tiv people were suspicious of the school system, and did not want their children to attend them. They saw it as a way of teaching children to be lazy and to grow out of hand. However, as they became aware of the benefits of school and schooling they warmed towards it.

The missionaries did not consider school as a place for aimless instruction — even about the things of the Bible. Rather, they had a focus in the whole exercise, and their goal was to help the person to discover his stand with Jesus Christ so that he can decide to receive the Lord and serve Him with all his knowledge. The idea was to cultivate a healthy Christian character in the pupils, and through them, in their homes as well.

The first school in Tiv land, which was opened at Saai in August 1911, did not progress, it was the same with all the other church activities there, and eventually it was closed down. The next school was started at Zaki Biam in April 1913. This one thrived fairly well over the years, later becoming the premier school east of the Katsina Ala.

At Seva a new experiment was started in the area of education. The missionaries started an exclusive Girls' School. As we have seen earlier, they aimed here among other things, to lead the girls to the Saviour Jesus so they could accept Him, and also to cultivate good Christian character in them and train them in a few branches of domestic science. This work continued till 1956 and the school was shifted from here to Uavande where a more elaborate one had been built for this same purpose.

The place where schooling thrived most beautifully was Mkar, and here the first boarding facilities had to be built to accommodate the teeming pupils and their yearnings. School became a big point of attraction for the young people, and the Mission used it to instruct and help them to come to Christ.

Many of the pupils who were trained in these schools became very useful members of the young church, and eventually were the ones who took over the mantle of leadership from the mission. The bright ones among them were engaged as indigenous teachers to help out with the job of teaching, and so the system was no longer too short-staffed in this area. The use of Tiv language as the medium for learning and teaching was a big advantage in this direction. Later on however, it became necessary to go further and train the teachers better in the English language.

As the numbers and the needs of the people increased it became very necessary to apply to government to recognize and grant-aid education in the mission schools. The first such application was made in 1948 with regards to the Mkar primary school. Government insisted that before they would recognize the schools and give grants, they must have 100% control over staff and their salaries. This worried the Mission a great deal, for they feared that it meant losing control over the staff thus reducing their schools to the same level as the secular ones.

The one thing they feared the most was that government might forbid religious teachings in the schools. The situation was compounded by the indigenous teachers, who wanted the government support because that pay packet was higher. It looked as if they did not care much for the religious instruction aspect of their jobs.

Again our Lord worked out a beautiful way. Government vested the responsibility for the schools and the meeting of all standards in

here in the Mission, and also prescribed the minimum requirements to be met with regard to teachers' qualifications, buildings and the age of pupils to be admitted, favouring the young age bracket of 12-14 years. What is more, Government did not stop or hinder religious instruction as had been feared by the missionaries. In return she gave grants to cover for monthly staff salaries, capitation and other facilities in bulk instalments to the mission to supervise and execute.

TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGE:

When it became necessary to take the training of teachers more seriously instead of just picking bright pupils and assigning them to the role, the Mission embarked on a deliberate scheme to train her own teachers locally. Brilliant pupils were pooled together and trained specifically for the purpose of teaching. Initially the certificate being awarded on completion of the training in those days was the "**Vernacular Teachers' Certificate**". The lower version was the "**VTB**," which trained a teacher to teach only up to Primary Two in Tiv language. This training scheme was started in Zaki Biam in 1916, and went on till it was discontinued in 1927. After this the higher version of the Vernacular Teacher Training, the "**VTA**," was started in Mkar in 1928. Here the graduates could teach up to Primary three and four in the vernacular.

Later still the **Teachers' Grade Three Certificate** course was started at the Mkar Teacher Training College in 1952. Graduates of this training scheme could teach up to Primary four in English language. They were also qualified to become headmasters of Junior Primary Schools. The Grade Three Teachers' Certificate scheme was phased out in 1965, and replaced by the **Grade Two** certificate. Graduates here could teach all the seven primary school classes in English language, and were qualified to become headmasters of any full primary school.

The training of local teachers in a Christian School set-up received a big boost when in 1948 government gave a grant for the building of the first Teacher Training College in Tiv land at Mkar. The buildings were completed and occupied in 1952.

However, education other than for the purpose of training teachers did not receive more than the Primary School level of attention

from the South African Mission. It was not until they had handed over the mission field to the Americans that this area was addressed. Pupils who finished from the Tiv Mission primary schools and who wanted to go further had to find placing elsewhere, like the Government Secondary Schools at Katsina-Ala and Keffi, or the Sudan United Mission Secondary School at Gindiri, Plateau State.

We are full of thanks to the Lord for what He gave us through these missionaries in the education sub-sector. It was a solid base to build on. A sample report of the government Inspector of Schools in 1957 says:

"The general bearing of the students makes a good impression on a visitor. They are clean and tidy in appearance and well-mannered; the morale is obviously high..."⁴¹

"DIFFERENT STROKES":

Rev. Cassaleggio reports in his book that the South African missionaries discovered after starting the handover process that their views on education were different from the American Mission's own. He says they discovered that the CRC of America does not believe that education is a needed avenue for evangelization, but rather, that schools should be opened for the children of Christians because they are covenant children. This means in effect that schools were actually meant to help the Christian parents almost as a gratification to them for becoming Christians. It was taken to be the same as infant baptism, where the child does not know what is being done, yet it is done because the parents have accepted Christ. Schooling was not seen as an important tool in the evangelism ministry. Cassaleggio also says that the Americans felt that education ought to be the sole responsibility of the local churches alone, with no input from the Mission or the General Council of the Church generally.

When the stations on the East Side of the Katsina Ala River were handed over to the CRC, the schools likewise changed hands. In

⁴¹Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p 92.

1953 six schools with 19 teachers joined the sister mission. We were still responsible for 44 schools with 75 registered teachers and 25 unregistered ones on the West Side. There were also two Senior Primary schools for which we were also responsible at Mkar and Kunav. We soon came to know the different views held on educational matters by our Mission and the CRC. The CRC does not regard the school as an avenue of evangelization, but in their view, schools must be held for the children of Christians because they are covenant children, and schools are the responsibility of the local Christian communities, not the Church Council.⁴²

Smith confirms this when he wrote on the subject of "Covenantal Schools":

Christian schools and Christian school associations are highly favoured by CRC people and are an important part of the CRC system. In most other churches this is not true, for the CRC emphasis upon covenant with reference to its children is not common elsewhere. The DRCM had no like emphasis and it ran simple schools in Nigeria as a means of evangelization. This proved to be a point of difference for the two missions for the several years that they worked together.⁴³

How much this disclosure here affected the schools management after the handover may not be known. It probably did not affect it at all, for Smith says that despite their conviction over this matter, none of the schools became a covenantal school. However, the NKST believes, just as the South African Mission did, that education is a very necessary and important tool for the evangelization ministry, and has been given the church by Christ Himself. With this conviction in mind, she has been pursuing education vigorously with the aim of giving quality Christian education to our children, and not just because their parents are Christians, but mainly in order to shape them in Christ.

⁴²Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p 92.

⁴³Smith, Edgar, op. cit., p 239.

LOCAL HANDS IN EDUCATION MANAGEMENT:

The South African Mission not only involved the young local church actively in the undertaking of responsibilities in the area of education, but also included her in all areas of its organization and management as well. Tiv Christians served on the local schools boards and also occupied the seat of Assistant Director of Schools in the Central Schools Board. The first Tiv person to serve in this capacity was Mr. Mbaakaa Indyorhwer, who was so appointed in 1956.

At the end of 1961 all the remaining schools in the Tiv land Mission Field were handed over to the SUM/CRC. About 50 schools in all were handed over to the CRC by the time the transfer of the entire Tiv land was completed.

5. HEALTH:

Medical treatment and care for the sick is one ministry in the services of the missionaries, which talked directly to the Tiv man. The education ministry helped him learn to read and write, and thus opened a New World to him he never knew about before in his life. Again, agricultural ministry helped him get better yields from his farm and introduced to him many new crops that fed him and gave him more revenue (thus raising his standard of living quite appreciably). Yet no other ministry (except maybe, the preaching ministry itself) spoke compassion, care and love to the Tiv man as deeply as did the medical ministry. Cassaleggio writes about an incident in Zaki Biam:

Amachigh, meaning, "he drinks medicine", was widely known for his medicines used to treat the sick. The Tiv came to him with their sick from far and wide. Yakobu as a child had great admiration for his father; no one surpassed his father in his estimation! One day Yakobu became very ill. His father did all in his power to cure him, but no "aḳombo" and no medicine had any effect. Finally he said to Yakobu, "You had better go to the 'Ortese'. The illness is too strong for me." This was a severe blow to Yakobu.

...Yakobu went to Zaki Biam to seek help from the mission, but it was with a troubled mind and full of doubts. After a thorough examination he was told that nothing could be done for him.

However the missionaries encouraged him and told him about the Lord Jesus, the Great Physician, who was able to heal him.

...Many days passed before he was healed. It was during the long period of waiting that the Lord opened his eyes and he realized that it was not his father nor the Ortese, but the Lord Jesus who was the Great Physician of his body as well as his soul.⁴⁴

In another incident — this time at Sevav, again he writes:

In the same way Kohom, son of Ityav, was bitten on his finger one day by a night adder. The Tiv call it "igbinde". As a rule, after an "igbinde" bites a person, it starts bleeding, and if medical treatment is not provided at once, the person bleeds to death. Ityav consequently brought his son to the clinic at Sevav. Rev. Malherbe tried all possible means, but to no avail! After twelve days Kohom was almost as pale as a white man...As a last attempt he made plugs of cotton from the silk cotton tree to block up the small arteries. Surprisingly, it worked and the bleeding was arrested. With good care, Kohom recovered and the father was sent for. Ityav was happy and thankful to receive his son back from the jaws of death and said, "He is not my child any more; he now belongs to the Mission. You have healed him!"⁴⁵

Many such testimonies abound, and many lepers left their homes and camped in the Leprosy Treatment units at Mkar, Kunav and Shangev Tyev. Here they learnt about the Great Physician Jesus, and many gave their lives to Him and His service. Many of them became evangelists and other workers in the Lord's vineyard as time went on.

Again, apart from the preaching of the Word itself, no other ministry given to us Christians was so diligently and compassionately practiced by Jesus Christ Himself as was the healing ministry. Similarly, in a heathen community, none is as effective as this one for catching their attention and making them listen to what God has to say to them. It is a ministry very close to the Lord's heart, and it allows for His

⁴⁴Cassaleggio, E.N., *op.cit.*, p 40.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p 41.

compassion to flow out visibly (as it were), especially when it is approached in Christian love.

Rev Shinyi Ugô, one of the first-generation Tiv pastors, wrote:

The Lord Jesus revealed Himself in Tiv country, just as He did in Palestine, through healing the sick. If you go about asking Tiv people where they first heard the gospel of Christ, about sixty percent will tell you that it first came to them at hospitals or dispensaries.⁴⁶

Some people have tried to play down the vital role of this service in the ministry of the Missionaries who came to Tiv land. They tend to see the "Revival" in the "Bush Bible Schools" as being more significant. But in the Lord's scale sometimes things are not rated vertically as such, but are considered as complementary partners towards achieving a goal. This seems to be the case here. Even though we do appreciate its value, we are not saying that the medical treatment ministry surpasses the others in value, for they all interweave together. The medical services definitely were of great value towards achieving the set goals, but so also was the effect of the "revival" and the other ministries.

In a primitive setting like was obtainable all over Tiv land at the time of the coming of the missionaries, diseases were prevalent everywhere, and any child that survived to adulthood was a big miracle. Parents were preoccupied with attempts to help their young ones survive, and this was the underlying factor behind many of the religious and other practices of the people.

Everyone coming out to the mission field (at least initially), needed to undertake a six months basic course in tropical medical practice at Livingstone College, London. This was not only to help themselves, but also to make them able to offer some basic medical help to the teeming needy ones they were bound to meet in the course of their ministering the spiritual. With this training they were able to treat

⁴⁶Ugô, Rev Shinyi, *"The Freedom Brought the Tiv through the Gospel"*, *The Coming of the Gospel into Tiv Land*, (Publishers and Date not supplied).

many of the simple ailments, and do some minor emergency surgical operations as well.

The first fully trained doctor to come from the South African Mission was Dr. M.C. Dippenaar, and he came out to the field in 1918. However, he said it was virtually impossible for him to perform. He felt he just could not perform well under such conditions as were prevalent in Tiv land at that time. That same year he left back to his country. The first doctor who came and did some real work was Dr. Labuschagne, who came to Mkar in 1925. He recruited some young Tiv people so he could train them to help him, among who were Akpetyo, Akaa and Tarsoo. After some basic training and experience, Akpetyo was sent to run the Kunav Medical Centre. The initial hospital building was a grass-thatched round hut with a mud floor. This served as operating theater as well...unthinkable in this day and age, yet it worked, and many were helped in there. After two years he had performed over 78 operations in this place, and attended to over 5,000 patients.

TIV RESPONSE TO WESTERN MEDICAL PRACTICES:

Not all the people accepted the white man's treatment methods initially, especially those who stood to benefit from the old, traditional health practices. They continued to preach to people on the evils of the white man's treatment practices. This too was understandable, given the cultural setting in those days. Demetrius, the Ephesian silversmith had felt a similar tension in the Bible days when Paul came to Ephesus and began preaching a message that was certainly bad for his business.

A certain silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no small business for the craftsmen. He called them together, along with the workmen in related trades, and said: "Men, you know we receive a good income from this business. And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says man-made gods are no gods at all. There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshipped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty." [Acts 19:24-27]

Even for the rest of the people in the community, a cautious response to western medical treatment was "understandable", given the cultural setting they had grown up in. All their lives they had been made to believe that witchcraft is the cause of diseases and death, and time was needed for their minds to be disabused about this.

Anyone with a good understanding of sociology would not "blame" or "accuse" the Tiv people at this time, nor would they tease them because of their "wrong" belief. After all, when they were adequately convinced about this, they did not again abandon the new knowledge and "go back to roots". When a belief system is not out of keeping with the cultural awareness of a people, such a belief is not considered as "abnormal". Therefore, trying to give the impression that the Tiv opposed western medical treatment methods generally is not fair.

Dr. Labuschagne was later in 1928 joined on the field by Dr. Izak Le Roux, who was posted to Kunav to head the unit there.

A government grant was given in 1929 to build the Mkar Hospital, and work on it started right away. A decent operating theater was completed and put to use by the following year.

From then on many other doctors came out to the Tiv field and put in their own quota to the development of Christian medical care in the region. Prominent among them was Dr. M.L. du Toit, a lady doctor who stayed at Mkar for sixteen years (from 1942-1958). She was the person who started the scheme to properly train the Tiv staff, even awarding them certificates. She also gave special attention to the Tiv women, especially pregnant ones.

Because of her efforts and achievements in medical care delivery, the British government honoured Dr. du Toit in 1955 with the prestigious award of "Member of the British Empire" (M.B.E.) for her role in medicare in Tiv land. She was the second South African missionary in Tiv land to receive this prestigious award from the British government for meritorious services to the people, the first being Mr. Loedolff. In addition, she was later awarded a bronze medal from the Royal African Society for her meritorious services in Africa generally. This shows quite clearly that we are not blowing things up about God's goodness to our land during these days.

Dr. du Toit left the Tiv Mission field in 1958, and a few years later the Hospital at Mkar was handed over to the American mission. We will continue to praise our God for raising such zealous Christian people to lay the foundations of His work among us, and we hope that by His grace, the work will continue, even as it is doing right now.

Apart from good quality medical care brought to the doorsteps of the Tiv through the medical ministry by the missionaries, the Gospel was preached daily in the hospitals and dispensaries to patients and their relations. An evangelist was recruited and assigned this role. He also did the rounds and spoke to patients on their sick beds. In addition, every day's work was started with morning devotion by the staff. Cassaleggio quotes another medical missionary elsewhere, who said:

When to the prayers of the church are added the love shown by the medical work of that same church; or when to the love expressed through the medical works is added the prayers of the church, it is to the great enrichment of both.⁴⁷

Cassaleggio writes about one lady who met Christ in the corridors of one of our hospitals:

Yough is a Christian woman living near Apir. She was baptized in the Makurdi church. She has one wooden leg, but each month she walks eight miles to Apir to attend the monthly meeting of the Christians. She was asked, "Yough, where did you first hear the gospel?" She said, "My child was ill and I took him to the Kunav Clinic for treatment. Each day I heard of the Lord Jesus at the service there, and it was there that I gave my heart to the Lord."

In another episode, he writes in connection with a woman who was seeking to be baptized, who had been rejected at the baptism examination the previous year:

Avingir, one of the class, who had come again after being rejected the previous year, was asked, "Avingir, how did you come to become a child of the Lord?" She answered, "For years

⁴⁷Ibid.

I suffered from stomach trouble. I spent much money for the 'akombo a sôron', but to no avail. My trouble became worse instead of better. One day someone advised me to see the doctor at Mkar. She operated on me and I was healed. The day I left for home, she said to me, 'Avingir, remember it is not I who healed you, but the Lord. Now go home, serve the Lord who healed you.'" She went home and sought the Lord, attended the services in her village school at Nyiev. When her husband saw that she became a Christian and would no longer 'sôr akombo', he chased her away. From then on she had to fend for herself.⁴⁸

Stories like this abound in many homes, to show how the good Lord called people to Himself and His service through the ministry of healing at the hands of the early missionaries. We praise the good Lord who gave them the heart to bear with us in our ignorance, which sometimes made us rude, hostile and antagonistic. Their work has continued to bear fruit, and many can testify to that...all to our God's glory.

Apart from the two large medical units at Mkar and Kunav, smaller dispensaries were established in various places where the churches had been planted. Whenever possible the resident doctors in the larger units undertook tours of these places to help out, but for most times the local dispensary attendants in these places referred difficult cases straight to the doctors in the larger places.

What was obtainable in the larger health units in terms of sharing the gospel message with patients and their relations on the premises was also occurring in the dispensaries as well. Through this very humanitarian ministry many who would have been unwilling to listen to the gospel message were reached, and many became touched.

Of these early dispensaries, the ones at Zaki Biam, Sevav, Turan and Shangev are worthy of note for their great service to the Tiv, both physically and spiritually. As time went on, more and more dispensaries were being opened to cope with the increasing health needs as Tiv people came to accept hospital medical services. In fact, every church that opened in those days also wanted to become a center for medical

⁴⁸Ibid., p 87.

treatment. This was because the Tiv Christians saw and appreciated the great ministry for the Lord in medical treatment.

When the Saviour sent out His disciples to go and evangelize, we are told that He gave them power and authority to drive out demons... "and to cure diseases". When the missionaries obeyed this little injunction on the Tiv Mission Field through the health services they offered in the dispensaries and hospitals, the Great Physician Himself honoured His word, and people were not just physically cured, but many were won over to His kingdom in these places.

THE BENUE LEPROSY SETTLEMENT:

Leprosy was highly endemic in the Benue Valley by the time the missionaries arrived. Being a very disabling illness, it rendered many people useless for normal life. The Tiv society in those days cared very little for handicapped people, and the general attitude to all such people was just like the jungle practice of "survival of the fittest". Thus Saai gave out his son Akiga to the missionaries because Akiga was physically handicapped and therefore "useless to him." Cassaleggio writes:

To give a child of his to the missionaries was as good as reckoning him as lost. His gaze lighted on the neglected Akiga. His mother had left Saai, but had left the child with his father. One of his eyes was blind, and part of his foot was eaten away by ulcers. Among all his children, Akiga was of the least value to him. He decided to give him to the missionary.⁴⁹

Even their relations abandoned physically disabled young people who could not work and look after themselves. The Leper Treatment Programme offered hope for a hopeless group of people in the society. This was a very welcome message to these people.

The programme was set up with the aim of rehabilitating the patients well enough for them to be accepted again and integrated in the society, and wherever possible, with some useful job training that would

⁴⁹Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p 19.

help them live and fend for themselves. Because leprosy treatment is a slow job, there was need to camp them in a settlement for quite a while.

The need for a leper treatment programme was perceived quite early in the work of the missionary doctors in Tiv land. Dr. Labuschagne, the first South African Mission doctor to work in the field, saw the need. However, when weighed against the many other acute medical and surgical problems that were rampant everywhere, it was decided that more would be achieved if all attention was given to these more pressing problems.

Yet by 1930 some work had already begun in the area of leper treatment. A large piece of land was donated for the purpose just west of Mkar by the Ipyav Clan Head at the time, Mkôvor, and government approved it and gave a Certificate of Occupancy to cover it.

Treatment of these patients was residential, and patients could come with their families and settle on the land acquired while they received their treatment and participated in the rehabilitation efforts. The aim here was that as far as possible, such patients would be fending for themselves by farming within the land, and thus be self-supporting while there. They were also expected to build their own huts on the premises.

As time went on government became very interested in the venture, and suggested that if the mission would keep a good eye on the work, she would be willing to grant-aid the project. Initially Dr. Labuschagne was squeezing time from his very crowded programme at Mkar Hospital to come and see the patients every once in a while. This was not very taxing on him, and despite many appeals to the Home Mission, nobody volunteered to come and take on this ministry full-time.

It was not till Mr. Loedolff, the Mission Builder who was already on the field, was posted to the Centre in 1940, that the place began to have full-timers supervising work there. The good Lord laid it on the heart of the most unlikely missionary on the field to accept the challenge of spearheading the gospel of hope to this unfortunate group of people. We praise the Lord for the life of this man, who affected the work in the Tiv Mission Field more than most others through the ministry of building and of training local people, thus giving them hope and a means of livelihood. Many in the first generation of renowned

carpenters and builders in Tiv land trained under Mr. Loedolff and became useful citizens of the emerging new society.

With encouragement and support from government, this leprosy scheme expanded and covered the whole of the then Benue Province, with many centers outside Mkar. Medical and other staff from Mkar came to attend to the teeming outpatients from surrounding areas at these centres. Some of the centres were as far away as Keffi in present-day Nassarawa State and Rumaisha, a freed slave settlement where the British had started an S.U.M. Centre many years before. Later on, of course, these two stations were handed over to the Sudan Interior Mission based in Jos.

Medical work at the Leprosy Settlement included the serving of drugs for the illness itself, dressing of wounds and surgery where indicated, as well as rehabilitative procedures, including the provision of prostheses and shoes.

In the field of education, these lepers were being taught to read and write, and since they were living there with their wives and children, there was need for a school programme for their children as well. Consequently, a school was started here at the Mkar Leprosy Centre for the children, and the women on site also received special attention there. The women were taught such subjects as Cookery, Child Welfare, Needlework and the like. Mrs. Loedolff led this ministry with tireless zeal, and out of love and respect for her, the women on the camp gave her the venerable name of "AYA", meaning "Grandmother". Government became so interested in this area of women education that she started giving grants every year specifically for it.

A lot was also achieved in the area of evangelism among these patients. The gospel message was being preached regularly, and teachings from the word of God were being given continually. The first batch of three converts received their baptism in September 1937 at the hand of Rev. Scott (Ortese Bem). By 1940, with a mere six resident communicant members in the camp, a church council was constituted and elders nominated.

Many of the patients learnt crafts at the centre, like carpentry, building and other jobs under Mr. Loedolff, and many of them also learnt gardening and citrus farming. They carried this knowledge back

with them to their home villages, thus spreading the agricultural knowledge to more people.

It was not always so easy and smooth in the camp, and on not less than two occasions (being in 1931 and again in 1936), there was an epidemic of cerbrospinal meningitis in the camp. Many of the patients fled the camp and went back home, some not coming back again. The people assumed that the medicine they were being served was responsible for the epidemics, and it took a lot of talking to calm them down.

Yet in spite of all, the Lord's ministry continued to grow from strength to strength, and today we want to praise the Lord for His sustenance and blessings.

Mr. Loedolff the builder worked very hard at the Leprosy Settlement, and the good Lord blessed his work too. To show that we are not just blowing horns and praising Ortese Loedolff, King George VI of England awarded him the meritorious honour of "Member of the British Empire" (M.B.E) in 1950 for outstanding work among the lepers.

By 1953 there were no less than 78 locations where outpatient leprosy treatment was being served under the auspices of the Benue Leprosy Settlement at Mkar. Also in 1953 the first C.R.C medical doctor, Dr. Hermann Gray, was posted to the BLS, and he spent one year serving there.

The Northern Region Government, the Tiv Native Authority government, BELRA and the UNICEF variously funded the Benue Leprosy Settlement project.

Cassaleggio rounds up the story of BLS with the testimony of one of its patients. He was Gbakôron, one of those who were trained there and became a nurse in the hospital. Cassaleggio writes:

Such a one is Gbakôron, one of the male nurses at the hospital. He is a man with a good sense of humour, and is still under treatment. Gbakôron comes from Ukan. Ask him how it came about that he became a Christian, and he points to his face and says, "This disease!" He [had known] about the Lord, for he [had] attended a school where the Gospel was preached each Sunday, but he was indifferent.

Then he became a leper and his family and friends shunned him. Nobody wanted to have anything to do with him. So he came to the Settlement for treatment.

One day he read Psalm 41:8 which says, "A deadly disease has fastened upon him; he will not rise again from where he lies." He realized that this disease was from the Lord. In his trial he sought the Lord, but thought it was not suitable time. He went to a leper Christian and was told that with the Lord any time is expedient, [and] the sooner he went, the better.

Gbakôron sought and found the Lord. He entered the catechumen class, and in 1960 was baptized.

Yes, the work among the lepers in Tiv land, with its struggles in the beginning, has born rich fruit. By His grace lost souls were saved and maimed bodies were healed.⁵⁰

Hallelujah to God!

6. SOCIAL WORKS:

Principal among the social works the Mission embarked upon is the Orphanage, which they set up. This ministry was started at Sevav in July 1940, with Miss Inge Mosel as its first matron. However, when she left Tiv land in 1950 the work ground to a halt because there was nobody to take over the enormous responsibilities of being mother to so many hungry mouths. During the period of no more activity, and while efforts were being intensified to resuscitate the project, a plot of land was acquired at Mkar, and through the help of many bodies and organisations (including the Nigeria Red Cross), this ministry was revived at Mkar. New rules laid down this time stipulated that only babies below 6 months would be admitted, and they must leave by their seventh birthday, and guardians must pay a token fee upon admittance of their baby.

The first baby to be admitted at the Mkar Orphanage when it opened in 1953 was called Washima Senzua, from Mbagben Gaav. He was born on March 11, 1953, and accepted in the orphanage on 23rd March 1953. Many more followed him. The Women's Fellowship of the

⁵⁰Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p 71.

Tiv church undertook to pay the salary of the first indigenous staff employed to help out there. The Mission was responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the missionary staff there.

The orphanage was administered by a board known as the Orphanage Commission, which was appointed by the Synod. As time went on the C.R.C mission became more and more interested in this ministry, and many of her lady members found time to drop in and help out. Eventually they convinced their Home Board to take it over and send in qualified staff. This handover to the American Mission was done in January 1961. By that time the orphanage had handled 120 children, and at handover there were 46 children in the dormitory.

7. CHURCH GROWTH

DELIBERATE INDIGENIZATION STRATEGIES:

Some things were actively encouraged in the young, emergent church in Tiv land in order that a truly indigenous church, not just a copy of another church, might emerge in the end. One of the chief advocates towards this was Rev. J.G. Botha, who had come to the field with the very first batch of missionaries to the Sudan, and who single-handedly started and nursed the Jato-Aka (Turan) station to a mature state. Rubingh quotes Rev. Botha in this regard, saying:

One of the missionaries in Tiv land, Rev Botha, ...remarked that where the indigenous church had not been taught to stand on its own feet, it would be best to break down everything that had been with so much difficulty built up in order to begin all over again.⁵¹

These strategies included the development of preaching in the native language, the development of indigenous liturgy and many other para-church organizations.

⁵¹Rubingh, Eugene, op. cit., p 122.

1. LANGUAGE:

As we have already seen, the whole evangelization work in Tiv land was done in the native language — Tiv. The missionaries tasked themselves to learn the indigenous language and to communicate in that same vehicle. Though very difficult and frustrating at first, yet this move proved to be the one vehicle that speeded the mission work in Tiv land more than any other.

Many of the other tribes in the Sudan who were being evangelized at about the same time with the Tiv were being taught in Hausa language, which was the language generally spoken in the Northern Region of Nigeria. The Tiv, however, did not know a word of Hausa, nor were they much influenced by Hausa custom. Teaching them in a totally foreign language like that would have greatly hampered their understanding of the gospel message. We thank God for the wisdom He gave the South African Missionaries to take on this task. It has been truly useful.

It was only in 1914 that the first Tiv person ever put pen on paper to write anything at all. It is therefore, more than a marvel that today, less than 100 years later, Tiv people have produced very many university professors and presidents scattered all over the country, and are neck-to-neck with their counterparts in other parts of the country in all fields of social, political and academic endeavour. We believe that one of the most influential factors towards this was the early mother-tongue education system that the missionaries set up. Today the NKST church is trying very hard to revive interest in this system of education which, unfortunately, has suffered a big neglect.

The development of written Tiv language progressed very fast because many eminent scholars from the South Africa became very fluent in the language. This development speeded the translation of many literary works into Tiv, chief among that was the complete Holy Bible in that language, which was released to the public in November, 1964.

2. INDIGENOUS LITURGICAL SONGS:

Rev. Botha had started very early in his ministry among the Tiv, to encourage the Tiv to develop their own Christian hymns so that they could capture a truly indigenous mood of worship. He was convinced that foreign songs translated into Tiv could never effectively do this. Akaaer, one of the early converts from Saai with a knack for composing songs, set the ball rolling with a ballad that acknowledged that the former life-style was no longer acceptable to Jesus and God; and had to be discarded.

Ishôngo i Hii-hii:
 Me er asenge a Iyolshila wamoo...
 Ortese soo imbya la gaoo,
 Aôndo kpa soo imbya la zeoo.

Ishôngo i sha Uhar:
 Man mo m er asenge a Iyasekyuma mer
 a lu kwase a mo...
 Yesu soo imbya la gaoo,
 Aôndo kpa soo imbya la zeoo.

Mrumun:
 Yesu soo ipilakyaa zeoo,
 Aôndo kpa soo imbya la ga;
 Yesu soo ipilakyaa zeoo,
 Aôndo kpa soo imbya la gaoo.

Translation:

1st Singer:
 I flirted with my Smooth-skinned (lover)...
 Pastor does not like that behaviour,
 Neither does God.

2nd Singer:
 O, I joked with my Gap-toothed (lover)
 That she should become my wife...
 Jesus does not like that behaviour,
 Neither does God.

Unison:

Jesus does not like wicked behaviour,

Neither does God;

Jesus does not like wicked behaviour,

Neither does God.

This song was not accepted for singing in the church (probably because it was sung like one of the many songs used at drinking places, or probably because the words did not sound "reverent" enough). Yet it shows clearly that the Tiv did grasp the fact that following Jesus meant that something had to change in someone.

Over the years Tiv Christians have composed many beautiful songs that have been accepted and included for regular use in all NKST worship services.

ITYAVGYER FATE:

One of the most blessed Tiv composers to date was Ityavgyer Fate. Born in 1908 in the "Ukan" Clan in present-day Ushongo Local Government Area of Benue State, he later became a cripple in his adult life. As a young man he loved singing a great deal and even came down to Mkar to learn singing under one of the renowned Tiv traditional singers of the time: Mr. Yatsav Ugô. While at Mkar, Ityavgyer learnt to read and write on his own from individual people, but he had not met with the Lord yet. He married in 1932 and the wife bore him two sons and a daughter, but the girl died in infancy.

Ityavgyer took ill suddenly and dramatically one day after he had just come back from the farm. Without any previous problems, he bent down to pick a pipe on the ground and suddenly collapsed there, as his legs could no longer carry him. He had to be carried from that slumped position, and all through what remained of his life, (a period of almost forty years), this became his lot. His relations took him everywhere seeking medical help for him, including Mkar Christian Hospital and all reputed traditional healers, but no one could make him walk again.

To further compound his problem, Ityavgyer fell off his bed one day in 1963, and fractured his right leg. Healing became a very big

problem, and he had to have an amputation of the said leg later at Mkar Christian Hospital.

It was in this crippled and bedridden state that the Lord spoke to Ityavgyer Fate, and prepared him as His special vessel for evangelism among the Tiv for many generations to come. In a similar way, He had also prepared Saul of Tarsus many centuries before:

In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying..." "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem..."

But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! *This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.*" [Acts 9:10-11, 13, 15-16].

We praise the Lord very much today for calling His child, Ityavgyer Fater in great suffering and humbling pains to come and serve him like no other Tiv man has ever since, and helping the young man to know who was calling him. And when he started, he worked at it with the enthusiasm and joys that only the Holy Spirit of God can give to someone. Tiv Choir singers believe that his first hymn was what is now Number 190 in the recent Edition published by Lamp and Word Books. Here he sang a prayer of confession to the Lord about his previous life of sin. The song starts:

O Lord, our God, it was ignorance, we knew no better;
 [That's why] we paid the fee for the sorcerer,
 And killed the fowl in sacrifice;
 It was all in ignorance.

● But when I failed, it was the living Lord
 Who showed me the way;
 Showed me the Son, Saviour of the whole world...

When Ityavgyer started composing hymns people were trooping in hundreds into all churches on Sundays to listen to the melodious

numbers that were able to communicate the Gospel message so clearly and simply to them. And as they came, the Holy Spirit touched many of them and retained them in His house and service. What is more, the man's helpless but most cheerful nature spoke volumes to all who came face-to-face with him, encouraging them to take the committing step and give their lives to the Lord. He sang in one of his songs:

As for me, had the Lord not shown me mercy,
I would be a miserable cripple, with head bent down;
God is greater than all, [and] misery has run away,
Now I sing melodies [to Him]...

This message, and many others like it, have helped many people to understand the Lord God, especially when they too are in pains and their lives appear to be torn apart by suffering.

It is most difficult to find another hymn composer in Tiv land even today with a Gospel message greater than what the Lord gave us through Ityavgyer Fate. Many of his numbers had messages in them that even many ministers did not know or understand before.

Ityavgyer started composing hymns for the NKST in 1957. Initially his brothers and relations at home laughed at him and teased him for his "ridiculous" compositions. Disheartened, he nearly gave up the ministry altogether, but the Lord again sent his servant — the same one He had sent earlier to lead Ityavgyer to Christ — to encourage him. This servant of the Lord was Rev Buter Agba. When he came round and listened to the numbers, especially the unique presentation of the Gospel message in those songs, he recognized the voice of the Spirit of God in them, and encouraged Ityavgyer to keep up with the ministry. He brought the young cripple down to Mkar, and exposed him to more appreciative Christians. His last hymn was composed in May 1974, and is recorded as Number 507 in the recent edition of the NKST Hymn Book. It talks about the end of all of mankind.

Ityavgyer Fate slept in the Lord on November 7, 1974. It is believed that he composed almost a thousand hymns, but not all of them have been recorded. Out of the 1035 indigenous Tiv hymns in the NKST Hymn Book, Ityavgyer's own alone account for 315 of them. The deep messages the Lord our God placed in his compositions are still helping Christians today...and they will continue to speak to many more

even tomorrow in various situations that they may find themselves. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken...(Isaiah 22:25).

New Tiv Songs:

Dr. Herman Gray was, a one-time very renowned medical doctor at Mkar, and was better known to the Tiv as "Orimese" (or "the left-handed one"). He said in a paper he presented to the C.R. Ministers of Southern California on Nov 8, 1966 and to Fellow Students at the School of World Missions, Fuller Theological Seminary on Nov 25, 1966 that:

Hymns by Tiv composers, with Tiv melodies, Tiv instruments in church. Sung by Christians going to market, and so others hear the Gospel message. Some come to church to hear the new Tiv hymns. New hymns constantly composed. The best ones selected annually at hymn conference for inclusion in the hymnbook. Psalms now also is paraphrased. Each hymn must tell a story from the Bible or be on a Bible theme.⁵²

Cassaleggio also writes about this, saying:

The Tiv are developing their own hymnology, which fits in with their cultural background. Christianity has a long history, which cannot be ignored, but the Tiv have their own soul life and way of thinking. So they must develop their liturgy and hymns to fit that need. The Mission can find nothing that can be purified from the Tiv pagan religion to be used in the Tiv Church. In his language and song however, the Mission found a medium whereby the gospel could be brought in a form that spoke to the heart of the Tiv. There are already a large collection of Tiv hymns already in use, composed by the Tiv themselves in their

⁵²Gray, Herman, "The Tiv Church in Nigeria", Paper presented to the Christian Reformed Ministers of Southern California, November 8, 1966 and to fellow students at the School of World Missions, Fuller Theological Seminary, November 25, 1966.

poetic style and melody which are being used in the churches each Sunday. They are being added to and improved constantly.⁵³

Initially even these Tiv songs were sung in church in a very somber and quiet mood — almost as if mournfully. However all this changed when the NKST Synod approved that some local instruments be used to accompany the singing of the songs in 1960. Since then a standard and uniform musical beat pattern using native drums, cymbals, the flute and the "akacha" has been developed and is used in all NKST worship services all over the land. This has helped create an original and indigenous mood in the worship system.

The Tiv Choir is a very important part of the NKST worship system today. They are an integral part of every worship service, where they lead in the praise and worship that precedes the service, and also lead some of the liturgical singing during the worship services. Offering, for example, is usually collected to the accompaniment of NKST hymns led by the Choir Group.

The aim of the Choir Group, which is organized at all levels of operation in the NKST, is to worship and glorify the Lord through the ministry of singing, and also to evangelize the whole community. The singing attracts many listeners, and they pay close attention to the message coming out of it.

Activities of the Group, apart from the regular worship service functions, include regular meetings on Saturdays, to meditatively rehearse songs to be used in the Sunday services. They also meet on Sundays to rehearse some old songs and learn new ones. In these two regular meetings devotions are conducted for the members, and the word of God is shared in order to encourage and help build up members for the service God has called them into.

Also because this Group is the life-wire of all worship activities, they feature regularly at all of the Church's functions, like all-night wake-keepings for departed Christian brethren, and at burial services too. This service of sacrificial fellowship is highly appreciated even by non-Christians, and is a very effective tool for evangelism. It is among

⁵³Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p 101.

the biblical injunctions given us in Romans 12:15, to "Rejoice with those who rejoice, [and] mourn with those who mourn."

Apart from these regular activities, periodic (annual) meetings are held at all levels of the Group's organization, beginning at the local church level all the way to the consistory and classis levels. And every other year a large national meeting takes place where all the classes are represented. In these meetings, individual groups in the presence of all sing old songs, and their singing are critically examined to ensure that it is correct. By this method old songs and their messages are preserved correctly in the whole Church. Since Tiv hymns are not written down in music form, they stand the risk of being forgotten, either entirely or in part.

Also in these meetings Bible studies are conducted and speakers invited to share with the choristers on selected topics with the aim of encouraging and strengthening them in their calling. New songs are received and examined for the content, and the message in them critically weighed. If a song is found useful, it is accepted for inclusion into the large collection of NKST hymns.

Administration of the Choir and discipline of members is done by the elected executive at the level concerned, and cases requiring further action are referred to the council of elders. The Choir Group emphasizes good fellowship and Christian love among members and towards others, and they often lead the practical demonstration of this love in the whole Church today through their singing.

No church organization in the NKST can survive without the invaluable services of the "Mbaatsamev". If all the organs of the church were as alive to the ministry of the Lord's work as the Mbaatsamev where they are in the Holy Spirit, a lot more would be achieved in the NKST today.

3. SUNDAY SCHOOL:⁵⁴

This was one teaching avenue created by the missionaries as part of their evangelization ministry. Here young people were gathered together after church service on Sundays to be taught Bible stories and to learn some Bible verses, committing them to memory. Through this method, the Bible stories were being cultivated in the minds of the young Christians even in the days when the whole Bible had not yet been translated into Tiv. As time went on, attempts were made to centralize the teaching system and pamphlets of the Bible verses for given three-month periods were printed and sold to members and they could all follow together.

However, the idea of "Sunday school" service to youth did not originate within the NKST, for it was began as early as 1780 in far-away England. **Robert Raikes**, a benevolent Christian, became very concerned about the behaviour of the many unemployed youth that were just idling around. Many of them, as a result, became involved in crime and many other bad habits. As he sought the Lord's face about this, the good Lord led him to start a programme that would keep them busy for His glory, and also help their lives, winning them and other souls for Him.

Through the ministry of printed literature, he was able to gather many of these "delinquents" into schools on Sundays and teach them to serve and love the Lord. Generally, they were taught to read the Bible and to recite Bible verses and learn Bible stories. Though this may seem like nothing much to some of us, yet God richly blessed this "small", and a lot of good came out of it. Many youth were called unto the Lord, and many received Jesus in such places. This good work was noted and greatly appreciated by many churches and Christians. Ever since then, many missionaries have sought to include such a youth programme in their work fields, and have obtained positive results from it.

The early missionaries started this service in Tiv land as soon as they arrived. Thus as early as 1911 Mr. Carl Zimmermann started

⁵⁴Aboho, B.I.; MIM And Youths...Towards the Development of Christian Values and Spiritual Maturity...NKST Sunday School; Onaivi Printing and Publishing Co. Makurdi; 1999; p 31.

gathering young children in Saai on Sundays and on other days to teach them Bible stories. Even though it was not very well organized, this ministry continued, and mission-owned primary school teachers generally kept it going.

By 1976, when all primary schools were taken over by Government, even the Christian teachers were no longer keen on this unpaid work. The Sunday school programme suffered a lot of neglect during the ensuing period, and all but died completely. Then the Lord God raised a revitalising tonic in the person of Mr. Gosough Ikpa, a renowned schoolteacher, who went to the NKST Synod and pleaded for more attention to be given to the Sunday school programme. As a result he was commissioned along with a few other notable people to do the homework on the issue. This committee toured the whole of Tiv land, and afterwards presented a report for the resuscitation and revitalization of the Sunday school programme. This report was studied and accepted, and also implemented.

The first ordained minister to be assigned the supervisory role over the Sunday school programme was Rev. James Myima Ajoko. He started reorganizing the ministry again, and it was evident that the Lord's hand was on the work. After him, Rev. Hembraor Gajir was appointed in 1976 as the next pastor to oversee this project. It was during Rev. Gajir's tenure that this ministry was properly reorganized to the status of an NKST department, and the Reverend in charge given the status of an NKST director. It now became a full-time ministry with an office and staff and a defined scope of activity. During this time too the Department was re-christened "**Makeranta u Iyange I Memen**" (**MIM**), this being the Tiv translation of the Sunday school.

Since this time MIM has been on sound footing, and is doing very well indeed. The NKST Synod has modified this some more to incorporate a new singing and musical programme that has proved very useful in keeping our youth in the church. It allows for more youthful expressions and activity, to the delight of the youth.

The hymnology and drum patterns of the MIM differ from those of the Tiv Choir, for the MIM songs are more expressive and lively, almost as if designed to allow bodily expressions as well. They are basically short, and tell a Bible story, or briefly outline a theme or thought.

Dramatization of Bible stories is a common feature of this youth wing of the NKST Church. Other activities include regular meetings for the purpose of teaching the Bible. Every week the teachers gather the young ones and teach them from the Bible, pointing out relevant applications to everyday life, and helping them to mould their young character after the Lord Jesus Christ. Teaching is divided into at least three classes, according to how well the people can read. Apart from those who are very fluent at reading the Bible and Bible stories, there are others who can just manage to read even though with difficulty and a third group that cannot read at all. Teaching is planned for each of these groups.

MIM also plays the same roles in the Church as the Tiv Choir Group, leading worship services whenever asked to, and attending and participating in fellowship meetings like wake-keepings at the homes of bereaved members, where they also participate actively in all that is going on. They also hold annual meetings at the level of the consistories, and at the classis levels, and biannual meetings at the overall NKST level. Here they hold competitions in Bible verses recitation, dramas and singing and drumming, and they also listen to and accept new songs.

Although working with youth is not very easy, the grace of our Lord has been very much on this work, and many are getting blessed by the ministry.

4. THE BOYS' AND GIRLS' BRIGADE MOVEMENTS:⁵⁵

To further engage the youth in the Tiv Mission field the Boy's Brigade Movement, an international Christian organization for young boys. This movement provides an avenue for young boys to express their Christian faith. It has been in existence a long time. A Sunday school teacher called William Smith started it in Scotland in 1883. His aim was to produce a disciplined youth through drills, and thus help mould them for Christ.

⁵⁵Aboho, B.I.; MIM And Youths: Towards the Development of Christian Values and Spiritual Maturity...NKST Sunday School; Onaivi Printing & Publishing Co. Makurdi; p 180.

In 1939 Rev. Botha had suggested the introduction of the Boys' Brigade movement in the Tiv mission field. However, he had to leave in that same year, so he could not be there to start it. In 1940 the Field Council meeting gave permission for the starting of the Boys' Brigade movement in the Tiv mission field. The founding missionary was Rev. E. Coetzee. The movement was started at Jato Aka in Turan area of Tiv land in June 1942, and 15 boys were enrolled. They had a one-week training course there, with the leader of BB in the whole of Nigeria, Mr. Whale, in attendance. Shortly after this some young men were sent to Miango in Plateau State for another course. On their return they helped in the formation of more companies at Mkar, Shangev Tyeve and Idah in present-day Kogi State under the Qua Iboe Church. Pioneer members of the Brigade in Tiv land include Môôr Kpile, Haako, Joho, Adzam Gar, Ugbor Garba, Ndur Adi, Uji Anula, Mbaakaa Indyorhwer, Ahura Kpile, Nyitse Anjo and Ukpi Yawe.

Organization:

The movement is organized first of all at the world level, and further organized at national levels. Within the country it is organized into zones, which comprise the various state bodies. A state council is further divided into battalions.

Initially battalions in the former Benue Province were organized along the tribal boundaries of the various peoples involved. Thus there was a Tiv Battalion, an Idoma Battalion and an Igala Battalion. Today, Benue State is organized into six battalions. These are the Benue Capital Battalion (Makurdi, Guma, Gwer and Gwer West Local Government Council areas), Mid Benue Battalion (Gboko and Buruku Local Government areas) and Benue SouthEast Battalion (Konshisha and Vandekya Local Government areas). Others are Benue East Battalion (Kwande and Ushongo Local Government areas), Benue North East battalion (Katsina Ala, Ukum and Logo Local Government areas), and Benue West Battalion (covering all the nine Idoma and Igede-speaking Local Government areas).

Their elected executives carry out administration at all levels. At the lowest level is the "company", which must be connected with a local church and headed by a pastor or an evangelist. Where this is not

possible (like in an institution of learning) such a company (called a "cadet company"), must be headed by a religious instructor, and be specifically approved by the national body. Recognition of any group formed is based only on clear approval of the pastor in charge of the church. The company is an arm of the local church and is administered by the pastor and elders of the church, with the overall aim of training and moulding the youth towards good Christian discipline and character.

Objective:

"This is the advancement of Christ's kingdom among boys, and the promotion of the habits of obedience, reverence, discipline, self-respect, and all the tend towards a true Christian manliness." Their motto is "Sure and Steady," taken from Hebrews 6:19.

Activities:

Activities in the Boys Brigade include regular parades, Christian education, Bible studies, Bible quiz, Bible verses recitation, parades and competitions. Others include First Aid, Road Safety, Band, Arts and Crafts, Drills and Expeditions among others. They also organize BB Week to raise funds, a week of prayer, camps and many other youth activities. The movement also organizes regular leadership training courses at various levels to help in moulding leadership qualities in the youth.

THE GIRLS' BRIGADE:

This movement is very much like the Boys' Brigade; but it is independent of that one. It has as its motto, to seek, serve and follow Christ. It is a voluntary international and interdenominational organization permitted to exist in a church or mission of an approved Christian denomination. Its aim is to help girls to become followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and through reverence, self-control and a sense of responsibility, to find true enrichment in life.

History:

The Girls' Brigade of Nigeria started in Tiv land in 1958, with Miss. Voster heading it. Among the earliest members were Mrs. Ibi, Mrs. Akerkpev and her sister, Mrs. Achineku. They all served the Brigade a very long time, some of them up to their very last days on earth. The idea of introducing the Girls' Brigade into the Tiv mission field was to engage young girls and help mould them for Christ. Their motto is to seek, serve and follow Christ, and their aim is to help girls become followers of the Lord Jesus as their Saviour and Lord according to the Scriptures, and also seek to achieve its aim to the glory of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It also seeks to give positive teaching on the Christian attitude to the social evils facing young girls.

Organization:

The smallest unit of existence is the "Company" (or the Village Group), which operates at the level of the local church. A group of local churches are organized into Classes, and further into Districts. The NKST for example, is organized into four districts: Gboko, Makurdi, Vandekya and Katsina Ala. A minimum of 4 districts (usually spanning over a whole state), forms one Division, and is headed by a Commissioner. At present Mrs. Susan Yakobu is the Commissioner of the Benue Division. She also is a member of the national executive. What is more, the National Chaplain of the Brigade in the year 2000, Rev. T.V. Gbiligh, is a member of the NKST Church. He is the first NKST member to hold such a position in the GB hierarchy. Currently only six states in Nigeria have organized enough to operate as divisions, with a Commissioner heading them, but there are 27 states in Nigeria, which are member states in the Girls' Brigade. Benue State is one such state, and this is chiefly because of the organization of the GB in the NKST.

Activities:

The activities of the Girls' Brigade, co-ordinated internationally, are divided into four parts, and are referred to as the four square

programme. These are Spiritual, Physical, Educational and Service. Bible Study outlines are designed and produced together with the chaplain or pastor, and are used for regular Bible study sessions. These Bible sessions are usually interspersed with other activities in order to take care of the short concentration span of young girls. The aim is to sharpen their interest in the work of evangelism.

In the area of education, there are programmes that teach various trades and try to cultivate a creative mind in the young girls in the area of crafts making, soapmaking, production of oils, sewing, typing and other small jobs.

The service programme teaches young girls to work for others, especially the handicapped, the young and the aged. In the month of March each year they organize a Week during which time members go out to visit orphanages, play with little ones and pray with them, and also give them some gifts, learning to show the love of Christ to others.

Other activities include the holding of regular training courses (camps) nationwide at various levels to teach all its four programmes mentioned above in greater detail and promote the excelling members to the various officer cadres. It is important to note that although the Boys' and Girls' Brigade activities are closely related, yet they are separate, and aim to remain so.

5. THE CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP (MZOUGH UKASE):

We have seen how Government responded enthusiastically to all programmes aimed at educating and helping women in the region. Thus when the idea of a girls' school was started, Government responded by giving grant enough to build the whole school at Uavande. Even earlier on, when the Benue Leprosy Settlement had initiated a programme to educate women, Government had responded equally by giving annual grants to the project for quite a while. We believe that our God actually intended to lift the status of women in the emerging church and make them a very useful appendage of His ministry among the Tiv people and beyond.

Many of the female missionaries and missionary wives felt very personally concerned for the welfare of Tiv women among whom they were serving. Of these special mention must be made of Miss G. Schumann (better known to the Tiv as "Atese Jighjigh", who was Superintendent of Schools in 1940), and Atese Iyolshila (Mrs. Brink) and others. They did a lot to help in the formative days of the Fellowship.

Prior to the formation of the Mzough Ukase, moves by the Tiv Christian women and use them in the work of evangelization had already started. Evangelists' children for example, were actively involved in women evangelization in the villages alongside with their parents even before 1938. This sensitization and mobilization of Christian women for the specific ministry to their own continued till regular general meetings for women representatives was commenced around 1940. The female missionaries and missionary wives were doing the co-ordination, and Tiv women were also involved in it.

Following closely on the heels of this development the "Mzough Ukase" was officially started in 1941. The personal efforts of Mrs. De Lange (Atese Iveren) and many others like her must be commended. Atese Iveren was a great help in mobilizing the Tiv women together in the formation of the Mzough Ukase and in nursing the young organization to growth and maturity. She wrote the "Mzough Ukase Hymn", and taught the women to sing it. That song, number 143 in the new Tiv Song Book (1996, Lamp and Word Books), is the special song for the Mzough.

The first women to be deeply involved in the work were Mrs. Kime Alam (the first Tiv wife to be baptized), and Mrs. Yangana Akiga. Later on many other women joined in leadership positions, even as more and more evangelists (the husbands) were trained in Tiv land. But even after the Mzough had been formed, it was not till the parent church, the NKST, was formed that Tiv women occupied very prominent leadership roles in the Fellowship. At this time Atese Kuver Ishoribo Saai was made the first Tiv Women Treasurer, and Atese Nevkar Anum the first Women Leader. As time went on responsibility for the running of the Fellowship was relinquished to the Tiv women.

The aim of this Fellowship is to encourage women to come to Christ and to live for Him as shining lights to others. This aim directs all

two people groups: the saved Christians and those yet to receive Jesus as personal Lord and Saviour. To those already saved, it seeks to encourage them to live the life that will attract people to Jesus — a life that shines the beauty of Jesus for others to see and be attracted to Him. The Fellowship also seeks to reach out to those others who have not yet accepted the Lordship of Jesus over their lives, and attract them wherever they may be found, through acts that deliberately show to them the love of Jesus, and thus win them over to Christ.

Jesus said that He has many other sheep that are not [yet] of His fold, and that He is determined to bring them in also, so that they and all the others already in there will be one flock, with Himself as their Shepherd (John 10:16). This is what the Women's Fellowship seeks to achieve among the womenfolk.

Initially the founding Missionary sisters felt very concerned because the womenfolk were being neglected even in the church. This motivated their desire to rally the women together and try to correct this. Today the leadership of the Women's Fellowship confesses happily that the NKST women are not a neglected people in the church. We praise the Lord for this. Rather, they say that their women are naturally shy, especially when men are around, and tend to keep quiet even when they have something to say. Therefore, continued existence of this Fellowship just for them allows them to open up and express themselves freely over all the issues that trouble them. In this medium also, they feel free to go out to make disciples of the nations, as the Lord Jesus has ordered all His saved ones to keep on doing till He returns.

Activities:

The main activities of the Women's Fellowship hinge on **prayer** and humanitarian **services to the needy**. In the weekly prayer meetings held every **Wednesday**, they concentrate on prayers for the many women who are yet to receive Jesus in their lives and homes. They also take the problems in their various homes to God in prayer, and pray for those in need, including the sick, the poor and the bereaved. They also read the Bible to themselves and share from the Word of God. In this forum, members are taught the practice of sharing the Gospel with others, thus preparing them for that ministry, and helping them overcome shyness.

When there is a need, like if a member is in great need, they take collection and aid such a one with it.

Apart from this, the congregation is split into small groups and leaders appointed over them to help keep an eye on all the members even at home, and report to the leadership and membership accordingly. Through this arrangement they keep abreast with each other's current problems and needs.

They also have monthly meetings where they have more elaborate activities. Collections are taken towards their various activities as directed by the central leadership. Contributions towards worthy charity causes are also made at these monthly meetings.

The popular "tin" collections (known as the "bata"), was designed as a secret tithing system, where each member was encouraged to throw in a tenth of everything she made into a sealed tin with a small hole for the purpose. The member was not supposed to keep a record of the amount so dropped into the tin, and at the monthly meeting the leaders were the ones to open it and count the coins in there. However, some members were not faithful at this, and so the leadership changed the system and started defining the contribution that each member should bring, based on their assessment of the members.

Other contributions are towards some specific projects, like the Fellowship farm, which is added to the Fellowship's account, and also for the provision of "soup" to the pastor's house. Here they collect soup-making ingredients, either physically or in cash, and hand it over to the pastor's wife (Atese), to aid in cooking at the pastor's residence. This "soup" is in two categories: the literal and the "dry" soup. This latter one is physical cash collected and given to the Atese as upkeep money, since the Atese is not a worker on the NKST payroll. This is meant to help her purchase personal items, like dresses and so on.

Apart from fund-raising for specific projects as we have seen, the Fellowship is also seriously geared towards evangelism. Ideally, this should be carried out every month by the various church units, but where for logistic reasons this is not feasible, it is done at least once every year. Members go out in small groups to share the word of God with other people in their own homes and working places, encouraging Christians about their relationship with the Saviour, and urging the non-Christians to take positive steps to becoming His own children. They

also sometimes organize some dramas on Bible stories to drive home this evangelistic ministry.

The Fellowship's general meetings stop at the "Classis" level, where members from the various churches come together for a Bible study and general meeting session. Because women like colourful things, these meetings are usually made very colourful indeed. They all appear in their uniforms, with processions, dances and song. However, the leadership has been discouraging the spirit of competition in these activities, as this can create bad blood, and ruin a good and true Christian fellowship.

The Women's Fellowship is run at the church level by a committee of leaders comprising the pastor's wife as the "Mother" another member as the Women Leader, a Secretary and a Treasurer. These form the executive. The same is repeated at the "Classis" level. At the whole NKST level the Fellowship is run by a body of "Elected Ones" (the *Mbaitsohve*), comprising all the pastors' wives and nominated members from each Classis. This is the highest ruling body of the Fellowship.

Constitutionally, the Women's Fellowship is deliberately designed to function independent of the Council of Church Elders at the local church level, even though it is still under the overall supervision and jurisdiction of the elders. However, the overall administration of the Fellowship (the *Mbaitsohve*), is fully subject to the supervision of the NKST Synod.

Use of Funds:

The Mzough Ukase is the only institution in the NKST that operates this "suicidal" practice that insists that all moneys collected in a year must be completely spent at the end of the year. This emphasizes the fact that they are a non-profit organization. This spending is done by a deliberate distribution of all funds collected to charitable causes and to help the various arms of the church in the pursuit of their functions. Other monies may be channelled towards the development of worthwhile ventures within the NKST.

THE NKST GIRLS' FELLOWSHIP:

This is an appendage of the Women's Fellowship, born out of concern by the Christian women about the state of the young unmarried daughters even as they grew up among them. The mothers in the Women's Fellowship felt (correctly), that it would not do for them alone to organize and serve the Lord if their unmarried daughters were to be left out. They felt that since the young unmarried daughters are the eligible members of the Women's Fellowship upon their marrying, it was just proper that they ought to fashion out a good Christian programme for them too.

Objectives:

These aim at helping the young girls to:

1. Get salvation from God by accepting the Lord Jesus Christ
2. Love God from their youth onwards
3. To be watchful in their lives, and live godly lives
4. Learn to teach and help other girls to be fair to other people and to obey their parents and concerned about others. They also learn to show lives that will bring glory to the Lord God.

Activities:

This fellowship operates under the direct supervision of the more mature Women's Fellowship at all levels. Thus it cannot exist where the Women's Fellowship does not exist. All members are expected to be regular church worshippers. They meet regularly under the supervision of their elected officials and adult supervisor (called the "Mother") to study the Word of God through a Bible Study outline prepared for them by the Women's Fellowship. Other activities include plays and dramatic presentations.

Members who are of age and about to be married out of the fellowship are expected to inform the parent Women's Fellowship. In this way there is a form of regulation over the activities of members especially during the volatile teenage years of transition from young

girlhood to young wives and mothers, in order that the name of Jesus Christ is not dragged into mud.



REV. J.E.I. SAAI,
One of the first Tiv Pastors.



REV. J. ORFFER (snr),
MEMBER, TIV BIBLE TRANSLATION TEAM

CHAPTER 6

THE TIV BIBLE

Right from the outset the Missionaries realized the absolute necessity of giving to the Tiv a copy of the whole Bible in his own language and they worked tirelessly in this direction. This meant first of all, that they would learn the language themselves and become fluent in it. Secondly, they needed to teach the Tiv how to read and write, and thirdly they would sit down and translate the Bible into Tiv. So sure were the founding missionaries of this work and the results they were going to bring that soon after they presented the finished Bible to the Tiv in November 1964, they packed their bags and left. Some had remained around for three years after they had handed over the mission work to a sister mission in 1961 to see this life-ambition materialize.

No mission work is ever complete till the pagan has been brought to the stage where he can sit down on his own and read the Word of God in the language he understands very well, and have God Himself talk to him through the Word. The era of someone else always receiving from God to come and serve the people, as the Israelites did request Moses to be doing for them at mount Sinai, was over when Jesus Christ came and died for us all. Thus we read in the opening lines of Hebrews:

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in the last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word...[Hebrews 1:1-3].

Instead, the Holy Spirit says:

I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a

man teach a neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, "know the Lord," because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. [Hebrews 8:10-11].

From we learn from the Bible that:

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. [Hebrews 4:12].

There is just no gift a Christian can give to a new convert better than the word of God, to talk to him directly. Realizing this beautiful fact, the missionaries busied themselves towards the realization of this goal from day one of their work among the Tiv people, not wavering from it at all till they achieved it almost fifty years later.

Work on the writing of Tiv language and the translation of portions of the Bible commenced almost soon after the missionaries started work on the field. A few portions of the Bible were translated and printed in 1914, and Rev J.G. Strydom finished the translation of the Gospel of Mark by 1916. However, by this time the missionaries' knowledge of Tiv language was not yet very thorough, and their expression of many passages was not the best.

The second book of the Bible to be translated was the Gospel of Matthew, and this was completed in 1918 and out in 1920. Rev Malherbe assisted Rev. Strydom in this work.

The third Bible book to be translated was the Gospel of John, and exclusively Rev. Malherbe did this. He completed the work in 1922 and Rev. Botha was asked to revise it. Here there was a lot of disagreement about some basic questions in the translation, and publishing was delayed till 1924 to sort things out.

The Gospel of Luke was not translated before the Acts of the Apostles. Rev Bam did the translation of the Acts, completing it in 1930, and Revs. Botha and Vos edited it. It appeared in print in 1931. Rev. Malherbe translated the Gospel of Luke, finishing it in 1928 (along with Paul's Epistle to Titus). Revs. Vos and Orffer did the editing. This was the first work to be printed in Nigeria (Jos), all the previous ones having been printed in Britain.

By 1933 when most of the pioneer missionaries were exiting the field, a lot of the New Testament was still not yet translated, and so Rev Malherbe was relieved of all the other duties and assigned exclusively to Bible translation. He was moved to Mkar for this purpose. Akiga was given him as his Tiv assistant. The missionaries had all along been relying heavily on selected Tiv Christians to help them in the translation work, and no passage was Okayed till the Tiv assistants Ok'd it. Other Tiv assistants who served on the translation teams included Mbaahii, Evangelist Buter Agba and Shawon Ndur.

Rev Malherbe completed the whole New Testament translation together with the Psalms in 1934, and it was printed in two volumes in 1936. The first volume contained the four Gospels and the Acts. The entire one-volume New Testament was printed in 1942.

The job of translating the Old Testament was given to Rev. J. Orffer, with Akiga Saai acting as his assistant. The book of Genesis was completed in 1938. Altogether, the Old Testament translation work took thirteen years to complete, finishing in December 1950. Revision of the work was assigned to Rev. Scott (Ortese Bem), and he started in 1940. He did not continue for long because he was assigned to take over the training of evangelists in 1945, and Rev Gerryts continued from there. By 1953 when there were enough hands, both of them were freed from all other assignments and moved to Kunav so they could concentrate on the Bible work.

In 1955 Rev. Orffer requested that Rev. Malherbe's New Testament work be revised, and in 1956 Rev Gerryts was assigned to revise the four gospels and Acts, and Rev du Toit van der Merwe (Ortese Iyua), was assigned the remaining books in 1957. Rev Gerryts referred to the New Greek N.T. for his work, though trying very hard not to deviate from the previous translation.

Most of the changes in this revised work came in the Pauline letters, where some expressions were altered and delivered in simple, everyday Tiv in order that they would no longer be ambiguous or vague as they had appeared previously. Choice of language generally was aimed at the commonest expressions in everyday use, avoiding fancy language.

According to the missionary writers they discarded the "Ukum-Shitire" dialectal variation when they became more fluent in Tiv

language generally, and chose the "Kparev" variation.⁵⁶ However, what is found in the Bible today is really none of these, but the common Tiv, which all the dialects can easily identify with. Secondly, they were able to identify just these two distinct dialectal variations in the Tiv language even though there are many more than that, like the Kwande and the Ihyarev/Masev dialectal variations.

Meta-language:

While trying to write Tiv the missionaries discovered that in some cases no suitable word existed in known Tiv to express what the Bible was saying, and they needed to coin such a word or borrow from the English or Hebrew/Greek from the Bible to achieve a literal translation. The word "dooshima" for example, which we now know to mean love, was coined during the writing days for it did not exist in the Tiv vocabulary before the advent of written Tiv. This is a very well known method of language expansion.

Bible Versions Used:

Basically the English version of Bible used in the translation was the "Revised Version" of the Authorised (King James) Bible. This was the chief source of translation work, but for revision work, the latest Netherlands and Afrikaans (Dutch) translations were the chief sources. Constant reference was also made to the "Cambridge Bible for Schools", the "Leidse Translation", "Young's Literal Translation", the "Emphatic Bible", and a few American translations. In addition, Evangelist Buter always consulted the "Hausa Bible" for reference.

Completion of the Work:

With all glory to God, the Mission completed the work of translating the Bible into Tiv in January 1961, and it was sent to Britain for printing. This was just what the Tiv Christians had wished for. One of the wishes

⁵⁶Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p 106.

of the young Church had expressed in the talks concerning hand-over of the Mission work to the CRC was that the original Mission should train indigenous pastors for them and complete the Bible translation work themselves before handing over the work. The Dutch Reformed Church Mission viewed this as a sign of affection and respect to them and we thank God very much that they were able to achieve this.

When the completed Tiv Bible was launched on November 4, 1964, it became **the seventh indigenous Bible translation to be completed in Nigeria**. The Nigerian tribes/languages that received the Holy Bible in their mother tongues before the Tiv were Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Efik, Ijaw and Nupe. This shows how much the grace of God was on this work. Many other missions had been at this work a long time, but the Lord God allowed the work on the Tiv Bible to overtake them and be completed before them. Praise the Lord!



FIRST FOUR NKST PASTORS:

Kneeling (from left)
 Varem Ayaka
 Ishoribo Saai
 Standing (from left)
 Shinyi Ugô
 Nevkar Annum



ITYAVGYER FATE

CHAPTER 7

THE TRAINING OF INDIGENOUS PASTORS AND EVANGELISTS:

Evangelists' Training:

One of the things that was paramount on the minds of the Missionaries even right from the onset of their ministry was the training of indigenous manpower to take over the work one day. With this in mind they kept a close eye on the progress being made by the young converts. However, at least initially, progress in this direction was very slow — so slow in fact, that they closed down their first station at Saai after 15 years of "fruitless" work there.

Yet even during these so-called fruitless years at Saai a lot was achieved to the praise of the Almighty God. Work towards training devoted indigenous manpower started in 1915 when Akiga and another nominee called Buma who was not Tiv, were sent to the SUM Training School at Wukari. However, in 1916 after the ownership of the Tiv Mission field changed hands from the SUM to the South African DRCM, and the idea of sending people to the SUM school was discontinued.

A form of training school was started at Saai in January 1916, with three pupils drawn from among the first Tiv converts: Akiga, Alam and Teiyor. But because of a total absence of literature in Tiv language at the time, the training could not be very deep. It was about this time that Rev Strydom translated the first Bible book, the Gospel of Mark, into Tiv.

By 1919 some more students had joined the school, but they all had problems with consistency. One of them, who was not Tiv, left and went back to his land to serve, and another was dismissed from the school for truancy. At the same time it was discovered that the remaining three, who were Tiv, were all living in sin and had to be placed under church discipline. During this time they could not continue

to serve as student evangelists doing spiritual work and conducting services.

At one time the Mission felt so concerned that they started negotiations with the Presbyterian Mission of Scotland working in the present day Cross River State regions for loan of some evangelists, but this did not materialize because that was not our Lord's will for us. He once said to Abraham concerning the son who was to be his heir, that it had to be a son born by Sarah, his wife, and not by any maidservant. So also in our case: He destined that our own evangelists had to be Tiv people trained in the local setting by our missionaries, not those from elsewhere. All praises to Him!

From 1933 onward, the number of converts increased manifold, and it became possible to plan a formal school for evangelists in Tiv land. This school was opened at Mkar in 1937, with five students: Tar from Kunav, Peteru Ngukpa Agwabi from Sevav, Yerima Yakubu Amachigh from Zaki Biam, Mika Wende Agur from Turan and Mose Korinya Akaa from Mkar. Rev Scott was responsible for their training.

The second class of evangelists was started in 1938. This class started with seven students. After their training, this second set was graduated together with the first set following an oral examination in 1943. The ten who were successful at this examination were graduated as the first batch of fully trained evangelists. The following also graduated together with those who had started in the first batch: Paulu Gbajur, Elia Orkan, Levi Buter and Oteniel Wanima Ami.

The third class of evangelists was admitted in 1941, and included Achan Seta, Iyorhuna Ami, Nevkar Anum, Akpo, Varem Ayaka, Peter, Anyam Asombo, Akaaenger Atsegha, Bagidi Choko and Ilim Bomnger. This set graduated in 1944. At this time it was decided that annual refresher courses would be held for all the evangelists, to keep them in shape and in check.

In 1948 the Evangelists school was moved to Zaki Biam. Rev. Gerrys took over the training for some time. Among those who graduated at Zaki Biam were Chia Aminde, Atsehe, Azaagee, Akough, Hanmo Shawon, Kenti Anõngo. They were all absorbed in the Christian work among their own people.

By 1960, 39 Tiv evangelists had been trained and were employed in the Tiv Mission Field. This greatly enhanced the mission

work among the Tiv because being Tiv, the evangelists understood their people much better than the missionaries, and could communicate more effectively. They also lent a very useful hand to the Bible translation work that was going on then, helping the missionaries with "original" Tiv translations the missionaries would never have known on their own.

Pastors Training:

The first few batches of student pastors were drawn from the graduates of the Evangelist Training School. However, their training was not done in a vacuum, but even before this started there was need to put in place a form of church and church organization that was ready and capable of supporting its own workers. With this in clear focus the Mission started appointing Tiv Christians as "Church Supporters", whose role was to help oversee the interests of the emergent young church in the various stations. The aim here was to cultivate in them a strong sense of responsibility and leadership in all the various aspects of church work. It was from among these people of proven Christian leadership qualities that men were later selected for training first of all as evangelists, and then later as pastors.

After the first evangelists completed their training in 1943 and started working smoothly among their own people, attention was then shifted to the possibility of training indigenous pastors. A committee to study this feasibility and recommend to the Mission was constituted in April 1946. They needed people with a high enough spiritual commitment and a good academic qualification, but they could find no more than two people who fitted this role initially, especially with regard to the academic qualification desired. Consequently the academic standard was lowered to Primary Standard VI to accommodate more people.

In March 1950 four candidates, most of them graduates of the Evangelists Training programme, were selected and presented to their various Local Church Councils for recommendation. After such a screening by their local church councils these four were admitted for the

pastor training. The four were Nevkar Anum, Ishoribo Saai, Varem Ayaka and Shinyi Ugô.

However, none of the candidates admitted in this first batch possessed even this lowered academic qualification, and they had to be trained to attain that standard before the theological training could be started. Miss Schumann (Atese Jighjigh) was assigned to train them and help them acquire the Standard Five qualifications. For this purpose they were all moved down to Shangev. In 1951 they returned to Mkar to continue their Standard Six training.

Finally in October 1952 their theological training was commenced at Mkar, with Rev Gerryts (Ortese Teghlee) as their trainer. Rev Orffer joined him in 1955. Subjects taught in their curriculum included Introduction to the Old and New Testaments, Exegesis and Ethics, Dogmatics and Dogma History, Church Order, Geography of Palestine, The Pastoral Office, Homiletics and Church History. All of these were translated and adapted in Tiv language to be presented to the students.

It took these four students seven years to complete their training as pastors, the two "preliminary training" years inclusive. They completed their training in July 1956, after being successful at the prescribed final examinations. They then proceeded on Practical Work till the end of the year, for the young church to officially accept them and work with them had not yet been organized. But soon after this took place in January 1957 they were examined and accepted by the NKST. They were also free to be called and to accept calling by any of her consistories.

A second pastor training course was begun in 1957 with Rev Peter Ipema of the CRC as their teacher. Rev van der Merwe later succeeded him. They were moved to Zaki Biam for their training. This second batch comprised three students, also drawn from the old Evangelists Training programme. These were Yakubu Amachigh, Kenti Anôngo and Hanmô Shawon. They began their training in March 1957, and were later joined in April by Evangelist Tar Shande from Adikpo.

They did not receive the preliminary academic training that the first batch had received, and their training was very short. The Americans, who by now were featuring more and more on the scene, had urged for a short course. They therefore completed their training in

August 1958 and in September of the same year, were examined and accepted by the NKST Synod, and approved for calling.

The third batch of eight students was admitted for training as pastors in January 1959. All but one of them, were previously trained evangelists. The NKST Synod Committee screened and rejected two of them, leaving six to continue with the training.

THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF NORTHERN NIGERIA:

All the pastors trained locally for the NKST this far had been trained exclusively in the vernacular. This posed limitations to the content and quality of their training, as well as to their exposure. There was need for a more comprehensive training for future pastors in English language, to make them better equipped. Such better-trained pastors would be in a position not only to offer quality pastoral service, but would also be able to train indigenous manpower for the church when the need arose.

This need to have better trained workers for the African Church was not perceived only in the Tiv Mission Field, but it was felt in all the emerging young churches of the Sudan region. The SUM, serving in five main areas of the Sudan at the time, also felt this need and set the machinery in motion in 1955 to realize such a dream. Dr. Harry Boer, a one-time missionary with the SUM CRC in Nigeria, was approached to undertake a feasibility study in Nigeria on the subject matter by touring the existing Theological Seminaries in Southern Nigeria with a view to setting one up for the young churches in the North. His report was accepted by the conference of all the churches in the Sudan thus: "Conference heartily endorses the principle of cooperation with other evangelical mission bodies of Northern Nigeria in a united theological training school, and encourages Dr. Boer to continue work on this project."⁵⁷

However, when the Theological College of Northern Nigeria finally took off in 1959, there were varied opinions in the CRC Synod, about the extent of involvement of the CRC in such a joint venture.

⁵⁷Smith, Edgar H., op. cit. p 250.

Some of the members, who formed the majority of the committee that had looked at the issue, were agreed that the CRC should participate fully in the events at TCNN without fear of compromising their Reformed principles. But a minority, in their own report, did not favour such a move, preferring that CRC should develop its own Reformed pastors training programme.

Consequently the June 1959 CRC Synod set up its own committee to look into the issue and report back. This committee recommended as follows, according to Smith:

1. The CRC **participate in TCNN only to the extent of loaning** Dr. H. Boer as teacher of Reformed Theology at TCNN...
 3. That Synod declare that a Missionary-Teacher loaned to teach at TCNN is not thereby violating his ordination vows.
- Grounds:
- a. The CRC does not assume responsibility for the teachings of others in the school.
 - b. The constitution of the TCNN guarantees the teacher freedom to present his doctrinal convictions and to refute all error.⁵⁸

As a result of these recommendations the CRC Synod decided that:

In response to the invitation to be a member of the TCNN Synod expresses its appreciation, but regrets that in view of its total commitment to the Reformed faith it cannot see its way clear to be co-responsible for the college which may present many different doctrines...

Synod instruct the Christian Reformed Board of Missions and the Nigerian General Conference to maintain and develop the Reformed Pastors' Training Programme in Nigeria with a view hopefully to establishing a Reformed Theological Seminary.⁵⁹

This laudable decision by the CRC Synod as the final deciding body was however challenged by the NGC (the local Mission body on the field), who wrote:

⁵⁸Ibid., p 252.

⁵⁹Ibid.

"We adhere to the position regarding the desirability of a united theological seminary which we have held from the beginning. In view of these consideration, and considering that the Tiv and East Benue churches have consistently supported the TCNN and that strained relationships would be formed between our mission and the churches, and between these churches and their sister churches in the Tarayya; NGC cannot in good conscience support the founding of a separate seminary in competition with TCNN..."⁶⁰

We have gone to great lengths here to quote this background drama because when eventually the NKST sought permission and blessings to set up her own Reformed Theological Seminary later, a lot of bad blood generated. But Smith still notes:

Upon reflection we can see that NGC had explained clearly in 1960 that it could not implement the decisions of the Synod of 1959 where the promotion of a Reformed seminary was concerned. Counsel had been sought and the replies granted did not alter that situation at all. Through 1964 the position remained the same and was not altered later on.⁶¹

The NKST did not reject Bukuru, nor did they stop sending their students to train there. Up till today her members are still attending that institution, and the Church is still sending in her contributions for the upkeep of the school.

The Reformed Theological College of Nigeria:

Despite the failure by the CRC Synod to act as they sought, the NGC continued to insist that a Reformed seminary was not needed in the Sudan. In December 1966 the NKST wrote direct to the CRC Board of Foreign Mission requesting for "a separate school." The NGC however,

⁶⁰ibid.

⁶¹ibid.

viewed it as "a tribal institution" which, it felt convinced, could not "make a great contribution to brotherly love." Smith writes:

For twelve years and with repeated and considerable risk of being unpopular with the church at home the missionaries consistently held a position which **they felt** to be the only one which would bring glory to God.⁶²

We want to thank our God who decided to allow the establishment of the Reformed Theological College of Nigeria at Mkar for the NKST, despite such persistent opposition. We are very convinced that today the RTCN has proved itself as a huge blessing not only to the NKST as was feared, but also to many other churches throughout Nigeria and Africa generally. Today it has become clear that the establishment of this separate Reformed theological seminary is yet another way to bring glory to our God...and we gladly say, "Thanks Lord, for the gift of RTCN to us!"



**Rev. C. ZIMMERMANN,
The first Missionary in
Tiv land, 17.4.1911.**

CHAPTER 8

EVENTS IN TIV LAND AT THE TIME OF THE COMING OF THE GOSPEL

The coming of the Gospel message to us in Tiv land did not take place in a vacuum in history. Thus many other things were happening in Tiv land and to Tiv people during this time period, which had impact on them in one way or another, and mention ought to be made of them too. Some of these things relate to the former way of life of the Tiv before the advent of the Gospel message to them. It would be good to see how the Gospel influenced and changed them, or how the Gospel had difficulty penetrating because of such held beliefs and practices.

1. Witchcraft (*Tsav*):

Much has been said about the Tiv people and their belief in witchcraft — almost as if this was peculiar to them. But no tribe yet to be influenced by the gospel message has ever been any different anywhere in the world. We do not dispute the "fact" that the Tiv held many "strange" beliefs before the Gospel message was presented to them. However, the important thing we see is that the good Lord God decided in His infinite mercies to shine the light of the Gospel of His grace and salvation on us, and true to the power of His word, we have responded positively as a result.

When Paul came to Athens and saw the many idols that literally dotted every street corner, the Bible tells us that he was very distressed about it all. In his distress he acted humanly by engaging the people in disputes (arguments) in the church (the synagogue) and in the market places. But how much good did that attitude do him and his mission? We do not know, but when the Holy Spirit Himself led him to the altar set up to honour "the Unknown God", He gave Paul positive utterance, which would benefit the people and win them to Christ.

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there...

...Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown, I am going to proclaim to you." [Acts 17:16-17, 22-23].

If we must dwell on the "fact" that the Tiv were superstitious worshippers of witchcraft, let us also open our eyes and see the beauty of what God has done to them by helping them to cast away all of that, and embrace His Gospel. Only then can we be discussing the history of Tiv Religion in a Christian setting and in such a way as to glorify God. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:11:

And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

The Bible teaches us to look beyond the sinful past and behold the beauty of the salvation in Jesus Christ each time we see a saved child of God. Dwelling on the sordid details of a sinful past life, without taking note of the salvation from Christ, will always distort a Christian's view of his brother. This leads to judging and condemning, which is something the Bible forbids of us. Paul says:

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so longer [2 Corinthians 5:16].

Neither should we today. However, a detailed study of the negative, unless where and when directed by the Holy Spirit for achieving His purposes of salvation, can only lead to a lack of love among brethren.

Having said that, we are not afraid or ashamed of admitting that we once lived in horrible darkness in our land before 'the light of Jesus came to us. And here we quote Ephesians 2:1-5 to show it, even claiming all of it in our case too, in Jesus' name:

As for you, you were once dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. *All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts.* Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. *But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved.*

Now that Jesus has saved us by His grace, we need to forget the "negative" past and press forward towards the prize set for us in Him. It is this that makes us want to praise our God...the fact that even hopeless wretches like us in Tiv land have attracted His attention and prompted His love and salvation. We will continue here and everywhere else to praise Him for His wonderful grace to us...to a people otherwise unlovable, unknown, despicable and ungrateful.

Oh, the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God that God should repay him? For from him and through him are all things. To him be glory forever! Amen. [Romans 11:33-36].

2. "Na akaa": The Massive Government Clampdown on Witchcraft:

This took place around 1930. It was said that a Tiv man from the Ukum clan East of the Katsina Ala River came to Katsina Ala' to lodge a "complaint" of breach of confidence against his people. He claimed that his people had promised him a chieftaincy if he would give them someone to kill and eat. According to him, after they killed and eaten

the man, they did not give him the chieftaincy again. So he was seeking compensation. He presented a human skull and a piece of human skin to "prove" his story.

This incredible story was treated with all seriousness by the colonial administration, and an investigation was instituted. Government learnt during the investigation that every chieftaincy installation was preceded by a human meal sacrifice. At this she reacted swiftly, ordering the arrest of all chiefs in Tiv land and forcible retrieval of all their instruments of witchcraft, especially the cherished "imborivungu", believed to be the most sacred instrument that a Tiv male could possess. It was believed that this was handed down from father to son, and it was believed to be the most powerful "protection" weapon against all wicked forces. Only the presentation of such stuff could save one from continued merciless torture by the overzealous Native Authority policemen.

This action brought untold hardships on the poor, "innocent" chiefs, whose "mouths" had killed them. Such talk was often peddled in order to scare the youth into staying in check in the society. Now the chiefs had to pay very dearly for their "idle" talks, for the colonial Government believed it verbatim, and took them up on their words.

Many people hurriedly made various gadgets and handed them in with all seriousness and weird claims in order to save their loved ones from the clutches of the ruthless policemen. Many old people lost their lives in this exercise, but no one could prove that such a thing ever did happen. Some missionaries tried to investigate into the matter, but no one could find any truth in the allegations.⁶³

3. The "Inyamibuan" Movement:

This was a movement that swept across the whole of Tiv land in 1939. It was more of a religious campaign, and it claimed to offer "eternal life" to people who were initiated into it. Many Tiv were interested in it, and many Christians also backslid and joined in the ceremony. Because

⁶³Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p 37.

of this promise that an initiate would never die, many that performed the rites became saucy to constituted authority, thus bringing a general breakdown of law and order in the land. Also, because the initiate was told he would not die no matter what happened, very little attention was paid to farm work, which was the sole means of sustenance. As a result, a famine followed soon in the wake of the movement, helping to sober the people up.

Many things helped to make this movement unique at this time, prominent among which was the fact that no such thing of that magnitude had been reported in Tiv land before. However, people even before this had claimed many crazy things.

Because of the wide patronage enjoyed, the organizers of the "Inyamibuan" became very bold indeed. They learnt to organize themselves along the lines they had seen in the colonial government and the missions. At the top was the "chief", who had a "policeman" he could order to do things for him, and a "messenger" he could send. There also was a "doctor" to prepare the potions, and a "missionary" and his "wife" (atese), to administer it.

Basically, an intending initiate had to pay the initiation fee of four pennies (or a fowl), and an egg (or a halfpenny) to the chief, after which the messenger would go into the bush and gather the required shrubs for the concoction to be made. This was prepared with an excessive amount of pepper spice. The "doctor" prepared this and the missionary administered it, first of all calling on the initiate to "confess" to being a bad person in need of purification, and also in need of power to not die even when someone sought to kill him. After this ceremony, the person was given the concoction to drink. Many people could not hold this down, and many died as a result of the cathartic effects of the preparations. But those who survived it were very sure that they "had arrived".

At the end of the ceremony, the initiate was given a small fly whisk and a painted stick as symbols of his new status, and as weapons for seeking out wicked people who kill others through witchcraft, and destroying them. Through this means the organizers of the "Inyamibuan" movement aimed at ridding the society of all the wicked people who were "spoiling the land" through deaths and diseases.

The "Inyamibuan" had two or more aims in mind. First of all, there was this offer of "eternal life" to all initiates. This was very enticing bait to dangle to the Tiv people in those days, for the original Tiv religion did not believe a life after death. Their idea of an after-life was definitely nothing like what the Missionary taught. Generally, the Tiv used to believe that once a person died, everything was over for him. This informed their intense anger at death and disease: they fought very hard not to die.

Christianity was the first teaching about eternal life that the Tiv man received, and "Inyamibuan" thus was a crude distortion of that teaching. Now that the Tiv heard that there was such a thing as eternal life, the "Inyamibuan" organizers tried to reduce it to "a Tiv man's level", to make it more "real". They turned the concept into a business, and tried to rip some gain from it for themselves. Our Lord Jesus once drove out some people who by their action in the Temple, sought to turn His Father's house into "a den of robbers" in a similar way.

Another aim of the "Inyamibuan" movement organizers was to use the initiates to fight and rid the land of wicked people who were spoiling it. Rather than sit in court themselves and try such people, they cunningly made their initiates do it for them. The whole land was virtually turned upside-down in no time at all as zealous initiates went everywhere seeking out "wicked people" to torture and destroy. The guarantee that they would never die made them very bold, and they showed flagrant disrespect to constituted authority, whether it be traditional, colonial or missionary. Not until Government stepped in to stamp out the order, did they consider that authority still existed after their initiation.

But perhaps more than the above aims, the clever organizers of this movement sought to capitalize on the gullibility of the Tiv people and make fast money...and this they did, and plenty too. These "con men" realized that this eternal life idea was very appealing to the Tiv, and also that many who followed the missionary did not even understand it well enough. When they re-presented it mixed with the superstitious in the context of current social problems, the gullible public believed it as authentic.

The results of this movement were many. First of all, the people were deceived and their money taken from them. As a matter of fact

soon after this wave hit Tiv land and people were paying to get the "service", it became clear that many could not pay their tax to Government. This was one of the areas where people started getting into trouble because of the movement.

Secondly, farm work was generally neglected during this movement; till at the end of the farming season there was a great shortage of food, with an attendant famine that rudely shocked many out of the Dream State they had gone into.

Thirdly, the people came to see that even many of those who had purchased this "immunity" to death were still dying. At this many started wondering whether the claims were true at all. The resultant disillusionment also contributed to killing the movement spontaneously.

Many in the Church were accused of being wicked people, and were tortured and maltreated. Schools, especially the "Bush Bible Schools", were forcibly closed down and members rough-handled because they were alleged to be wicked people who were spoiling the land. The reason was that they failed to accept the "in-thing".

Many people have analyzed the "Inyamibuan" Movement and come up with fanciful conclusions as to the root causes that led to it. Many believe that widespread corruption by the elders and leaders was responsible, while others say that it was "the enemy" trying very hard to confuse the work of Christ among the Tiv. Those people have implied that it was a religious battle between the forces of evil and the Christian work that was going on in the land.

Some have said it was a societal revolt against the colonial government, which was over-taxing the people. But taxes were being paid prior to this movement, and "revolt", if any, was evident only after the movement had started. Again, others have said that restive young people were revolting against a corrupt eldership. However, by this time it was very clear that the young people no longer took the leadership of the elders very seriously, for they had found out that if someone had the means he could climb to great heights even if he was young. One could go over to the Jukun and pay to become a titled person, known as "tor agbande". Thus seeking to blame the corruption of the elders may not be the entire story.

We cannot state categorically that one, and not the other factor, was mainly responsible for this outcome. Rather, it is possible that

many of them did play a part to some extent in bringing this movement to prominence. For example, it was definitely a religious revolt, and it also was a revolt against bad governance. Since government in the old Tiv society could not be dissociated from religion, it makes sense also to see it as both.

But more than anything else, it was a confidence-swindling job, and the people tricked the Tiv and made lots of money from them. We can say this confidently because up till today (even in the year 2000), we are having very similar movements plaguing Tiv land. "Inyamor" and "Anyamkwase" are very contemporary names in Tiv land even today. The pattern of operation of the contemporary confidence tricksters who pose as reformers bent on fishing out bad people engaged in spoiling the land is exactly the same as it was more than sixty years ago during the "inyamibuan". The problem is still with us even today, and "Inyamibuan" is no news to the modern Tiv man because it is occurring "live" even today. The idea of confidence swindling therefore, makes more sense than revolt or attempts at reformation.

4. Marriage:

Concerning our way of life, the white missionary said that he found no good thing at all in the Tiv life that he could dust up and use in the Gospel that he brought to us.⁶⁴ Thus evil intent was read into everything that the Tiv man did. The missionary did not try to sit down with the Tiv to try and understand him and some of his practices, but decided that the Tiv had to change, period!

The Judean brethren towards the Gentile Christians had demonstrated a similar type of "rigidity", and this resulted in a strong argument, which went all the way to the Jerusalem Synod. The Judean brethren, without consulting the Holy Spirit for clearance and direction, had decided that the Gentile Christians were not yet good enough till they had also observed all the Judaic laws. But when the Holy Spirit

⁶⁴Cassalegio, E.N., op. cit., p 101.

later made His way clear to them on the matter, He did not impose such a law on the poor Gentiles.

Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question...

The apostles met to consider this question. After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the Gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that He accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as He did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that we are saved, just as they are." [Acts 15:1-2, 6-11].

When the missionaries came into Tiv land they met a traditional way of marriage that was strange to them. We will not deny that the way "exchange bride price" system was being practiced was evil and caused degradation of human life at times, and we are not advocating for it today. Yet it also had its own checks on the pagan society of the day. For one, it made the man feel permanently responsible and accountable for the sister who had been given out to help him get a wife, and whenever something came up concerning the sister, he had to be consulted. In a culture that believed that extraneous influences could arch across and harm someone who did not have the needed protection, this was a very welcome practice indeed.

However, the missionary did not consider some of these "pros", but only saw evil in the practice. He went ahead and influenced its abolition. But just the very next day, it became clear to them that the "solution" they had proffered to the "problem" was really no solution at all. Cassaleggio writes:

A matter which concerned the Mission was the Tiv marriage system. The old system whereby a man could exchange a female member of his family for a wife, known as the giving of "ingyör" in exchange **was not acceptable to the Mission** and was responsible for endless troubles and strife. At the Council meeting of 1926 and 1927 the whole affair was thoroughly discussed. It was decided by a majority of votes that any Christian who without the knowledge of the Mission contracted a marriage according to this Tiv custom, might not be used in Mission service. A delegation was sent to the Government to negotiate about a marriage system that does not clash with Christian principles. The Government proposed that the old system was to be abolished and that in the future they should pay a dowry to the guardians instead of giving another woman in exchange...

However, the new ruling did not solve all the problems. The following quotation from Rev. Botha's Turan day book indicates new problems: "About sunset a woman named Dzendaun sought refuge with us. Her people wanted to sell her to a man against her will, a man she had never seen before..."

This dowry marriage which was looked forward to with so much expectation [but by who?], degenerated from the very beginning into a trade in human lives because of the materialistic character of the Tiv.⁶⁵

This was caused entirely by the missionary and his zeal, and one would expect that he be sorry about the outcome even though "the materialistic nature of the Tiv" was the culprit. But this was not the case here.

Today we have modified our new culture according to how someone else felt it should be. We have exchanged our former "human lives trade" for the more fashionable "materialistic nature". One wonders which of the two is the lesser evil.

This "culture", which the Bible simply calls "the love of money" and also accuses it of being the root of all evil, has been a thorn in the flesh of many in Tiv land today, even including Christians. However, when cultures clash, it is the Holy Spirit who arbitrates and lovingly brings about a solution to the glory of God. Man and his idea of what are, or what is not "acceptable" to him, cannot achieve this.

⁶⁵Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p 36.

5. The Second World War:

This war began in September 1939 and lasted some six years. The war was fought in far away Europe and SouthEast Asia, but in many ways Tiv land in those days was affected. Because Nigeria was a colony of Great Britain at the time, many able-bodied young men were recruited here as well in order to go and fight the war in Europe. Many thousands of young Tiv people were also recruited and taken off to fight this war. Most of these young people had never been outside the immediate confines of their land, and they did not know a word of any other language either. They could not read or write a word even in their own language. Thus they were forcibly (as it were), plucked from their micro-culture and transported into a very different culture, where they matured. This had many severe effects on them.

They were transported by sea, along the West African coast to SouthEast Asia, where they were made to fight the Japanese in India and Burma.

Back home, they had been controlled and kept in check by fear of witchcraft, but suddenly out there in the strange land they came to know that all that talks about "mbatsav" was untrue. This "rude" realization had many effects on them, and when they came back it was virtually impossible to "tame" some of them. The rate of crime and violence rose astronomically in the tranquil Tiv countryside and respect for authority suffered greatly. This became a big problem for the traditional institution, the government and the Church. Even many that had been professed Christians relapsed into this state of moral decline on coming back from the war.

On their return, many also came into contact with some educated politicians from Southern Nigeria who at that time were busy organizing people into labour and political unions as pressure fronts to press for social reforms and political emancipation. There was a gentle but firm edging to push out the old traditional rulership and replace it with young, active political voices in the land.

The ripples of this effect were also felt in the Church realms too, as Mission teachers and workers also began to organize and press for

better conditions and facilities. In this spirit, some of the people left the Mission work and took stands against the Mission on many issues.

But it was not only bad effects that we got from the War. A good number of the Christian young men who had gone to the front came back still strongly devoted to the Saviour Jesus and willing to accept to serve Him in their land with whatever good experience they might have brought back from the War. Cassaleggio writes:

There were those who went out of our schools and from our stations and remained faithful to their Christian principles. There are today devoted Christian leaders in our Churches who returned from the foreign lands with a wider outlook, deeper insight and stronger principles. The responsibilities they had to face developed a leadership in them of which the Tiv Church had great need...

One Sunday in August 1946 there was no less than 40 returned soldiers present in the morning service at Mkar. Rev. Brink welcomed them and encouraged them to continue following the Lord, and those who had not yet accepted him, to believe in Him for true life could only be found in the Lord Jesus.⁶⁶

We praise the Lord our God for protecting His own, keeping them for His glory even in such trying times, and returning them in His fold.

6. The "Bible Schools":

This has been described variously as a "revival", an "awakening", God's own miracle and so on, so it was. It started in 1933, at the time when the Missionaries were just beginning to despair for Tiv land. They had just thrown in the towel at Saai in 1926, and done the same again at Adikpo in 1927. Nothing seemed to be moving right with the Tiv...definitely not as fast or as smoothly as they would have loved to see them moving. By this time they had put in more than 20 years of service to the Lord among the Tiv, and they had less than the same number of baptized converts. Cassaleggio records that after the sixth person in Tiv land (Akiga's wife), was baptized in 1922, there followed

⁶⁶Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p 61.

a period of eight long years (till 1930), when not a single convert was baptized throughout the land.

in the early years of our mission in Tiv land, it often looked as if this Church among the Tiv would never come into existence. The first station was opened at Salatu by Carl Zimmermann in 1911. After six years the first four Christians, Bemyamin Akiga, Yosev Teiyor, Yohane Alam, and Roseta Kime, wife of Alam, were baptized by Rev. J. Strydom in 1917. There were only five baptized Christians after ten years and by this time some of them were already in discipline. A few months later Dina Yangana, wife of Akiga was baptized in January 1922. Then followed eight years in which no one was baptized! Truly the first twenty years much of the seed of the Gospel fell on rocks.⁶⁷

This was further compounded by the Government clampdown on the chiefs in the land over the issue of surrendering of articles of witchcraft. Many people suffered greatly, some for no fault of theirs. The whole picture looked very gloomy from the spiritual point of view.

A lot of activity had been covered in the said period. The opening of the Sevav (1922), Mkar (1923), Adikpo (1923), Turan (1927) and Kunav (1927) stations, the Mkar Hospital (1925) and Leprosy Settlement (1930), the Kunav Medical Station and many others are examples to show this. Yet the spiritual aspect of the ministry failed to show fruit in this period of most intense activity.

Yet this "poor spiritual yield" was only an apparent thing, for underneath the deceptive surface, the Holy Spirit was very busy putting things in place for a sudden great outburst of activity in that direction very soon. Cassaleggio writes:

Judging superficially, it looked as if the Gospel found no entrance in Tiv land, yet the Spirit of God was working in the hearts of scattered individuals. We saw it in the conversion of some who preceded the awakening which took place during the beginning of the Bible schools. These new converts were only a few in the beginning. Though like the little cloud, it contained the promise

⁶⁷Cassaleggio, E.N.; op. cit.; p 97.

of the great blessing which the Lord poured out a few years later.⁶⁸

No one person can claim responsibility for the coming into being of the Bible schools that sprang up spontaneously and multifocally all over Tiv land at about the same time. The missionaries only learnt about them after they had started through the initiatives of some recent "converts", many of which were not even known by the missionaries yet. Because of this spontaneous nature of the action and the fact that it does not appear that anyone co-ordinated it at all, we are very convinced that the Holy Spirit was firmly behind it at every stage and every place that it happened. This is why we are not at all hesitant to refer to it as the First Spiritual Revival in Tiv land. Cassaleggio writes:

This revival was not limited to one area but extended across the whole of Tiv land. The Holy Spirit convicted many a heart of sin. Where the light began to penetrate, the people began to gather in their villages, started classes and services without the help of the missionaries, just on their own. Those who could read started to teach others and to preach the gospel to their own people. Men, women and children gathered together around the Word of God searching for light.⁶⁹

The Revival produced quite a number of outstanding Christians who later become key figures in the emergent young church in Tiv land. People like Rev. J.E.I. Sai, Rev. J.Y Amachigh, Rev. N. Anum, Rev S. Ugô, Rev. V. Ayaka and many others like them, came out of this Revival.

We will continue to praise our God who visited us in this way, imprinting on our hearts and those of the Missionaries very clearly that though Paul may plant and Apollos water, only He the Lord gives growth. He did visit the Tiv land Mission Field just when the missionaries were beginning to think it had all been one colossal waste of effort and time.

Again Cassaleggio writes poetically:

⁶⁸Cassaleggio, E.N., p 39.

⁶⁹Ibid.

In this way the Lord brought them in one by one. Around the fires at night, in their huts, and under the trees, the Tiv sat in groups and talked about the One who came to save them from their sins.⁷⁰

Definitely the Bible Schools (referred to in Tiv as (Ubabel Sekuul"), played a vital role in the evangelization of Tiv land, and all glory is to our God alone for it, not to any man, lest he should boast. Later the Mission decided to make concerted efforts to call in the leaders for some training and coaching so they would perform even better. The number of such schools increased in Tiv land, reaching over five hundred by 1960. Most of them gave quality religious instruction to the rural Tiv in their own surroundings. So pleased was Rev. Brink (Ortese Agee), that he wrote: "...I make bold to say that the Bible schools are the most efficient way whereby the gospel can be brought to ten thousands of illiterate pagans in Tiv land."⁷¹



AKIGA SAAI,
First Tiv Convert.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid.

CHAPTER 9

THE HANDING OVER TO THE CRC

We understand that as early as 1931 the South African Mission inquired from the missionaries in Tiv land whether they thought that the work should be folded up. But the missionaries on the field were very convinced that it was God Himself who had sent them to this work. They felt that the idea of folding up was "undesirable," and so the question was not pushed further... then. Cassaleggio writes:

The possible transfer of the Sudan Mission of our church was talked about in the Church circles for several years. In 1931 the Mission Board enquired of the Field whether it thought it desirable to hand over the unoccupied part of Tiv land to another Society in case it became impossible for us to occupy it. The Council was to inform them which Society if this was possible. In April 1931 the Council however, informed the Board that such a step would be undesirable.

The matter was again discussed by the Council in 1934 when Rev. G.L. van Heerde, the General Mission Secretary visited the field. The first pioneers, Rev. Botha and Rev. Malherbe, were still on the field but were nearing the time of their leaving. The Council again confirmed their sacred conviction: "It was under God's special guidance and disposal that this Mission had its origin, and that our church took over the work from the Sudan United Mission... The workers on the field express their earnest hope that our church will never have to abandon this work."⁷²

However, the pressure to disengage did not let off completely. In 1948 Rev. Brink (Ortese Agee) reported to his Mission Board that Tiv people had migrated outside their boundaries and gone far into Jukun territory and settled there. He complained that it would be difficult to chase them into the territory of the American CRC and evangelize them there, and so suggested that they be allowed to go to the Americans. This probably was understood by the Home Board to be

⁷²Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p 107.

the cue to open discussion on the trimming down of their responsibility...something the Board had been pressing the Field to see with them.

In October 1949 a meeting between representatives of the American CRC some from the South African side took place at Mkar. Here it was agreed that the whole of Tiv land east of the Katsina Ala River be transferred to the CRC Mission. In November of the same year, the DRCM Chairman on a visit to the United States wrote a letter to the American Field Secretary, offering such a transfer to them. This was the official proposal at highest level, the very document required to close the deal.

But it was not until January 1950 that the people directly concerned were informed of the concluded decision to transfer them. Here however, the reason advanced was no longer the offensive migration that Tiv people had made into Jukun territory that was advanced as having caused the necessity for the transfer. Rather, it was said that lack of funds and personell was responsible. However, the missionaries were quick to assure the Tiv people that there were no "doctrinal" differences between them and the American CRC. Cassaleggio writes:

When this decision was made known to the elders...their hearts were deeply moved and they were somewhat upset, but in the end they also gave their permission.⁷³

From this moment on, things moved at a very fast speed, and the DRCM Synod Committee gave its permission in May 1950, but on the following conditions:

1. That the Christians from paganism will be consulted in the matter.
2. That the transfer will take place gradually,
3. That the unity of the Christian Church among the Tiv people will be preserved.

⁷³ibid., p 109.

In June 1950 the CRC Synod also met and gave their blessings to the deal that had been negotiated by their Field missionaries, and it was signed officially at Mkar in July of the same year. A handing over ceremony was done in September 1950 at Zaki Biam. The transfer agreement read:

"...It is hereby agreed to transfer as a sphere of missionary endeavour that part of the Tiv tribe living east of the Katsina Ala River and those living north of the Benue River but not resident in the Tiv Division, to the care of the Sudan Mission of the Christian Reformed Church from that of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission before July 1, 1953..."⁷⁴

The first CRC staff to come into the Tiv Mission Field, Rev. Peter Ipema, arrived at Zaki Biam on the 17th of October 1950. But the South African resident missionary stayed on at Zaki Biam till March 1952, thus ensuring a gradual, smooth transfer, just like the DRCM Home Church had requested.

But even up till this time the missionaries did not show any intention of leaving the Tiv Mission field entirely. Cassaleggio writes that even after they had decided to hand over the part of Tiv land east of the Katsina Ala River to the Americans, they still did not plan to hand over the remaining part of Tiv land to them as well as soon as it turned out.

It must be observed that the transfer of part of the work, namely that to the east of the Katsina Ala, was not considered by the missionaries in the light of a total transfer.⁷⁵

From this it appears that most of the "poor" South African missionaries on the field never knew exactly what hit them and sent them out of the remaining territory of Tiv land. Yet some of them, especially in the leadership, were aware of the plan and even part of it too.

⁷⁴Smith, E.H., op. cit., p 144.

⁷⁵Ibid., p 109.

In 1951 the CRC was sent out of their Mission Field in China because that country became a communist country. They were in need of more mission placings, so they wrote to Rev. Brink (Ortese Agee), who gave them a subtle consenting reply thus:

"When your Church has occupied your present Field to the satisfaction of your Board and your staff on the Field, do not look for a new field elsewhere else, but let us know."⁷⁶

Rev. Brink (Ortese Agee) had just come back from leave in South Africa, and so it can be assumed that as Field Officer in charge he was acting on latest directives from home. He met with some officers of the CRC in 1951 and discussed further transfer with them. Cassaleggio says that the staff on the field was not consulted over this matter till the 6th of July, 1953.

The staff did not favour this at all, and wrote a memo to the General Mission Board about it. The Board then set up a commission to "investigate the matter". This commission recommended that the work in the remaining parts of Tiv land west of the Katsina Ala should continue, and that the CRC or another Reformed Church in homeland Netherlands be invited to take over the Tiv land Mission Field while the DRCM gradually disengages.

The reasons they gave for these recommendations were that they lacked the funds, and cost of transportation to and from South Africa was very high. Finally, they said that due to political factors, they as a mission might become undesirable in Nigeria in the near future. By this they were referring to the apartheid policy that South Africa was practicing against blacks in that country.

The DRCM Synod of October 1953 deliberated on these recommendations and decided that **the Tiv mission work should be carried on to independence**. But she left the decision and action concerning whether or not to hand over and who to hand over to, to the General Mission Board. This meant that the Church in Tiv land should be made independent before being handed over to another Mission field.

⁷⁶Ibid., p 111.

In January 1954 representatives of the DRCM met with those of the CRC at Mkar to negotiate further transfer of the field to them. Here the DRCM offered the whole of Tiv land not yet handed over to the CRC, and they agreed to it.

Cassaleggio says that when this news was broken to the Church Council in Tiv land, they rejected it initially. However, "since there was no other way open" (meaning since they really had no choice in the matter, except to acquiesce), they agreed, but on the condition that the DRCM complete the Bible translation work themselves, and train indigenous pastors for them. He reports that even after consenting like this, the Tiv came back to them on many occasions to ask if truly there was no doctrinal difference between the DRCM and the new Mission.⁷⁷

After this decision was taken and all the necessary things done, the station at Turan was the first to be transferred to the CRC. This was in 1956, the year when the first set of trained Tiv pastors finished their course. In 1957 Kunav and Adikpo were handed over. In this year too, the NKST was granted its autonomy as a full-fledged Church. It can be seen that through careful planning, all the promises made were being fulfilled in the transition process, although "gradually", as directed by the DRC Synod did not necessarily mean "slowly". Thus the whole exercise was done smoothly.

We would like to continue to praise the Lord God whom, when the first missionaries had to leave, still lovingly arranged for us so that His work among us should continue growing. Despite the fact that some problems came up along the way, the transfer was generally smooth.

In 1958 Dr. du Toit, the lady doctor who had worked so hard at Mkar, had to leave because of ill health. So rather than arrange a replacement for her from South Africa, it was decided that the Mkar Christian Hospital should be handed over to the CRC right away. This was done in July 1958.

The institutions were also handed over one by one, according to a previously arranged scheme. Mkar TTC was handed over in July 1959, the Printing Press in 1960, Uavande School and the Benue Leprosy Settlement in 1962.

⁷⁷ibid., p 112.

Although it had been planned that the remaining stations (Mkar, Shangev, Makurdi and Apir), would be handed over in 1963, this decision had to be revisited in the light of some recent events. The first was the approaching independence and the growing prejudice against the government of South Africa because of its apartheid policy. Cassaleggio says that this prejudice was directed against their church as well. They also feared for their safety, because in the Congo the Europeans had to leave the country in a not-too-friendly way soon after the country's independence.

Because of all these and many other such questions, the South African missionaries did not have any more rest in their minds. As the Nigerian Independence Day drew near, the missionaries met at Mkar and considered things soberly. But the Nigerian government did not do anything even up till the Independence Day on October 1, 1960, and the missionaries who were still in Tiv land were not molested in any way at all.

However, shortly before the Independence Day (in September 1960), a violent riot broke out in Tiv land and rapidly spread all over the land. Many people had the misfortune of losing all their property and homes in flames as tempers flared, for political reasons. However, this did not last very long, and things settled again.

By 1961 it was possible for all the missionaries to gather again at Saai on 11th April, to celebrate fifty years of the Lord's work among the Tiv. The occasion was marked with the unveiling of the memorial plaque built at Saai by Kime Alam, the first woman Christian in Tiv land. It was quite a day for the founding missionaries — to be able to see the fruit of their labour even before departing. They came in their hundreds to Saai to celebrate the occasion. Many who had already left the field also found time to come and grace the occasion. It was at this occasion too that Saai was officially re-instituted as a full-fledged Church consistory.

But soon after this moment of glory, pressure started mounting from the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs in Lagos about the continued presence of South African nationals and Mission working in Nigeria. A letter arrived at the SUM in Jos inquiring about this in August 1961. Although this letter was not addressed to the DRCM, yet steps were taken to sort things out amicably.

At a meeting held with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry in Lagos it was suggested that what remained of the transfer process should be speeded up, and any remaining South African missionaries be placed under the CRC so that officially the DRCM will cease to function in Nigeria.

The Government official, who was a Christian, said that there had been a lot of pressure on Government on account of the presence of some South African citizens and especially the DRCM in Nigeria still.⁷⁸ But the Lord our God intervened, and did not allow their exit to be covered in shame. The speeding of the transfer was agreed upon at the last DRCM Field Council meeting on September 2, 1961. Cassaleggio writes that Rev Gerrys, writing on their behalf to the General Mission Board back home, said:

"This means that we have here no longer a Field Council, a Council Committee nor a Council Chairman. All responsibility has gone over into the hands of the SUM CRC, in whose service our missionaries were taken. Temporarily, we are now members of SUM, we are represented in their Council and some are appointed in Commissions or as functionaries, as the Council rules. We have no separate administration any more, all our personal and other accounts have been entered into their books...The only responsibility which our General Mission Board has, is to undertake for part of our expenses, which means especially the salaries of our missionaries, until the end of 1963..."⁷⁹

The DRCM Synod approved the acceleration of the transfer process on November 1, 1961. Thus there came to be a fusion of the Mission field during the period from late 1961 till 1963. There existed a good and cordial spirit of Christian brotherliness among the missionaries too. We want to praise our God who kept His providential and protective hand over those children of His who had served Him so well among us, not allowing them to be put to shame.

⁷⁸Ibid., p 114.

⁷⁹Ibid., p 115.

We have these beautiful and blessed assurances from the Holy Scriptures:

God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. [Hebrews 6:10].

"Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him. [Psalm 91:14-15].

However, the working relationship of the new missionaries was not always very cordial with the Tiv...at least initially. This caused Rev. Gerryts to write back to his General Mission Board:

With the change of Missions for the work in Tiv land, it appears the Tiv Church has come to a crisis where its members are being sifted as grain. They need our prayers now more than ever before, that the faith fail not. Our prayer is that they will stand firm on the immovable Rock of the Word of God, with Christ as centre against the anti-Christian winds which apparently are rushing in on them with increasing force.⁸⁰

⁸⁰Cassaleggio, E.N., op. cit., p 115.

CHAPTER 10

THE GRANTING OF AUTONOMY TO THE EMERGENT YOUNG CHURCH IN TIV LAND

When the time came to transfer the running of the emergent National Church to the Tiv Christians and make them autonomous, it was but a mere formality. Because the Tiv Church leadership had been deliberately and systematically sensitized towards this, they too were eagerly looking forward to the moment. And because it all took place in a brotherly and Christian atmosphere, the missionaries willingly stayed on for many more years even after they had granted full autonomy to the young church. In return and appreciation, the Tiv have continued to hold the missionaries in very high esteem and confidence even after full autonomy was granted them.

In 1950 a Mission conference was held to seriously discuss the question of autonomy to the church of God in Tiv land. After intensive consultations between the South African Mission and the American SUM CRC who had just come on the scene, it was decided in 1954 that a committee be set up to draft a constitution for the emergent young church.

In 1955, by which time a lot of ground had been covered in this direction, the head of the CRC Mission field among the Jukun, wrote to find out the possibility of setting up one single church to embrace the Tiv and the Jukun. This probably arose because of the logistic difficulties facing the CRC, of having two separate and mutually independent churches just next-door to one another under the same "parent" Mission supervision. A joint committee of the two Missions met to discuss this issue, but the decision was that the granting of autonomy to the Church in Tiv land could not be delayed any longer.⁸¹

After the draft constitution was prepared, it was referred to the various local Church Councils in Tiv land for study and comments. The

⁸¹Cassaleggio, E.N., *op. cit.*, p 98.

Dutch Mission worked here in full consultation with the Tiv Church leaders at all the various stages of development of the Constitution, and it was easy to finally table and discuss this agenda in a very friendly atmosphere in July 1956. The Constitution was accepted with only a few amendments at the meeting.

At this same meeting the young church was Christened the "**Nongo u Kristu u ken Sudan hen Tiv**", meaning "The Church of Christ in the Sudan among the Tiv." Also the first set of Tiv graduate pastors were presented at this meeting for oral examination, and upon their passing, were officially accepted and approved as NKST pastors fit to be called to serve in any NKST consistory.

The formal establishment of the NKST took place at Mkar on January 9, 1957 at a colourful ceremony witnessed by a large crowd of Tiv Christians and a representation from both the DRCM and the CRC.

PERTINENT QUESTIONS:

It will be very good to address in this forum questions that would otherwise continue to trouble many who have heard them. The NKST and Tiv people in general, have not had any opportunity to address some of these "complaints" and "comments" made about them even by "fellow Christians". Many of them are capable of influencing somebody's opinions about Tiv Christians and people...even negatively.

We are aware, of course, that Daniel's friends said to King Nebuchadnezzar that they did not need to defend themselves about the matter they were accused of (Daniel 3:16), and also that our Saviour Jesus did not try to defend Himself when He was arraigned before the authorities. Yet we also believe that we must help those innocent brethren from falling victim to mind poisoning against a people they have not even met. We need to address some of these "complaints" against the Tiv Christians, their Church and peoples by people we have always considered to be our dear brothers in Christ.

1. Was the Transfer to the American CRC Warranted?

This was a question put forward by Rev. Peter Ipema, then acting Secretary of CRC in Nigeria in January 1953. In his letter to the CRC Home Board over the proposal to take over the remaining part of Tiv land, he said:

"It is true we would, by taking complete control be put in the way of a great challenge and opportunity, but it is also true that we would fall heir to a host of unsolved and insoluble problems and difficulties, for the work is far developed and may never be considered as approaching a new and virgin field. Is it not possible that the work has developed almost far enough so as to be nearly self-sufficient?" It was his feeling...that the Tiv Church had progressed so far and was so self-sufficient that there was doubt whether a mission was needed any more.⁸²

Why, for example, did the DRC Synod decide and direct that evangelization work in Tiv land be carried on "to independence" even when they were considering a handing over to another Mission in the very near future? We do not know. Any attempt to answer the why here would only be mere conjecture; and that may not give glory to our Father. All we say is that we praise our God for His wisdom and actions on our behalf. He protects even from unseen harms and dangers, and He deserves our praise even now.

2. Why So Many "Misgivings"?

Smith says that "misgivings" were expressed as the Americans were coming into the Tiv Mission Field. There were a number of complaints on what we may term "matters of the flesh", which appeared to upset the missionaries quite a lot. Issues like a refusal to be allowed into the pulpit on a particular Sunday by local Church Elders in a particular Church became a general assessment of all the Tiv Christians and the whole Church.⁸³

⁸²Smith, E.H., op. cit. p 160.

⁸³Smith, E.H., op. cit., p 146, 160.

Here too we cannot answer the why; it would only be a conjecture. Suffice it to say that despite the fact that such "misgivings" were encountered, still the good Lord helped to shape a very fruitful mission work among the Tiv people by the American CRC Mission. For this and much more like it, we praise the Lord our God wholeheartedly.

We join with the outgoing South African missionaries at the time, who also noted these "small frictions", and who had the grace of God in them enough to drop on their knees and pray "more than ever before" that despite all, the faith fail not. This, we believe, rather than blaming and castigating, is the correct, Christian way to go about things even when "misgivings" arise and abound.

3. Split, Or Not?

This issue came up when two independent young national churches lying next-door to one another, and already separated as it were by the barrier of language, came under the control of one mission. The NKST (as we call ourselves, not "The Tiv Church") was the first to point this out to the CRC. Her delegation pointed out language barrier and "differing ecclesiastical practices" as the reasons for the request. They accepted that both churches had the same creed, and agreed that they could interchange speakers at conventions and unite in the TEKAS fellowship, yet they needed to have separate Mission bodies governing them.

A similar problem had arisen on the Tiv Mission field earlier, when the English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking South African Christians had arrived in Tiv land together and started work. Whether this was right or not, they decided at a certain stage to separate. Again, we realize that the CRC did not always agree with many of the doctrinal teachings of the DRCM. But such splits or differences did not necessarily mean that all subsequent work done was unacceptable to Jesus. When Paul and Barnabas split following a difference in opinion concerning the young man John Mark, we are not led to believe that their work from then on was necessarily unacceptable before God.

But this request did not stop with the "naughty" Tiv, for the Jukun also saw areas of friction, and made a similar request later. One may say the Tiv taught them, but we wonder. From Smith's account of the incidences, we feel very concerned, for the Jukun did not just state

their case, but even went ahead and accused the Americans of being responsible for their misunderstandings with their Tiv neighbours. In a communique on the subject matter following their Regional Church Council meeting in May 1967, they noted, inter alia, that:

1. It is a difficult thing for one mission body to claim that it can serve two different indigenous church bodies faithfully...

5. From the time SUM(CRC) joined its field of work in the EKAS/LB area with that of the Tiv, EKAS/LB cannot in good conscience say that there has been a good relationship between her and the Mission, or the NKST Church. Fellowship, and exchange of delegates at church meetings of the two indigenous churches ceased to exist...

7. Now the EKAS/LB is aware that the root of misunderstanding between her and the Tiv is always in most cases brought about by the SUM(CRC).⁸⁴

It is not with a gleeful mood that we quote this passage, but we only wish to state that the CRC Mission brothers had a very difficult job to perform, and God gave them this. Today we truly praise God because He enabled them to perform the said job creditably well. The Lord has said to us over and over again that it is not by our might or power, but by His Spirit that He gets His work done through us. And our Saviour Jesus reiterated this when He told us that apart from Him we can do nothing [John 15:4-5].

Relational problems are by far the greatest (and probably the worst) problems to be found even among good Christians, and it always takes the grace of God to go through them and live to give glory to God for them. In some, He may allow our weakness to show more than our ability, but even in this we are to praise Him. The Apostle Paul says:

To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded

⁸⁴Smith, E.H., *Nigerian Harvest*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1972, p 222.

with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, **for my power is made perfect in weakness.**" Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weakness, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. **For when I am weak, then I am strong.** [2 Corinthians 12:7-12].

We too refuse to "defend ourselves" in this matter. Rather, we pray that when we look back on our mistaken past, our God will help us to see ways prepared by Him, by which we can correct our present, and thus improve on our future.

4. "Tiv Church", or NKST?

This is another aspect that has been dwelt on almost to the point of insistence. The "Tivness" of the Tiv man (an expression coined by some Christian brethren, not the Tiv themselves), is something that has irritated many. Here it is supposed to mean the fact that the Tiv man is very proud for being Tiv, and that he keeps close to his "blood". Those who feel irked by it have contemptuously interpreted this to be "tribalism".

Without denying this, we can still understand how one who does not belong in a tribe can feel this way. Many Caucasians today, especially in North America, do not know "tribe". They lost it, a long time ago to "nationalism", which is the closest (but very arbitrary) definition of "belonging" that they know, and which is based on geographical delineation rather than on blood ties, and descent. These same people who have no feeling of closeness at the "tribal" level may have very strong "nationalistic" feelings where their country and her interests are concerned. It is all the same. The feeling actually starts at the family level, and we like to believe that God has a lot of love for family ties. "National patriotism is just a step further than "tribal" ones; it is only that some people do not have the tribal stage of closeness in their culture.

We have been accused of living closely together and not "integrating" with others. Unfortunately, this accusation comes more from non-Nigerians, for no Nigerian will ever see something wrong in

that, unless where in the process, another person is denied his rights. Eugene Rubingh, a one-time missionary whom the Tiv people still hold in high respect for his ministry among them, writes:

A most significant cultural phenomenon faced by Church and Mission in Tiv land is that of resurgent tribalism. The Church, **because of its Tivness**, is an important focus for this tribal feeling while at the same time she must, in the name of man's equality before God, speak out against tribalistic excesses. The ambivalence of attitudes in this difficult position of the Church indicates that no satisfactory theory of the integration of the NKST into the wider context of Christ's Church has yet been evolved.⁸⁵

When we are called to serve the Lord in a pagan society, we must not forget what the Lord sent us to do in the first place, or we will end up just condemning the pagans. This is very tempting indeed, especially when we see how the pagans are "messaging up". Yet this course of action does not help things at all. Again Rubingh writes:

...This aggressive outlook of the Tiv has not gone unnoticed. The Tiv were characterized at the beginning of the civil war by some as "The Ibos of the North" and as "Christian monkeys" and in these epithets lies a strain of fear...As yet, it must be said that the majority of Christians are scarcely aware of the problem at all and sense no reason for moderating the race for glory for the Tiv.⁸⁶

We praise the Lord our God who did not view the Tiv so negatively, but even in their darkness and utter filth, still saw a people He loved and was determined to save. We are also very grateful to Him that the first Missionaries He sent to us did not see the Tiv in that light even though they met us in the lowest depths of everything called evil. If a Christian becomes so occupied with negative feelings against

⁸⁵Rubingh, E., *Sons of Tiv*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p 182.

⁸⁶ibid.

another that he can only blame and condemn, he cannot again be effective for the Lord. In such a state he can easily call his fellow Christians "Christian monkeys," and not feel any qualms about it because it was "others" who first used the language. Paul says:

When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their conscience, you sin against Christ. [1 Corinthians 8:12].

But after all is said and done, we are praising our God who has continued to love us and lead us, even when we were totally blind and unable to know our way. Today all can see for themselves the abundant riches of God's grace on us.

We did not create ourselves in tribes, nor do we believe the devil did it either. Rather, we believe our God did it, and for a purpose – His own very purpose. Although we cannot claim to know what this purpose is, and even though we may abuse this gift of God and serve a purpose other than His own with it, yet we are not going to pretend it does not exist. Nor will we insult our God by implying He made a mistake by creating us and assigning each and every one of us in a tribe. Instead, we will seek His face to know that purpose.

What is more, we believe that even in those places where "tribe" has lost this original meaning, many Churches and Missions are still grouped along lines of the rudiments of such "tribal" bonds. And we praise God for them too. Smith writes in connection with both the DRCM and the CRC:

However, there was this, which the two missions had in common: they both had Dutch origins...⁸⁷

We would like to state here too that the term "Tiv Church" is not a term used by NKST members, or even by Tiv people generally, to refer to the NKST. It is a term coined and used by our former missionary leaders to describe us in the way they saw us. But the NKST member has never considered his Church as "a Tiv Church" or as "the Tiv Church". After all, the number of Tiv Christians in the Catholic

⁸⁷Smith, E.H., op. cit., p 147.

Church and in the other churches today almost equals the number of NKST members.

5. Change, Change, and Change...But to what, and For What?

The NKST has been accused of conservatism...of remaining cast within a traditional mould. The elders are said to be very resistant to change, and that the educated are fuming as a result. Rubingh says:

The chafing [impatience] within the traditional mold increases as the educated continue to pour from institutions of learning in even greater numbers. The Church now faces the problem of how to incorporate her elite class into her life. In general, she harbours a latent distrust of the liberated ones and seldom asks them to lead worship services.⁸⁸

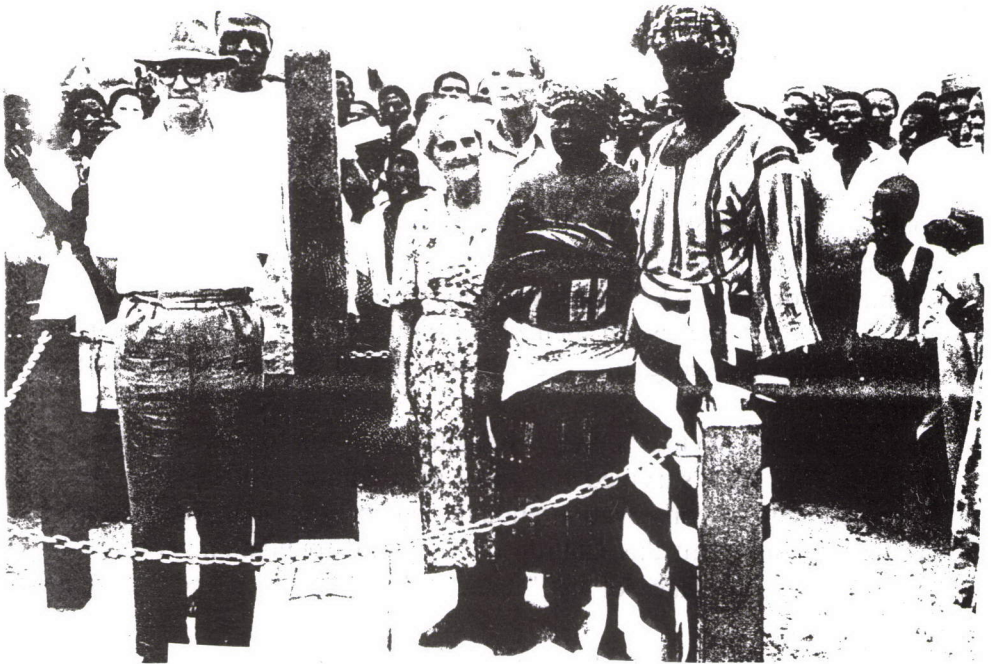
We praise our Lord and God who, despite all the accusations made against Christians by other Christians, still lovingly accepts us all as His children. Some comments have over the years caused a lot of problems for the NKST and sadly enough, even human blood has been shed in the past because of their effect on the people. The enemy has on many occasions used grumbling to sow seeds of discontent, and foment trouble.

Yet our Saviour's prayer remains most comforting: that the faith fail not. We have survived till today as a Church not because we are smart enough or conservative enough, but because our Saviour Jesus, who personally built this Church on His solid foundation, is upholding us. He says "the gates of hell" cannot overcome it... and we believe Him.

The leadership of the NKST Church is not up for grabbing by the most educated person, and the fact that a young person came home with a high academic qualification does not automatically mean he has qualified "to lead worship". Many people have made this mistake in the past.

⁸⁸Ibid.

Of course, the NKST Church has to be careful in selecting people to preach in church, but this is not necessarily because those not allowed are distrusted. Whenever she sees a member with a message from the Holy Spirit (as evidenced by his good Christian life pattern rather than by his educational standing), she does not hesitate to put such a one in front of the congregation of God's children to deliver the message. As a matter of fact, the practice of allowing and encouraging lay preachers in the Church is more pronounced in the NKST than in most other churches in the Country.



**50 YEARS AFTER STARTING AT SAAI:
UNVEILING THE MEMORIAL IN 1961**

From Left:

Rev G. de Vos

Rev. Ishoribo Saai

Mrs. Orffer

Rev. Orffer (Snr)

Kime Alam (first woman Convert)

Mrs. Kwaghembe Saai (Rev. Saai's mother)

CHAPTER 11

NEW HANDS: THE MINISTRY IN TIV LAND UNDER THE CRC

It is true that the Americans were not starting a fresh, virgin ministry in Tiv land when they took over, and they were very aware of this too. As a matter of fact, Rev. Peter Ipema, then Field Secretary of the CRC, had asked the question whether it was at all necessary to take over the Tiv mission field, seeing that the work had already progressed so far. But the Lord still had a lot of work to do in Tiv land, and this time He intended that His children in the CRC should come and do it.

Anyone wanting to assess the work done by the Americans after they took over must keep this in mind: that the work that needed to be done now was different from the one the South African Dutch had already done and were doing up till the time they left. A "crude" assessment by simple comparison will always give wrong results. We believe that a lot of the crises and misunderstandings that arose between the native Church and the new Mission arose because someone did not understand this basic fact, or how to communicate it clearly.

The South African Mission had done the initial work of planting and the Americans coming after them had the job of watering, with our God providing the growth. If the new Mission had tried to reproduce the work done by the first Mission, it would not have worked for the simple reason that the work on the ground now was not a starting job.

The activities of church planting and growth, which the South African Mission had started, and which had very much endeared them to the Tiv people, were now the sole responsibility of the young NKST Church on its attainment of independence. It was no longer the job of the American Mission to open more stations in the land, or to organize rural evangelism, for they took over an independent church, not a dependent one.

Smith writes:

However, as early as 1952, our missionaries became aware of the independence of the Tiv Church, and in the sixties the

evangelistic and ecclesiastical service the Mission could render in the local areas became minimal.⁸⁹

The impression here is that the CRC decided not to be very interested or active in evangelical work in the land on arrival in Tiv land because of the independence [arrogance] of the indigenous Church, and this even before it became independent. This probably means to say that their good intentions on arrival were altered when they met this stance on the ground. But the spirit of their decision to do less of the direct evangelistic and ecclesiastical work was quite okay; both sides only failed to communicate very well. In his book, "Understanding Christian Missions", J. Herbert Kane writes under the heading: "How Missionaries Can Accelerate the Process of Indigenization",

2. Missionaries must acknowledge the right of the national churches to order their own affairs... This period is characterized by independence. Right or wrong, they want their own way. They have come of age and insist on asserting their independence, and woe betide anyone who gets in the way... The situation was further complicated by the fact that the national churches and the Western missions both had their own point of view. The churches identified independence with self-government, and they were all for that. The missions, on the other hand, equated independence with self-support, and they pushed for that. In the hassle that ensued both churches and missions lost sight of the most important thing of all — self-propagation. Be that as it may, the time has come for all mission leaders to take the initiative in arranging for the transfer of power from the mission to the church. And when this is done, let the missionaries beware of back-seat driving!⁹⁰

Again he writes:

3. Missionaries must be patient and sympathetic during the period of transition. In the first years of independence mistakes

⁸⁹Smith, E. H., op. cit., p 180.

⁹⁰Kane, J.H., *Understanding Christian Missions*; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan; 1978, 1982; p 356.

will be made; but hopefully the national leaders will learn from their mistakes. At least they have the right to make them! Worse still, the missionaries will have to stand by and see some of their cherished plans and schemes blown away by the winds of change. Some of the excess baggage will have to be jettisoned to make room for new commodities with "Made in Africa" or "Made in Asia" labels on them. Not all the new items will be good; but they will doubtless be better than the "Made in U.S.A." articles introduced by the missionaries. The real test of the missionary's spirituality will come when he is asked to step down to make way for a national leader whose qualification might not be as great as his own...It is natural to want to hold on to power. He is a rare person who will want to relinquish power voluntarily.⁹¹

If someone with this much understanding had patiently sat both parties down in a simple meeting and carefully explained things, a lot of the tensions we hear of today could have been avoided.

It could be said that because the young church had been declared independent, it ought to be able to take on all the activities of an independent church right away. And in a way, the NKST was willing and prepared to get moving with it. Yet there was still a lot of work to be done among the Tiv, and they could not do it alone.

So what again was there to be done if the NKST already had its independence? Why still have a Mission working in an independent Church? Again Kane writes:

Is the task of world evangelization completed? From all the corners of the earth comes a resounding *No!* Far from being completed, we have hardly reached the halfway point. To quit now would jeopardize the entire enterprise.⁹²

Over the few years of our independence we have come to realize that a native Church in a developing economy like ours will always need good Mission friends, whether physically on the field or in constant corresponding relationship, in order to stand. The NKST realizes this,

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Kane, J.H.; op. cit.; p 442.

and has endeavoured to keep friendly relationship with all her old friends...and has been richly blessed by it.

All the areas of mission work covered by the South Africans (plus a lot more) needed to be dug deeper and concretized. A discussion of the things that needed to be done by the Americans would therefore, necessarily be a discussion of the development and growth of all that was done by the South African Dutch (plus a lot more).

DEVELOPMENT WORK ON OLD STATIONS:

Work continued on all the older stations that had been established by the South Africans when the Americans took over. The first CRC missionary to start work in Tiv land was Rev. Peter Ipema. He arrived Zaki Biam with his family on October 17, 1950, a few weeks after the actual handing over ceremony of the part of Tiv land lying east of the Katsina Ala River was performed at Zaki Biam in September of the same year. He joined Rev. Gerrits (Ortese Teghlee) of the DRCM there, and learnt Tiv language and culture from him. He also learnt the art of itinerant evangelism from following Rev Gerrits along everywhere the ministry took him. Here too he later participated, together with Rev. van der Merwe of the DRCM, in the training of the second batch of vernacular pastor students, which started in 1957.

Two years after his arrival he was joined at Zaki Biam by Fred Volkema, and a year later, by Ray Grissen who was a builder. Revs. Ralph Baker and Gerard Terpstra arrived in 1953. They started work in the two stations in the eastern part of Tiv land: Zaki Biam and Sevav. In 1954 Rev. Baker moved to Harga. Apart from pastoral work while based there at Harga, he was also ministering regularly to the protestant students at the Government Secondary School in nearby Katsina Ala town.

The Sevav Church inherited a motorized boat that could ferry people and goods across the River, and this brought in a good amount of money for the church. Unfortunately, this money also brought a lot of friction in the church on many occasions.

Many missionaries served at Sevav under the CRC, among who was Rev. G. Terpstra, who came there in 1954 and took over from Rev. Orffer of the DRCM. Rev. Eugene Rubingh took over from Terpstra in

1958, and worked there till the Church was handed over to the NKST in 1963. Miss Geraldine Vanden Berg, an educationist, also put in many years at the small-scale girls' school at Sevav till it was phased out in 1956 and moved to Uavande.

Work in the first two stations taken over by the Americans was not very different from what the South Africans had been doing. The only exception was the establishment of some facilities at Harga, a small town which lies midway between Katsina Ala in Tiv land and Takum in the Kuteb/Jukun territory...the former CRC territory.

"Turan" was the first station west of the Katsina Ala River to be handed over to the Americans. This took place in 1956. Rev. R. Tadema joined Rev. E.N. Cassaleggio of the DRCM at Jato Aka in Turan area a year before the actual transfer of the station, and worked the area together with him for up to a year before Cassaleggio was transferred elsewhere by his Mission. When Tadema left on furlough, Rev. George Spee replaced him there. Spee worked there up till the time the first Tiv pastor of the Station, Rev Shinyi Ugô, was ordained there in 1957.

Adikpo and "Kunav" were handed over to the Americans in 1957, soon after the NKST had been granted autonomy in January of that year. At this time Rev. Orffer was resident in Mbaakon in the Kunav area of Tiv land, where he was combining pastoral work and work on Bible translation. Rev. Harold De Groot, the first CRC missionary to that station, joined him there. Rev Orffer left the station in July 1957, and it was manned from then on by the Americans.

The "Kunav" station was very promising because of the dense population of the people there, and at a stage there was talk of moving the Mkar Hospital to that place, but this did not take place. Growth of the church at Mbaakon was very rapid, especially in the period just before the Nigerian National Independence on October 1, 1960, when there was a violent riot all over Tiv land. The riots drove many to the peaceful, calm and serene life in God's house. Many did not go back to "the world" after the danger was over because during that brief sojourn in there they found new meaning to life.

The medical centre at Mbaakon did very well, and a doctor from Mkar kept visiting the place regularly to help out with the work there. A training school was set up in there for "traditional birth attendants", and

this helped raise the standard of primary health care in the land as the graduates left and helped out in many more places all over the land.

Rev. De Groot, who was resident missionary there, enthusiastically continued the practice of rural evangelism to the villages, trekking long distances with the Tiv people...something that endeared him in their hearts permanently.

The Makurdi station had not done very well under the DRCM, especially in the area of spiritual help and growth. Yet it was still functional, and was handed over to the CRC in 1962. Rev Casseleggio of the DRCM, who had left Jato Aka and come to Makurdi, handed over the station to Rev. De Groot in 1962. The initial plan in the handing over timetable had been that Makurdi and the few other stations not yet handed over would be transferred in 1963, but when things started going wrong for the South Africans, the transfer was hurried and completed in 1962.

On taking over the Makurdi station, the Literature Department was moved there, and production and distribution of Christian books, pamphlets and tracts was carried out from there. The CRC extended the scope of operation of the Printing Department here and started producing Christian and educational literature in Hausa and Jukun languages as well. This made huge sales and greatly helped the promotion and spread of the gospel not only in Tiv land, but beyond its confines as well.

The station at Apir, some eight miles on the outskirts of Makurdi, which had been doing very well in the area of evangelism, was not handed over to the CRC, but was given to the NKST. Rev Ishoribo Saai, one of the first batches of NKST pastors, was ordained there on January 26, 1957.

The station at Mbaakpur in Shangev Tyevev region, which was the last station the DRCM built, was also handed over to the CRC in 1962, but not much use was made of it. They resorted to training new missionaries there in Tiv language and culture, preferring to base church activity in that region at Uavande, where there was a boarding school for girls and a lot of missionary activity going on.

Uavande had been planned and developed by the DRCM, but soon after occupation, the South Africans had to leave the land, so they handed it over to the CRC at its very inception. The school did very

well for some time, till it was handed over to the NKST in 1964. Soon after this government was no longer able to keep on with her share of grants to run the school, so it closed down in 1966, the remaining pupils being transferred to Mkar.

Mkar itself was handed over to the CRC in 1962. With it also were all the remaining institutions and departments still to be handed over. Thus in 1962, handing over of the entire Tiv Mission field to the American CRC was completed.

NEW STATIONS OPENED BY THE CRC:

At the time of transfer of the Tiv Mission field over to the Americans there was still a large area of Tiv land not yet properly influenced by the missionary activities and influence. This was mainly in the Ihyarev area of Tiv land. The South Africans during the transfer communicated this to the CRC. The CRC responded by opening a number of stations where there was need. But because their aim was not mainly to start and run new churches, the work on these stations was soon turned over to the NKST.

The station at Asukunya in Mbakor area of Tiv land, midway between Makurdi and Gboko, was the first to be opened. Rev. Veenstra started the place and nursed it to growth and stability. From here the work spread and took root at Wannune, a Government station that had been in existence a long time but which was not much touched by Protestant mission activity. However, the CRC did not try very hard to promote general evangelistic activity here, and they turned the centre at Asukunya into a station for organizing and co-ordinating Bible correspondence courses.

Two other stations were started in the Ihyarev region of Tiv land to the north and to the west of Makurdi. Rev. C. Persenaire started the station at Isherev to the north of Makurdi. There he continued the good work of training some more vernacular pastors for the NKST. The general evangelical aspect of the work at the station however, was mainly in the hands of the NKST, and she arranged and sent an evangelist and some Bible School workers into the area to help with the work.

The other station, also in the Ihyarev region of Tiv land, was sited at Ityôshin deep inside the region, and west of Makurdi town. Rev. Monsma started this station. After it was opened, it was handed over to the NKST for management. We wish to say here that even up till today, there is still a lot of work yet undone in this part of Tiv land, and intensive efforts are still being made to address the situation.

DEPARTMENTAL WORK DONE BY THE CRC:

The CRC Mission concentrated a lot on work in the departments that the DRCM had started, and most of its activity in Tiv land was in this direction. This we now know was "in order". J. Samuel Hoffman writes:

...They have their New Testament, what more do they need? A lot more! There is a lot more to the Christian life than having a New Testament in your hands. There is a lot more to the development of a strong, mature church than placing New Testaments in the hands of the church leaders. Translating and evangelism are the first steps of beginning a new church, but they are only the beginning. The birth of a baby is a time of rejoicing for the parents...the child has been born. However, now has come the time for commitment on the part of the parents as they dedicate themselves to the care and teaching of this baby. So also the birth of a church is a time of missionary rededication to a long term, follow-up ministry that will feed and strengthen the young church.⁹³

1. MEDICAL MISSIONS:

This was highly developed by the DRC Mission who left the field in 1962, and the CRC did a lot to improve on it and make it even more effective and relevant to the needs of the people. They prepared the

⁹³Hoffman, J.S.; Mission Work in Today's World - Insights and Outlooks; William Carey Library, Pasadena, California; 1993; p 156.

indigenous Church for an eventual take-over of this very capital-intensive ministry.

A. MKAR HOSPITAL:

As we have heard before, in November 1958 the South African doctor at Mkar had to leave suddenly because of ill health. The DRCM decided that instead of replacing her with another person at a time when they had already started procedures to transfer all their assets to the CRC, it would be better to hand over Mkar Christian Hospital right away. So this unit of the DRCM Medical Mission was handed over in 1958, much earlier than all the other institutions.

Rehabilitation work commenced immediately to upgrade the facilities available and "provide decent accommodation for patients now being treated under very adverse and unsatisfactory conditions."⁹⁴

CRC field administration felt that the siting of the hospital was basically wrong because of its impossible terrain, and they planned that with co-operation from Government, they would re-locate it in nearby Gboko town. Their Home Board approved this plan, and the CRC Synod also sanctioned it. However, the Synod of the NKST did not agree with this plan at all.

Also at about the same time, CRC also planned to move the Nurses' Training programme at Mkar Hospital to Takum Hospital in the Jukun territory. This too was strongly opposed by the NKST. These two points of disagreement led on till it became necessary for the NKST to request that a separate Mission body be responsible for each of the two indigenous churches to avoid further friction due to overlapping of functions. Concerning the re-location of the Hospital, the Mission Board decided that they did "not want to enter into a plan for a new hospital without a full spirit of harmony on the matter with the Tiv Church."⁹⁵

As a result plans were made to continue with development at the old site and location at Mkar, which was what the NKST wanted. Though this was a very expensive exercise, the Lord provided the funds

⁹⁴Smith, E.H., *op. cit.*, p 227.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, p 230.

and the grace for the CRC to do a very good job in modernizing and expanding the Mkar Christian Hospital on the same old site. By 1970 when most of the development work was completed, the Hospital really wore a new look. It was well staffed with missionary and Nigerian nursing and administration staff, a number of dedicated Mission doctors to head the team. In 1970 the Hospital administration was organized, and she started having a Board of Governors.

A lot of good work was being done at Mkar Christian Hospital by way of treatment of illnesses, acts of mercy and by proclamation evangelism. The Hospital developed in the area of staff training to embrace the Schools of Nursing, Midwifery, Laboratory Technology, and a Rural Health training scheme. Government-approved examining bodies were certificating all the graduands, and graduates were nationally recognized to serve in Nigeria. We really praise our God for the good work He did among us through the Medical Mission ministry as He Himself re-defined it at the hands of the CRC at the Mkar Hospital.

Work progressed very well at Mkar Hospital, and by 1970-71 the staff strength stood at six missionary nursing superintendents, 27 registered staff nurses and 13 registered midwives. Administration was still in the hands of the missionaries, but indigenous take-over was quite feasible. Outpatient attendance averaged 400 people, including a separate daily clinic for the children and a twice-weekly antenatal clinic for pregnant women. The Hospital had 205 beds for acute cases, and facility for 100 chronic care patients' (including tuberculosis patients). In the area of evangelistic work, two evangelists were employed to minister to patients and their relations through the public address system that covered the entire hospital and also by bedside visits and sharing.

Apart from the Mkar Hospital, which had been inherited from the DRCM as such, no other Hospital was developed by the CRC in the Tiv Mission Field. However, a beautiful and workable, comprehensive Rural Health Scheme was commenced which effectively covered the whole of Tiv land. This was through a well co-ordinated system of referral, supervision and organization of the many NKST dispensaries spread all over the land. Initially, Mkar Hospital was running this set-up, but later it was excised and made separate and independent of the Hospital.

The SUM CRC Mission handed over Mkar Hospital to the NKST on November 25, 1980.

B. SCHOOLS OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY:

Very early in the course of Medical Mission at Mkar during the days of the DRCM, it was discovered that it would be highly desirable to train indigenous hands to help out in the ministry. The first Mission medical doctor to work a long time on the field, Dr. Labuschagne, saw a great need to train some indigenous hands to help him with medical service. In 1925 when he started work at Mkar, he also started training some native staff. Among those very early beneficiaries of the programme were Akpetyo, Akaa and Tarsoo. Soon after such rudimentary training as this, Akpetyo was sent to Mbaakon to head the "Kunav" Centre.

Some form of on-the-job training of nursing and midwifery personnel was commenced at the very inception of hospital work at Mkar, but it was not until after the arrival of Dr. du Toit in 1942 that training of indigenous staff and certificating them was organized. Dr. du Toit had a great interest in this direction, and the good Lord graciously supplied the needed hands to help in this direction with the arrival of Sister Sipple, a qualified Nurse Tutor, and Sister J. Kellerman (Atese Erdo) in 1945. These two hard-working nurses started the training of midwives on the field soon as they arrived.

Formal organization of the School of Nursing took place in 1951, and that of the Midwifery School in 1953. Both of these were keeping a very high standard of training, but their certificates were local and valid only at the Hospital and the local Mission health units.

In 1968 training qualifications for nurses were standardized nationwide. The Nursing Council of Nigeria closed down Mkar School of Nursing for failing to meet the required standards. The Midwifery School however, was allowed to continue.

The Midwifery School had no qualified tutor until 1968, when Sister Holsema arrived on the scene. Meanwhile qualified midwives helped with the teaching in the School. By then the School was producing Grade Two Midwives. The first set of three students, all from Eastern Nigeria, graduated from here in 1955. The first Tiv graduate of

the Grade Two programme was Mrs. E.A. Chaha, who passed out in 1956, and the next was Mrs. G. Iortyom, in 1958.

In 1977 the first indigenous principal of the Midwifery School, Sister Tabitha Akure of the NKST, took over leadership of the School from Sister Holsema. She worked in this capacity, maintaining a very high quality of product, till 1989, when she resigned and handed over the position to Sister Tabitha Dzawua.

The Grade One Midwifery Programme was started in 1967, and the first set of three passed out in 1969. Again none of them was from Tiv land. Between 1967 and 1978 the school produced 105 Grade One Midwives fully certificated and licensed by the Midwives Board.

With the closure of the Mkar Nursing School in 1968, NKST had to send her students to Vom, in Plateau State, for the sister Mission there (the SUM), to help with their training. However, in 1976, the Plateau State Government took over this School from the Mission, and this privilege to train her students here was denied the NKST. NKST therefore applied for a re-opening of the Mkar Nursing School. By the grace of God this application was treated favourably and in April 1980 the School of Nursing Mkar re-opened under the leadership of Sister Becky Burbwa of the NKST. Since then the school has developed and acquired her own buildings that are fully adequate, and she has also been blessed with very many experienced indigenous teaching staff.

In 1990, the two schools were merged together into one **School of Nursing and Midwifery**. The Midwifery section now offers postgraduate training for nurses, leading to the "double qualification" in Nursing and Midwifery.

C. MEDICAL AUXILLIARIES AND LABORATORY TRAINING SCHOOLS:

Owing to the special place occupied by rural health service in the total health care delivery system in a developing country like Nigeria, it was decided very early in the Medical Mission of the CRC that medical auxiliaries be trained properly and sent to man the rural health posts. Here they could treat and manage the lesser ailments and refer the more serious ones to higher levels for care. In this comprehensive way, the

grossly inadequate specialist care could be made to cover the whole of Tiv land. Dr. Martin Reedyk, a Canadian medical missionary from the Sudan United Mission (CRC Branch), pioneered efforts in this direction by making enquiries and following them up till in 1975 approval was granted for the school to commence at Mkar. The school started off officially in 1977, and accreditation by the National Community Health Practice Board of the Federal Ministry of Health was received in 1979. Its name was changed from the Medical Auxilliaries Training School to the School of Health Technology at accreditation.

Objectives:

The School was set up with the following objectives:

1. To train health personnel to man NKST Health institutions, other sister Church institutions, Benue State, Community and reputable private organizations in Nigeria.
2. To impart both medical and spiritual knowledge in the trainees and instil Christian discipline in them, and to teach them both medical and Christian ethics.

The School of Health Technology was handed over to the NKST in 1980, and has since then been doing very fine. Students are admitted from all parts of Nigeria. Over the years the school has amply achieved its set objectives in the high quality of personnel it has trained and sent out into the field. Percentage passes have ranged between 70 and 100 in most cases, indicating a very good performance both by the staff and students.

In 1992 the School of Medical Laboratory Training was merged to the School of Health Technology. This combined School now offers training for the following cadres of primary health care students:

1. Community Health Extension Workers course (CHEW, formerly called Community Health Assistants. This is a two-year programme.
2. Junior Community Health Extension Workers course (JCHEW or Community Health Aides). This is a one-year course.

The Medical Laboratory Department offers courses leading the **Medical Laboratory Assistants certificate** and the **Medical Laboratory Technicians Certificate**. All the courses are nationally certificated and recognized.

The Primary Health Scheme is a well-proven system of care that the World Health Organization has been recommending to developing countries to help give quality health care where there are insufficient doctors to go round effectively.

D. THE BENUE LEPROSY SETTLEMENT:

We have already heard how the Lord used Mr. Loedolff, the DRCM builder, to set the BLS on a sound footing. When the DRCM handed over the BLS to the CRC in 1962, Mr Loedolff left the place, handing over to Dr. Susan Kok and Dr. Herman Gray, who had both been around with him for some time by then. By this time "Dapsone," the oral treatment for leprosy had already been introduced, and this made treatment of the disease no longer messy and difficult. Better results were being seen this time, and patient compliance improved greatly. By 1968 the population at the settlement, which had risen to 1,500, was dropping rapidly. Only those requiring surgery and close supervision stayed back for this, the rest only coming from their homes for scheduled appointments.

Admission to hospital for leprosy treatment takes a long time — up to 6 months on the average, but because most of them are fairly ambulant with minimal support, this did not pose problems for the relations who came to stay with them. By this time the original idea that leprosy was a hopeless infection had been changed, and relations were no longer abandoning their sick ones.

The Hospital had about 55 beds, an operating theater, and workshops for rehabilitation works. A physiotherapy unit was also developed to rehabilitate the patients with deformities. In time, this arm of the hospital began to gain more and more ground, as leprosy itself was becoming scarce to see.

Funding of the Hospital was almost totally by Government and some international leprosy missions. We will continue to praise our God very much for His message of hope, which He preached loudly and

clearly into the ears of the Tiv people in connection with leprosy. From here many were able to broaden this message to other areas of life, and share their experience with others. We thank God for His love!

2. EDUCATIONAL MISSIONS:

a. Primary Education:

The CRC Synod had decided in 1953 that "education on the mission field be limited as much as possible to a literacy programme in keeping with the performance of the evangelistic task—viz. the direct oral and written transmission of the Gospel, and the encouragement of native covenantal schools."⁹⁶ In an explanation on the decision, the Home Board said that this meant that education up to Primary School was okay for the purpose of obtaining the needed material to train as evangelists and pastors.

However, on taking over from the DRCM, they inherited a Teacher Training College as well. The Home Board interpreted the Synod decision referred to above to mean that this was desirable to produce teachers who would teach in the primary schools. This college was producing well-trained teachers to teach in the primary schools.

The running of all approved primary schools was being grant-aided by Government. This covered for salaries of certificated staff and also for development projects. The job of the Mission was to supervise on behalf of Government, to ensure that standards were kept, and the schools run correctly.

In 1961 CRC started making plans to transfer ownership of all its primary schools to the NKST. 1965 completed the process. Sixty-eight primary schools were transferred to the NKST. About fifty had been taken over from the DRCM. Fifteen new schools had been opened during the period that the CRC was in charge.

⁹⁶ Smith, E.H., op. cit., p 236

b. Secondary Education:

Despite the earlier directive to the effect that the Mission should concern itself only with primary school education on the field, the Home Board in 1956 decided to explore the possibility of establishing a post-primary institution in Tiv land. The Board sought assurance from the NKST that in another five years there would be enough indigenous teachers to cover all the existing Senior Primary schools. They said that if the NKST could assure them in this direction, they would consider opening a secondary school to cater for the children of Christians (covenant children) in the region. We thank God very much for this. In His time, He softened the stand of the CRC Board, making them agree to go beyond the Primary education level in Tiv land.

Mission also wanted that government should guarantee payment of all teachers and the NKST the full capitation costs. However, as the talks continued, the Mission agreed to start the school whether a grant was yet forthcoming from government or not. We praise God that Government also paid up her share, and "William Muckle Bristow Secondary School" was born in 1960.

The first class of 25 students started at Lupwe in the Jukun/Kuteb tribal region in January 1960, and transferred to the permanent site in Gboko in 1962 when the permanent physical structures were developed there. The intake was doubled in 1963, and girls were also admitted into the school, thus making "Bristow" a co-educational school. The first principal of the school, Mr. Harold Bergsma, laid a good and solid foundation for the school, beginning at the Lupwe temporary site and moving to Gboko with them. In 1963 when girls were admitted, Mr. Bergsma handed over to Miss Geraldine Vanden Berg. By the grace of God these two mission principals helped mould the characters of many a young person in Tiv land who passed through the school. Today all over Nigeria there are many young people who studied at "Bristow" under the missionary educationists, and who are a living testimony of the good work done there.

"Bristow" has been one of the greatest successes of the CRC Mission in Tiv land — one of her own babies right from the beginning. NKST praises the Lord God for work done at "Bristow".

We must note that "Bristow" was not the first secondary school in Tiv land. A Government Secondary School had existed at Katsina Ala a long time before the CRC came into the field, and the Catholics had also opened a secondary school at Aliade to the west of Gboko before the coming into existence of "Bristow". Yet by the grace of God, just as was once said of the little town of Bethlehem in the Bible, "Bristow" is by no means the least even among those other schools that came before her. Whether in the quality of her products or in the total number of students she has turned out, Bristow has proved adequate.

Apart from "Bristow", however, the CRC did not undertake any other secondary school project in Tiv land.

c. **Teacher Training:**

We have already seen how the NKST Teachers' College was inherited from the DRCM, and continued in order to produce the much-needed teaching manpower in the many schools that were coming up virtually every day all over the land. The CRC continued to send teachers to the school and also fund its various activities. Grants were also coming in from the Government.

3. **EVANGELICAL MISSIONS:**

We have already seen how the DRCM started the training of evangelists and pastors in the vernacular. We have also seen that even before they folded up their work in Tiv land it was becoming more and more necessary to train pastors and evangelists who could communicate beyond the vernacular. It was absolutely necessary that the NKST must not become an isolated island existing on her own. The Sudan United Mission had arranged a union seminary on the high plateau to serve all the evangelical national churches in the Sudan region. NKST also subscribed to a participating membership in the union seminary, called the "Theological College of Northern Nigeria," and sited at Bukuru, near Jos.

However, as time went on the NKST felt that despite this arrangement there was still a big need for her to have her own

theological seminary which would teach her young pastors the Reformed doctrines. There was also the problem of the Bukuru College being unable to meet NKST's expansion needs. The CRC Field Council did not feel the same way, and failed to agree with the NKST even when the Church made a request to the CRC Synod over the matter. The proper training of pastors for the NKST, as far as the CRC Field Council was concerned, had been adequately taken care of with the opening of the Bukuru union seminary. In the interim, the CRC mission continued for the short-term to help the NKST produce more vernacular pastors to cope with the increasing load of work. Rev. Persenaire was responsible in this ministry, and he was doing this at Isherev.

The Benue Bible Institute, HARGA

The area of evangelists' training however, was quite different. Here the CRC observed correctly that a beautiful revival had swept across Tiv land earlier on, and this had raised teachers and workers who rose to the challenge of carrying the Gospel to their own people. And yet nothing had been done to help these people with a useful training either in the Word of God or in general literacy, except for a few short-term contact sessions once in a while.

The DRCM had written to the CRC on this matter, saying:

"[Our] Field Council realized that something should be done to make our Classes for Religious Instruction...a more successful means of evangelization. We concluded that more attention should be given to the teachers of CRIs...that more regular religious instruction classes should be organized for the teachers of the CRIs."⁹⁷

The burden to train the evangelists in a proper way lay heavily on the heart of one of the missionaries, Rev. Ralph Baker. In 1960 this dream was realized and a properly organized Evangelists' School started in Tiv land. It started on a temporary site at Zaki Biam and was known then as the "Benue Bible School" (B.B.S.). With financial support from

⁹⁷Smith, E.H.; *Ibid.*; p 153.

the United States, it was possible to build the complex at its permanent site at Harga.

The school now re-named the "Benue Bible Institute", opened on its permanent site at Harga in 1965, with Rev. Ralph Baker as its first principal. The complex had nine dormitory buildings, two classroom blocks and a chapel, all on a spacious, well-wooded piece of land at the foot of the Harga Mountain. Among the initial teaching staff were Miss Nancy Chapel (who later became the first principal of Uavande Girls' Secondary School), and Rev. P. Agba, a Tiv graduate of the Theological College of Northern Nigeria, Bukuru.

The school's aims and objectives include among others, personal development of students and staff in Christian faith and practice, strengthening of the Christian home, training of church leaders and the encouragement of agricultural development. It runs a three-year course leading to a Certificate and also a Diploma in Rural Evangelism. Practical work during training includes village preaching, teaching Sunday School and catechism classes and field work, which involves going out in pairs to places with a real need and living there to share the word of God and help out as per need.

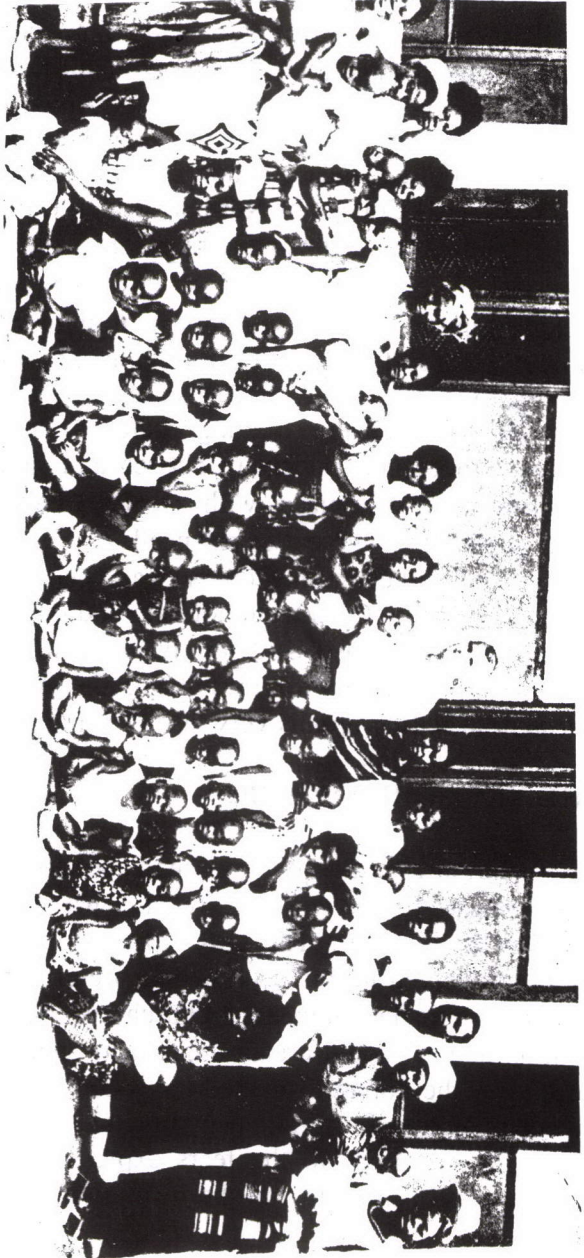
Today the training course has been upgraded and students are Secondary School Certificate holders, and the teaching is also conducted in English. We praise God for the beautiful work done among us by way of BBI, Harga. We also thank the American Mission for their foresight in setting up this very useful institution in our midst.

THE NKST ORPHANAGE:

This, the last institution we shall be considering under the CRC Evangelistic Mission work in Tiv land, was also handed over to them by the DRCM in 1960. The CRC Mission had been "unwilling" to be directly involved in this department, preferring instead that it be passed over direct to the indigenous church, yet the DRCM had argued that such an action "could create unpleasant opposition by the Tiv people", leading to the collapse of the whole department. As a result the CRC accepted the transfer of this department as well.

But contrary to the fears expressed above, the NKST Church was only too willing to run the institution even before she took it over

officially. She willingly took on the day-to-day running of the Orphanage while the Mission provided financial aid. In 1969, the Orphanage was officially transferred to the NKST.



Some Children, Relations and Staff
NKST Orphanage.

CHAPTER 12

NONGO U KRISTU U KEN SUDAN HEN TIV (NKST)

Up till now we have been discussing the NKST Church as some third party, concentrating on the missions that were in the forefront in her initial history. In order to arrive at the NKST, whose story we have set out to write here, we needed to discuss the two missions that preceded her in great detail. Now we would like to look more closely at the Church itself: what it was and is, and how it has been faring since its independence from the Missions.

THE NAME "NKST":

The full name of the acronym "NKST", which is given in Tiv, is "Nongo u Kristu u ken Sudan hen Tiv." Our missionaries gave the "literal" translation as "The Church of Christ in the Sudan among the Tiv," and we accepted it because we felt they understood our language well enough to be able to know what we said, and they could translate it accurately too. However, the translation "Church of Christ" is not entirely accurate technically. The Tiv for "Church" is "Nongo u Kristu", which translates literally as "people (followers) of Christ." Thus a literal translation of the Tiv expression ought to be the "The Church in the Sudan among the Tiv," or "The Followers of Christ in the Sudan among the Tiv," based on the definition of the word "Church" (from the Greek "Kuriakos"), meaning "belonging to the Lord."⁹⁸

We say this to make it abundantly clear that the NKST, so translated as "The Church of Christ in the Sudan among the Tiv," has nothing doctrinally in common with the denominations known as the "Churches of Christ" existing in Britain, the United States and elsewhere. We do not know these bodies, and have no affiliation with them.

⁹⁸Tenney, M.C.; (Ed.); The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary; Zondervan, Grand Rapids Michigan; 1967; p 170.

Having cleared the air about that, we wish to say, that the expression "the Church of Christ" is a description of what the Church is professing itself to be. It is not anybody's Church — it definitely is not the Tiv people's Church, or the "Tiv Church" as many have referred to it over the years. Many people have tried to imply that because "among the Tiv" appears in the name of the Church, it must be "a Tiv Church", meaning that it is a tribal church. This has never at all been the way the Tiv people have looked at the NKST Church. Rather, the expression describes the area of operation of the Mission endeavour that culminated in the formation of this Church.

Again, the word "Sudan" (actually referring to the so-called "West-Central Sudan") was the most technical term to define this region at the time of the formation of the Mission, which worked there. By that time the name "Nigeria" had not yet been coined; it was not until 1914 that the name "Nigeria" came about, and the region had a specific name. This is why the word "Sudan" appears in the descriptive name of the Church.

We should also note carefully that the name says, "among the Tiv" (*hen Tiv*), not "for the Tiv" (*sha ci u Tiv*), or "belonging to the Tiv" (*u Tiv*). The expression has only a historical significance since the Mission that worked among us used the entire Tiv people and land as their unit of operation. And when they granted autonomy to the indigenous people, it also happened to be to the whole Tiv land and her peoples. This was their expressed desire at the very beginning of their mission in Tiv land. At their meeting held at Saai in February 1914, it was decided, *inter alia*, that:

...The Dutch Reformed Church Mission (DRCM) should be responsible for the whole of Tiv land. There must be no division of the land or the people, but the Tiv as a whole must be worked by one Mission.⁹⁹

This same pattern of naming is true of most of the Protestant churches that emerged as a result of the evangelistic work "in the Sudan" generally. All of them bore similar descriptive names that

⁹⁹Cassaleggio, E.N.; *op. cit.*; p. 22

tended to highlight this "Sudan" ministry, as well as a geographical description of their location. Thus "EKAS Lardin Benue" was the Hausa equivalent for the same thing, meaning, "The Church of Christ in the Sudan in the Benue region." We note here that even though the Tiv also belonged in the "Benue Province", and even though the River Benue flows through a larger region in Tiv land, yet this other Church came to be known as "the Benue" Church. This does not necessarily have any tribal or political undertones.

"REFORMED..."¹⁰⁰

The next thing we need to explain about the NKST Church is the faith that they profess: the "Reformed Faith." What does it mean? Many members, even of the NKST, do not know what this means, and it becomes difficult for them to explain when called upon to defend their faith. But Peter says that we should always be ready to explain what we believe in:

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, [1 Peter 3:15].

The major teachings of the "Reformed" theology are contained in the **catechisms** of the Churches. The NKST subscribes to these confessions of the "Reformed Faith" as recorded in the Heidelberg Catechism, which was written in 1563. The "Reformed Theology" developed from within 16th Century Protestantism. Martin Luther did lead the Protestant split from the Catholic Church in 1520, yet when the Protestant Christians sat down to declare their faith on many issues of theology, they were not all agreed on the interpretations in some of the cases. This re-definition went on till a number of distinct groups emerged from the Protestant family, among them the "Reformed

¹⁰⁰Ferguson, S.B., Wright, D.F. (Eds); The New Dictionary of Theology; Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, England; 1988; p 569.

Theology". Martin Luther's group became known as "Lutherans". However, the differences between these "Protestant" groups are generally in the emphasis rather than on anything very serious, and all of them continue to agree more than they disagree.

One might be tempted to imagine that the Reformed Churches are a different sect or something like that, but that would be far from the truth. According to Rev. Dr. Timothy Palmer,

The first thing that should be said about the Reformed faith is that it holds to most of the beliefs of the early church. The Reformed and Presbyterian churches believe the basic Christian teachings that are found in the Apostles' Creed and which are held by Christians throughout the world. Our churches hold to the decisions of the Council of Nicea (AD 325), which said that the Son is of the same essence as the Father, we accept the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), which said that Jesus is one person with two natures (the divine and the human natures).

Our churches accept the classic Christian doctrine of the Trinity. We believe in the vicarious atonement of Christ and all other basic Christian doctrines. So the Reformed and Presbyterian churches stand in the mainstream of Christian orthodoxy.

Secondly it should be said that the Reformed and Presbyterian churches are part of the Protestant movement. The Protestant churches are those churches that came out of the sixteenth century Reformation. Reformed theology is close to Lutheran, Anglican and Baptist theology. The Reformed and Presbyterian churches agree with other Protestant churches on most points of doctrine. The points of unity are many, the differences are relatively few. Nevertheless, there are obviously some special teachings and emphases that characterize our churches.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹Palmer, T.; *The Reformed and Presbyterian Faith. A view From Nigeria*; TCNN Publications, Bukuru; 1996; p 71.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFORMED FAITH:

1. The Centrality of God:

This teaching shows the triune God (the Trinity as God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) to be at the centre of everything that goes on. The Reformed faith has a strong awareness that God is King over the entire world and over all our lives. Therefore our lives must be lived in reverence before God.

Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your body. [1 Corinthians 6:19-20].

2. The Centrality of Christ:

"Reformed" Christians see Jesus as the focus of the believer's life and as the example to be followed. It is through Him that we have come to know our God. Rev. Timothy Palmer says:

We believe that this theme of the Lordship of God and of Christ is a key to understanding all of Reformed theology... If God is indeed a true King, then it is clear that His Kingship is over all our lives. God is King both in our church services and also in the rest of our lives. He is King both on Sundays and also in the rest of the week. The Reformed people believe strongly that God is King over all of our lives. We believe that all of life is religion.¹⁰²

This means that all of a man's life is subjected to God: both the spiritual and the one outside of the Church, for all of life belong to, and must answer to God. Thus apart from preaching the word of God, Reformed theology also encourages the opening of schools and running of hospitals and development of agriculture and so on, so that the whole body and soul will live to praise the Lord. We are enjoined in the Bible

¹⁰²ibid.

to do all things in the name, and for the glory of our God. This stems from this "**fact**," that Jesus is our life.

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. [1 Corinthians 10:31].

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him... Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. [Colosians 3:15-17, 23-24].

This all-embracing way of looking at life in the context of a religion is termed a "worldview". It is true of some forms of government (like Communism), religions (like Islam and "Sharia"), or the traditional African religions (like the Tiv way of life before the advent of Christianity).

It also means that our salvation is entirely the work of God alone. Such a "**fact**" leaves no place at all for human effort in the work of salvation. Christ's work on earth (including His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead) was in order that He would "save His people from their sins." However, this salvation is not automatic for every human being, till the Holy Spirit has personally drawn each person individually to Christ. In our fallen state, we cannot come to Christ on our own. But when the Holy Spirit Himself has led us to Christ in this way, He also keeps us in Christ by His indwelling presence. This process of sanctification no doubt, requires our effort, **but the Holy Spirit gives us even this effort.**

Other views commonly held by "Reformed Christians" include affirmation of the Lordship of God in "election", "grace", "total depravity", "preservation of the saints" and "limited atonement". They also affirm the lordship of God over other things, like providence, sanctification of both the individual and society, and God's lordship in

the Church generally. We will need to briefly consider some of these cardinal points here.

a. Election: Man is so fallen and sinful that left on his own he cannot, and will not turn to God to be saved. The grace of God is what sets the process in motion to save us. The "setting in motion" of this process is the exclusive preserve of God, and He determines when and who to save. Some may argue that if this be the case, why should God blame someone for not getting saved? We do not hold an easy or comforting answer to that except that this is what the Lord has showed us from His word:

It is not as if God's word has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children...

What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire, but on God's mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I may display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." Therefore God has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy, **and he hardens whom he wants to harden.**

One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, "Why did you make me like this?" [Romans 9:6-7, 14-20].

"Terrible" and "unfair" as this may sound to our human ears, yet it is the Scripture's teaching on this subject. "Reformed theology" humbly submits to this teaching on the awesome and absolute lordship of our God, which no man dares challenge. Yet we also thankfully remember that despite all of that, yet His grace lovingly cares for us all.

b. Grace: This means an undeserved favour of a superior to an inferior. Divine grace refers to the favour and salvation offered by God to sinful mankind. As has been said, man not at all deserves the offer, and God has offered it out of His own love alone. God's grace enables

us to come to Him and confess our sins and repent of them. Afterwards, it maintains us in the faith. God's grace is therefore, basically the same as the Holy Spirit, who leads us to Christ and then indwells us and helps us live the correct life. This is completely the work of the Lord God alone.

c. Preservation of the Saints: This means assurance of salvation for the believer. We have been told in the Scriptures that "whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." The assurance of salvation for the believer lies not in his living the "correct life", but in the Lord Jesus Christ who Himself will uphold Him. But this does not at all play down sanctification, which is the same as living the holy life. Sanctification is a must for a believer, and is made possible by the Holy Spirit of God. And afterwards the same Holy Spirit testifies that such a one has become a child of God. How, after all this has taken place, can such a person who received all this fail to receive the salvation from God? It would be tantamount to saying God has lied, which, we know, can never happen. Reformed theology believes in the preservation of the saints or assurance of salvation — but this is in Christ Jesus alone, not in our own imagination.

Over the years since its formation, Reformed theology has been critically examined, questioned and re-addressed especially by its followers, to make it relevant to Scripture and easy for human understanding. Thus what we refer to today as the "Reformed theology" is not one single man's work, but rather a concensus of many people's work.

Reformed theology had its origin in the life and works of such people as John Calvin, John Wycliffe, Ulrich Zwingli, John Knox and many others. Large international conferences of Reformed Christians in the early days helped to formulate this concensus of opinions, and to marry the many shades of differences into one universally accepted whole. The rest of the teachings of the Reformed Faith are expressed in detail in the Catechism for anyone to study.

Reformed Christians from South Africa brought the Word of God to us, and when they left, the work was continued by other Reformed Christians from the United States. It would appear therefore, as if we had "no choice" in our becoming "Reformed." Yet the NKST

adopted the Reformed theology not necessarily because her founding fathers were "Reformed;" rather, she accepted it because after carefully studying it and the Bible, she was convinced that it spoke the truth from the Holy Scriptures, and nothing else.

A Reformed Church must also be a reforming church. If any of its practices fail to shine the light of Jesus to other people, then steps must be taken to reform such a practice. Also in order for the people to benefit from the message of Christ, it needs be presented in such a way that they can perceive, accept and identify with it. Rev. Dr. Palmer writes:

The Reformed movement is now about 450 years old, with churches in many different countries. Obviously these churches are not exactly the same in every matter of belief and practice. The Reformed Church in Geneva at the time of John Calvin was not the same as John Knox's Scottish Presbyterian Church; the Presbyterian church in Scotland today is not the same as the Presbyterian church in Nigeria.

The Reformed Church has been adapted to different cultures and situations in different periods of time. There has been some contextualization or inculturation of the Reformed faith over the course of history.¹⁰³

This explains some of the "modifications" of church practices that have been adopted by the NKST, to make the message more applicable to her members in their socio-cultural environment.

OTHER REFORMED CHURCHES IN NIGERIA:

1. The Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria (RCCN). A split out of the former EKAS Benue, with Headquarters in Takum, Taraba State.
2. The Evangelical Reformed Church of Christ (ERCC). Formerly called EKAS Mada Hills. Headquarters is at Akwanga.
3. The Nigeria Reformed Church (NRC), among the Izi people near Abakaliki.

¹⁰³Palmer, T.; *op. cit.*; p 70.

4. Presbyterian Church of Nigeria (PCN). Although mainly concentrated in southeastern Nigeria, they have now spread all over the nation.
5. Qua Iboe Church. Even though they do not call themselves "Reformed", yet they are in confession and belief.
6. Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN formerly EKAS Benue, based in Wukari).

A SISTER CHURCH - (ERCC):¹⁰⁴

It might do here to briefly show our "ancestral" relationship with the Evangelical Reformed Church of Christ, based at Akwanga. Formerly called "EKAS Mada Hills", this church was founded by some of the same South African Missionaries who first came and started work at Saai. Mr. Judd and Mr. Hosking were among the first missionaries who came to Saai and started work there. Mr. Judd in particular, being a naturally gifted linguist, was able to compose (translate) the first twelve hymns into Tiv language, and he also wrote the first-ever book in Tiv, called "Zua u Tiv" in 1913 at Saai.

In February 1914 at Saai, a Field Council meeting was held, which was chaired by the visiting Rev. J. du Plessis of the Theological Seminary back in South Africa. At this meeting it was decided that: "the DRCM should be responsible for the whole of Tiv land [and that] there must be no division of the Tiv land or the people, but that one Mission must work the Tiv as a whole." This decision meant that the English-speaking members of the SUM team from South Africa (represented at the time by Messrs Judd and Hosking, who was then on leave in South Africa), had to leave the Tiv Mission Field and seek an alternative field.

We learn that this proposal was acceptable to the English-speaking members and other missionaries around, especially the representatives of the American Branch of the SUM, stationed at Wukari. In a telegram to them, Mr. Hosking also indicated his support

¹⁰⁴Source: The Reformed and Presbyterian faith (A view from Nigeria), by Rev. T. Palmer; TCNN Publications, Bukuru, 1996.

of the move to split up in this way. As a matter of fact, we learn that the idea of a split had originated from Mr. Hosking in the first place.¹⁰⁵

Following this decision, Mr. Judd left Saai in February 1915 and moved northwards, crossing the Benue River seeking a site to start a new mission work. He chose Keana, among the Alago people in present-day Nasarawa State. Mr Hosking returned from his leave and joined Mr. Judd, and together they started the mission work among the Alago people at Keana in July 1916.

There at Keana Mr. Hosking died of Yellow Fever in 1917, and was buried. Also in 1917 more staff from South Africa came and joined them on the field. Mr. Judd and his wife began work on the translation of the Gospel of St. Mark into Alago language.

In 1920 Mr. Judd opened a new station at Randa, and moved his headquarters from Keana to this place. A "CRI" (Centre for Religious Instruction), was started at Randa. In 1923, with three baptized converts, the Lord's Supper was celebrated here for the first time.

The Missionaries spent a week fasting and waiting on the Lord to be shown where next to site a station. After this they moved to Wana. Many more stations were opened as time progressed, including Lafia, Ayu, Wamba and others. Their Women's Fellowship was organized in 1942.

In May 1956 the young Church was registered with Government. It was called "Ekklesiyar Kristi a Sudan Lardin Dutsen Mada," or EKAS Mada Hills. Two of their notable first pastors included Pastor Ambi and Pastor Abimiku Anzaku. They were ordained in 1958. A Bible School was opened on the field in 1959 at Murya, and a Bible Institute at Ayu in 1964.

In the early 1960s the South African Missionaries had to leave Nigeria because of change in government in Nigeria at the attainment of national independence. However, unlike in Tiv land, the Church was not handed over to another Mission but was left on its own, having already received its own independence.

The going initially was quite tough and rough for EKAS Mada Hills, but the good Lord helped them weather the storm. Today, ERCC

¹⁰⁵Cassaleggio, E.N.; op. cit.; p 22.

is doing quite fine as a National Church, and we praise God very much for them. They are our sisters - even more closely related with us than any other Church in the land, except maybe RCCN and CRCN, those two being the National Churches in the Jukun/Kuteb region next-door to us.

BIRTH OF THE NKST CHURCH

We have already seen in this book all the processes that unfolded over time, and which eventually culminated in the birth of the "Nongo u Kristu u Ken Sudan hen Tiv" (NKST Church). This "birth" did not take the leadership of the indigenous church by surprise, for there had been a "pregnancy" — a waiting and expecting period during which things were happening. The local leaders were aware of the preparations towards this, and were getting prepared for it. Cassaleggio reports that they were eager for the transfer, meaning that they accepted the challenge of taking on full responsibility for the work among their own people. He also reports that a lot was done to prepare the people in the key areas before the actual transfer.

The first of these was self-support. The churches were encouraged right from the start to do things by themselves. Rev. Botha had set this ball rolling as early as 1933 when he urged the congregation at Jato Aka in Turan area of Tiv land to get ready to give financial support for everything they were receiving. He also introduced school fees there to drive the point home. The entire Mission field a year later adopted this approach, and collections were introduced in all the Sunday worship services. We also learnt that the church building at Mbaakon in Kunav region was erected exclusively through input by the Tiv worshippers, not by the Mission. The same thing was going on in all the other stations. Today, the National Church expects the local congregation members to tax themselves and erect all structures, be they churches, dispensaries or schools, and to pay all their workers as well. This principle of self-support has proved to be very useful in the church.

The second area of preparation for independence was self-government. Initially, limited participation was granted some of the members in the various consistories by asking them to serve in the church as "supporters". In this capacity they were required to "keep a

watchful eye on all that was going on in the churches." Later, when local church councils were formed, the members were charged with the responsibility of "day-to-day running of the consistories" under the supervision of the Mission. Through this arrangement of delegation of duties the Mission was able to tell when the people were ripe for autonomy.

The Third area of assessing to know if an indigenous church is ripe for independence is self-propagation. Here one of the parameters used was spontaneous interest and action by the local church towards evangelization to her people and to other tribes and peoples. There was evidence of this as early as 1942 when Evangelist Nevkar and his wife went to the Etulo people on their own, and started a ministry among them. Also by 1956, another lay apostolate, Atsav from Ukan went to live among the Utange people to carry on evangelization work. In addition, there was an evangelistic outreach to the Hausa-speaking peoples in the Makurdi area. With regard to evangelization work to fellow Tiv people, there was no longer any doubt at all about the ability and willingness of the Tiv Christians to go on ever since the Revival that swept across the land in 1933.

The ability of the Tiv to develop their own hymnology in line with their cultural lifestyle and use them to express themselves in their worship services was another positive step confirming that they were coming of age for autonomy.

MILESTONES ON THE ROAD TO AUTONOMY:

As the membership of the indigenous congregations was increasing, so also was the leadership exposure. In 1942 a "Rule of Order" was drafted for the indigenous church in the making. This was the precursor of the NKST Consitution, which came much later. Through this document the leadership and membership was being introduced to "orderly" behaviour and consistency, instead of arbitrary high-handedness in running the house of God.

In 1950 a conference was held to seriously discuss the issue of granting autonomy to the indigenous church. After a series of consultations with the SUM CRC on the issue, it was decided in 1954

that a committee should be set up to prepare a draft constitution for the emergent indigenous church in Tiv land.

A transition leadership council of the emergent national church was formed in 1955. Known as "**The Church Council**," it comprised four Tiv Christian leaders and three missionaries, and it was charged with the running of the whole mission field. It was also kept in the full picture of all the developments with regard to the handing over process. Three of the four Tiv members selected were from the first class of Tiv Pastors in training.

When the draft constitution was prepared it was sent to all the stations that were in existence at the time for comments and suggestions. In July 1956 the Constitution was accepted and adopted at a meeting of the Church Council:

The name for the young church was also chosen at this council meeting. It was in Tiv, and was known as "**Nongo u Kristu u ken Sudan hen Tiv.**" Its English translation was "**The Church of Christ in the Sudan among the Tiv.**" The acronym from this descriptive term ("**NKST**" — **said in English, not in Tiv**), became the official name of this young church. Also at this very Church Council meeting of July 1956, the first four Tiv pastors who had just finished their training were examined and passed officially. They were now free to be called by any NKST consistory, and also free to accept a call.

However, it was not until **January 7, 1957** that the NKST Constitution was officially ratified and full autonomy officially granted to the NKST. On that day the Church Council was dissolved and the **Synod of the NKST**, just formed, became the young Church's highest ruling body. Its first executive comprised **Rev. Nevkar Annum**, pastor of the Mkar Church, as its **first Chairman**. **Rev. W.D.Gerryts (Ortese Teghlee)**, who was Field Secretary of the DRCM, was **Assessor**. The **Secretary** was **Mr. Asogo Ajiir**, a teacher, to be assisted by **Rev. du Toit van der Merwe (Ortese Iyua)**.

By this development the NKST came into being, but it was not until two days later (on the **9th of January 1957**), in church, that the **official ceremony** took place. Over 900 Tiv Christians and many missionaries witnessed it. Among the dignitaries that graced that occasion were **Rev. W. Malherbe** who came in from South Africa to

represent the General Mission Board of the DRCM, and Rev. H. Evenhouse who represented the CRC.

Since her independence on January 9, 1957, the NKST Church has been run by the Synod. The benevolent hand of the Lord has been over the Church and its administration, and its work has been moving in a steady, focused direction all the time. Even though it sometimes appears as if the wheels have become clogged and movement slowed down almost to a halt, yet definite progression is being achieved every single day. This is the one big reason that makes us want to burst out into the open with our praise to the Almighty. Attempting to further suppress our praise at this time is just impossible.

TRANSFER TO THE NKST CHURCH

At the granting of autonomy to the NKST in 1957 most of the Mission structures and facilities were not handed over to her except church buildings and primary schools. Even though she was given independence and autonomy, yet virtually all the "Mission property" in the land was handed over to the new Mission that took over from the South Africans. The two organized Mission stations east of the Katsina Ala River at Zaki Biam and Sevav had earlier been transferred to the American Mission in 1950. When arrangements for transfer of the remaining field to them was concluded, all the established mission stations were handed over to the Americans between 1956 and 1961... all, except Apir. This was the only Mission station that was handed over directly to the NKST. 1962 completed transfer of the remaining institutions to the CRC.

Transfer of most of the Mission stations to the NKST did not take very long. Those stations that had "nothing to offer" by way of institutional activity were soon handed over to the NKST so she could pursue the evangelization work to her own people. Since the NKST was very willing to carry on with this ministry, transfer of all such stations was done soonest. By 1963, most of the Mission stations had been handed over to the NKST Church, and "Mission activity" was wound up in all such stations. Zaki Biam was not officially vacated till 1970, but by the early sixties mission activity had virtually ceased in that station.

CRC Mission activity was concentrated at Mkar and Makurdi, where most of the institutions were located. Most (but not all) of the CRC's missionary activity in Tiv land was institutional.

The final transfer from the Sudan United Mission (Christian Refomed Church Branch), to the NKST Church was performed in 1982.



THE FIRST NKST SYNOD, 1957.

From Left:

Rev. van der Merwe (Ortese Iyua) (Asst. Sec)

Mr. Asogo Ajir (Secretary)

Rev. Nevkar Annum (Chairman)

Rev. W.D. Geryts (Vice Chairman).

CHAPTER 13

ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE NKST CHURCH:

The NKST Church is an evangelical church. This term is used here to mean, "pertaining to the Gospel" (as expounded by the four gospels), or "conforming to the basic doctrines of the Gospel" (as enunciated by the New Testament as a whole).¹⁰⁶ Simply speaking, this means that it is a mainstream church, believing and accepting all the cardinal teachings of Christianity as taught in the Bible. Besides being "evangelical" (i.e. conforming to the fundamental facts and truth of Christianity), NKST is also "evangelistic" (i.e. having a sense of missionary compassion and urgency). This is clearly exemplified in the NKST Mission Board and its various outreach activities.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE NKST CHURCH:

The highest ruling and decision-making body of the NKST is the "Synod", which is a General Meeting of all the ordained ministers as well as delegated elders from all the Classes that make up the NKST Church. Other members of the Synod are the Executive Committee members, and members of the Board of Trustees.

The Synod meets at least twice every year. The first meeting is known as "the June Synod" or "the Emergency Synod". This one deals mainly with examination of graduates of NKST-approved theological seminaries before they can be Okayed for calling in NKST consistories. Another regular feature of this meeting is the presentation of annual budgets by the various departments and organizations of the NKST for scrutiny and approval. The NKST year closes in September. Other matters may also be tabled and discussed in this meeting as the need

¹⁰⁶Douglas, J.D. (General Ed); The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church; Zondervan Corporation, Grand Rapids Michigan; 1978; p 358.

may arise, but most of the regular cases are kept till the "November Synod". The June Synod usually lasts one week only.

The "November Synod" usually lasts two weeks. Cases coming to this meeting include Annual Reports of NKST Departments and reports of Committees set up by the Synod. The Executive Committee of the Synod also presents a report of their activities during the year. Other issues in the November Synod include agendas brought by the various classes on issues over which they are seeking clearance, arbitration or policy guidelines from the Synod. The Synod as the last ecclesiastical court, listens to petitions, appeals and problems involving issues which the classes or the Executive Committee have been unable to deal with conclusively. However, all disciplinary cases are referred back to the local church for implementation.

Synod meetings are chaired by the President of the NKST and his Executive Committee comprising the Vice-President of the NKST, Secretary General and his assistant and three other elected members. Other members who take part in chairing the Synod meetings are the elected Board of Trustees, made up of the Chairman, Secretary and five other members.

The Executive Committee of the Synod:

This is a body of elected members of the Synod who do the day-to-day running of the entire NKST on behalf of the Synod. They comprise the NKST President and his Vice, the Secretary General and his Assistant, and three other members, all elected by the Synod for a term that can be repeated once for any given stretch. They meet regularly to deliberate on issues that arise in the NKST, and take major and final decisions on many of them, reserving only those that need be referred to Synod. The Synod reserves the right to review and amend decisions taken by the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee is a part-time in its functions, and members do not hold a permanent office in the NKST Secretariat, except the General Secretary and his Assistant, who are regular, full-time workers for the NKST. The Secretary General is the Chief Executive of the NKST, and he corresponds and acts on behalf of the NKST on all matters during the course of everyday running of the

Church's affairs. He does this in close consultation with the President and the Executive Committee of the NKST. He is also the Chief Scribe at all Synod and Executive Committee meetings. The presidency however, is part-time in function since the President has no permanent office in the secretariat.

The NKST Board of Trustees:

This body is the recognized custodian of the whole NKST. Members are registered with the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs under the "Land Perpetuation Act" as required by law, and they are the recognized owners of the NKST and all her properties and rights. In this capacity they can sue and be sued on behalf of the NKST. Members are often very busy looking after the "properties" of the NKST whether in cases of misunderstandings and quarrels or in litigations by staff or others.

Aims and Objectives:

The purpose of the Church is to serve God in the preaching of His Word to all men, in the administration of sacraments according to Christ's ordinance, in fostering the fellowship of believers, instructing believers and their children, and in the exercise of Church discipline. Therefore it is the purpose of the Trustees:

1. To purchase, lease or otherwise acquire lands, buildings, investments and property of any kind movable or immovable, or any interest in the same or in connection with, or to further the purposes above mentioned.
2. To enter into any arrangement with the Government of Nigeria or with any other Governments or authorities, supreme, local, municipal or otherwise, and to obtain from such Governments or authorities all such rights, concessions and privileges as may deem conducive to the above mentioned purposes.
3. To do all or any of the above things as principals, trustees or agents or otherwise, and either alone or in conjunction with any Church, Company, undertaking or body of persons, or persons, and either by or through agents, Trustees or otherwise.

4. To invest and deal with any monies not immediately required upon such securities and in such a manner as may from time to time be determined by the Trustees.
5. To do all such other things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the abjects above specified.

All policy decisions of the NKST therefore ought to pass through the hands of the Board of Trustees for knowledge and necessary advice. In practice however, this does not always take place, and sometimes the Board of Trustees is sued even before they get to hear of the incident.

The Board comprises a Chairman and a Secretary, and five other members. Usually appointment of members is a not a term appointment, and unless something happens to a member, he remains on in that office. Such things that can happen and get a Trustee member out of office include: death, resignation, insanity, conviction in a competent court of law for criminal offence, or recommendation for removal from office by a two-third majority vote in the NKST Synod.

The current membership of the Board of Trustees include:

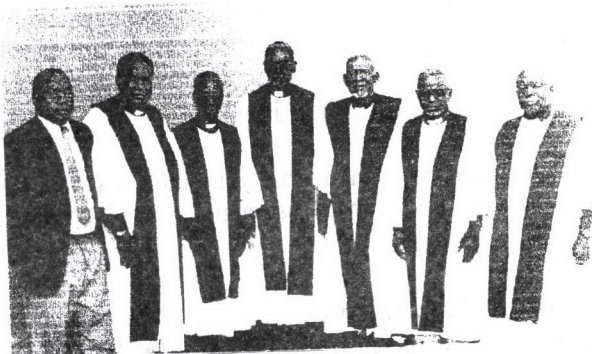
Rev. D. A. Aben	Chairman
Re. P. V. Gbashima	Secretary
Barrister P. Shimakaa	Member
Rev. D. I. Tija	Member
Rev. I. Achineku	Member
Rev. P. P. Agba	Member.

ORGANIZATION OF THE NKST CHURCH:

In order to keep track of the various areas of operation of the NKST Church, she has organized herself into "Departments". A "Director" usually heads these departments who is the chief executive, supervising and heading all the activities in there. Some of the areas of activity of the NKST are however, not referred to as departments, but are similarly organized and headed by an appointee of the Synod.

NKST DEPARTMENTS:

1. Education
2. Health Services
3. MIM (Sunday school)
4. Youth Ministry
5. Literature
6. Orphanage
7. Diaconal Services
8. Scholarship Board
9. Missions Board
10. Workers
11. Tiv Bible Revision.
12. Media Services
13. Tiv Choir Group
14. Finance
15. Audit



BOARD OF TRUSTEES, NKST.

CHAPTER 14

GROWTH OF THE NKST:

In Tiv custom, soon after a woman has wedded, enquiries into her well being always include the question: "Has she become pregnant yet?" And after she has put to bed the next question is, "Has the child started walking yet?" When this has happened and the child has been weaned, the next "natural" question is, "Has she not yet got pregant again?" This may sound callous and mechanical — almost as if the young wife was a breeding machine, but it is a "natural expectation" of the trend of events. Similarly, when a young church is born, it is "natural" to expect that it will grow strong enough to stand on its feet and fend for itself and its people. And when it has grown strong, it is further expected that it will also help its other brothers. This is the picture our Lord Jesus Christ gave us when He talked to Simon Peter:

"...I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail.
And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."
[Luke 22:32].

Today we would like to claim this prayer of our Saviour and Lord for ourselves in the NKST. What is more, we have seen lots of evidence in this direction — evidence to show us that the Saviour has indeed prayed this prayer for us. And we are very happy about it.

1. EVANGELISTIC MISSIONS:

Growth has been the story of the NKST Church right from its inception. Rubingh wrote that:

Since that natal day of the NKST, the Gospel has spread like a flame through Tiv land. Attendance at worship centres and communicant membership both doubled in the first five years. During 1963 attendance at worship services reached 100,000, and it became alarmingly apparent that a leadership gap of major

proportions had to be faced immediately... At the end of her first decade of existence, the NKST had established nearly 1,500 worship centres in villages throughout the tribal area. **Membership and attendance showed an increase of nearly 600% over the 1957 level.** ¹⁰⁷

Rubingh went on to show that this pattern of growth in the second decade of NKST Church's existence was just as impressive, and continued to follow along the same pattern. All her vernacular trained pastors were absorbed immediately, and more consistories were being opened. He quoted a statistical summary which, even though probably not very accurate, serves to show what was going on in the new Church:

		<u>Sunday Attendance</u>	<u>Communicants</u>
January 1,	1957	23,000	1,800
	1958	24,258	1,900
	1959	29,000	2,300
	1960	35,790	2,872
	1961	46,888	3,200
	1962	54,000	3,642
	1963	73,140	4,400
	1964	100,000	5,879
	1965	109,837	7,000
	1966	129,492	8,200
	1967	143,000	10,100
	1968	160,000	12,100
	1969	180,000	14,381 ¹⁰⁸

As we can see here, the story of the NKST Church serving in its own land has been one of steady growth ever since its inception. This picture is even more beautiful as the NKST Church takes a giant stride into the new millenium. Consitories and Classes are opened every single year, and the gospel message is spreading very fast even to lands beyond the boundaries of the Tiv.

¹⁰⁷Rubingh, E.; op. cit.; p. 168.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.; p. 169.

By the end of 1998 the figures increased tremendously, as shown in the table below:¹⁰⁹

1.	Total No. of Congregations	225
2.	Total No. of Pastors	294
3.	Total No. of Evangelists	752
4.	Total No. of Communicants	86,401
5.	Total No. of Worship Centres	2,731
6.	Total No. of Classes	34
7.	No. of Tertiary Schools	6
8.	No. of NKST Secondary Schools	31
9.	No. of Hospitals	9
10.	Total No. of Health Clinics	150

Classes that Form the NKST:

1. Abaji	13. Gboko	25. Mbaakpur
2. Aben	14. Gyenku	26. Mkar
3. Abwa	15. Harga	27. N. Bali
4. Adikpo	16. Ikpa	28. Pevikyaa
5. Ahôbee	17. Ikyaaave	29. Saai
6. Aku	18. Ishan	30. Sevav
7. Alam	19. Jato Aka	31. Shagu
8. Anyiin	20. Jos	32. Zaki Biam
9. Apir	21. Kuhe	33. Ayu
10. Biliji	22. Makurdi	34. Tavaku
11. Faajir	23. Mbaakon	
12. Garagboghohol	24. Mbaamandev	

NKST MINISTRY TO YOUTH:

Youth form a very large percentage of any population, especially in a developing country like ours where the life expectancy is rather short, and many are not living to the "ripe old age." The highest number of

¹⁰⁹Source: NKST Secretariat. Information to Churches for inclusion in the 1999 Programmes.

persons in a developing population is usually in the young age bracket. The Psalmist said that, "The length of our days is seventy years — or eighty, if we have the strength" (Psalm 90:10).

A responsible and responsive Church ought to go all out to target this age bracket. The NKST Church, taking a cue from the founding missionary fathers, has surely taken the ministry to her youth very seriously, and has many activities aimed at reaching them.

Ideally, all the youth-related activities ought to be grouped together under the "NKST Youth Ministry," which has its head office at Gboko. However, because many of these ministries have developed to the level that demands their separate recognition as NKST departments in their own rights, this has not been the case.

The various youth ministries under the NKST include the **Sunday School** (MIM - "Makeranta u Iyange i Memen"), the **Boys' and Girls' Brigades**, the **Girls' Fellowship** wing of the NKST Women's Fellowship, and the "parent" body, the **NKST Youth Ministry**. One may be tempted to add to this list the **educational ministry** of the NKST, since through this means the NKST is helping in training our youth to become useful adults in various fields of endeavour.

The great importance attached to the youth in our midst is very welcome because from today's youth will arise tomorrow's elders, and if there is going to be a continuity in the NKST ministry tomorrow, then the youth of today must be moulded to take it over tomorrow.

Most of the youth activities in the NKST today were started by the Missions because they saw the great need to target the youth, and started work on it. The **Sunday School programme** has undergone a full transformation under the NKST management, and emerged as something totally new after being moulded in line with the indigenous African cultural life pattern.

Though sometimes very "radical" in outlook and often very difficult to keep in check, yet the youth ministry generally has lots of gains, and we want to praise God because through such ministries in the Church, our youth have not all ran away from the Church and gone elsewhere. Some have moved out, but very many more have stayed on in the Church and are contributing very usefully to its growth.

THE NKST YOUTH MINISTRY:

This is a department in the NKST, and it was started in Gboko by the Sudan United Mission (CRC Branch) in the days when Gboko was rapidly transforming into a bustling city, and many youth were trooping into it. There was a very real need, to gather these youth together and channel their exuberant energies into something constructive for the glory of God. Smith wrote:

In these latter years there has been a heavy drift of the young people away from their farms and villages and away from the control of parents to the so-called freedom of urban and city life. Among the Tiv the cities of Makurdi and Gboko are proving to be very attractive. Under the Mission and in close cooperation with the [NKST] Church, Mr. and Mrs. W. Lemcke have set up a Youth Centre with a fine building in the centre of Gboko town. It is proving to be popular, but it is too early yet to assess its value...¹¹⁰

The NKST Youth Centre was set up in 1969 by the Sudan United Mission (CRC Branch) with the following **aims and objectives**:

1. Presentation of the Gospel message to the youth by means of film presentations, sermons, Bible study groups, counselling, the Library/Reading rooms etc.
 2. Provision of facilities for good recreation in sports, music, drama, debates, Bible and moral education examinations, and handicrafts in an effort to combat the evils and temptations of the urban environment.
 3. Training of youth leaders to serve in local centres and environs.
 4. Open Christian Youth Centres in both the urban and local churches so that those not interested in Boys' and Girls' Brigades or Sunday School Programmes can belong in it.
- Provide weekly programmes that can help combat the idle minds and stop them from becoming the devil's workshop.

¹¹⁰Smith, E.H.; Nigerian Harvest; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids Michigan; 1972; p. 283.

6. Provision of local youth committees to plan and supervise the activities of the centres established.
7. Provision of annual Youth conferences especially during holidays, to provide spiritual renewal and holistic learning.

Activities:

1. Sunday services for children in Tiv, and then in English language.
2. Bible Study every Sunday afternoon.
3. Girls' Brigade activities each Tuesday.
4. Boys' Brigade activities each Thursday.
5. Adult literacy classes every Wednesday to Friday in the afternoons.
6. Indoor games facilities for Table Tennis, draught, "Dar", Library with some books, and a stage for drama.
7. Outdoor facilities for games like volleyball, badminton, torniquet and football for little children.

Over the years the laudable aims and objectives of this centre have not been achieved, and the centre has not been able to rise above the level of an aging, single building situated on a poorly maintained premises. Nor has any other "youth centre" been opened since this one, over thirty years ago. This is not because the need for such services as listed above has ceased to exist, but probably because the operators of the scheme (both the local ones on the ground and the headquarters Church at Mkar), have failed to grasp the whole idea correctly.

We thank God that very recently the Benue State Commissioner for Youth and Sports came round to visit the NKST Youth Ministry, and offered to make a significant input into the place to make it functional again. We also thank Him for plans that are underway to start another NKST Youth Centre in Abuja very soon. Our God deserves all the praise for remembering and helping His own all the time.

THE NKST MINISTRY TO WOMEN:

There was a time while the missionaries were here with us, when it was feared that Tiv women might be left behind in the scheme of affairs in the emerging church. As a result many deliberate efforts were started to ensure that this did not end up being the case. The commissioning of the NKST Women's Fellowship in 1941 was an attempt to forestall and abort this. Today we thank God very much because the women in the NKST themselves are admitting that they have not been left behind in the affairs of the Church.

The forum of the Women's Fellowship has offered NKST women a very good and enviable opportunity to contribute as far as the Lord gives them His grace in virtually all the affairs of the Church. What is more, they have been alive to this responsibility, and have been contributing a great deal too. Today for example, the **multi-million naira Guest House Project** embarked upon by the leadership of the Women's Fellowship at Mkar is nearing completion. This is but one of the many areas in which the Women's Fellowship is charting the course in the Church today. They have also been regular contributors to the funding of many key projects in the NKST, notably the NKST Missions, the Orphanage, B.B.I, ICMS, Bible Revision and many other laudable projects in the Church.

We thank God for our women, and for giving them the heart to be very active and willing to serve the Lord in His house like this. The Apostle Paul says:

This service you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. [2 Corinthians 9:12].

THE NKST MISSION BOARD:

An indigenous church is considered mature when it becomes a sending church, sending out missionaries and supporting missionary activity in order to bring the Gospel message to others as well. Our Lord Jesus Christ told us that we have received freely and therefore, must also give freely (Matthew 10:8). If a church is only fussing over what she can eat, or dress or wear, such a church is not yet "mature". We want to believe

that by the grace of our God, the NKST Church is now mature enough to be called a church. This is why today we are shouting out aloud to the praise of the Almighty for His goodness to us.

History of mission works by the Tiv themselves is basically the same as the history of the coming of the Gospel into Tiv land generally. Even before the missionaries left Saai in 1926 there were "trained" Tiv evangelists working alongside them at virtually every stage of the work. In 1942 Nevkar Annum and his wife went to the Etulo people and commenced mission work among that small tribe living within the Tiv borders. Their mission was very highly appreciated by the Mission, and efforts were made to help them on with it. Similarly, in 1956 Atsav left his place in Ukan and went to live with the Utange, another neighbouring tribe in the Cross River State region, to evangelize them. After 1957 when Rev J.E.I. Saai was ordained as resident pastor of the Apir Church, he championed the development of the Hausa language ministry to the many Hausa-speaking peoples in the Makurdi township.

By the time the NKST Church was born, many such efforts were already on the ground, and much was being done in this direction. Thus we can say openly that even before the Mission handed everything over to the NKST, the foundation for the indigenous Mission work was already in place. However, there was no organized activity by way of co-ordination and administration in the NKST for this vital work for some time yet. Achineku writes:

In the early years of the 1950s the DRCM and NKST evangelists started work among the mountain tribes of what is today the Federal Republic of Cameroun. Rev. W. M Scott led this work... In the 60s and 70s this work was co-sponsored by NKST and SUM-CRC and led by Rev. George Spee. All of the work in the Camerouns was transferred to the Presbyterian Church in the Cameroun in the 70s. In spite of our early missionary activities, there was no synodically appointed body charged with the responsibility of overseeing these activities. In 1975 the attention of NKST Executive Committee was drawn to this need.¹¹¹

¹¹¹Rev. Iyortyom Achineku, *A Glance at NKST: New Edition, 1997, p. 14.*

The Synod of 1975 approved the idea of setting up a Mission Board, and commissioned Rev. Willem Berends and Rev. Iyortyôm Achineku to work out the modalities. Following their work, the NKST Mission Board was officially commissioned, and the pioneer Missionaries of the NKST were sent out. These included Rev. Gberihwa, Late Rev. J. U. Amon, and Rev. Ushi.

NKST Mission activity has two main thrusts: The first is the "intra-cultural." This emphasizes work among the Tiv people, whether they be found within the boundaries of Tiv land or elsewhere, and the "cross-cultural Mission work," which is directed at other peoples, whether they be within the confines of Tiv land or outside it.

a. NKST Mission Work To Tiv People:

It is true that the evangelization work carried out by the missionaries in Tiv land was not quite completed by the time they left the scene. Even though they succeeded in planting a church within "reasonable distance" of most people, yet this was not always so, and up till today there are many pockets in Tiv land where the Gospel has hardly touched yet. This is especially true in the southeastern tip of Tiv land towards the Cameroun Mountains and border. There are still many here who have not yet heard or received the Gospel in their midst. Similarly, in the northwestern edge of Tiv land (in the Ihyarev regions), there are still many areas yet unreached with the Gospel message. Recent evangelistic crusades in these places have led to the establishment of many mission stations and young churches there, and the NKST Mission Board is following them up. Many of her evangelists and pastors have been posted there to carry on the work.

Churches In Distant Locations:

Many people have sharply criticized the NKST for siting her churches in large towns far away from home and conducting them in Tiv language. They have argued that this alienates the Tiv from the people they are living amongst, and promotes negative tribal feelings. But what these critics have failed to take into account is the fact that what the NKST has done is not at all different from what every tribe in Nigeria is doing

in this regard. It is common knowledge that every tribal church in Nigeria today chases her people into far-away towns and cities and cares for them there in the same manner they have been familiar with at home. This allows such people to continue to worship their God in a cultural atmosphere they have been used to.

A similar system, called the "Synagogue" system, was developed for Jews living away from their homeland, and also for those in Palestine who were not living in Jerusalem. Although the official place of worship was Jerusalem, yet this arrangement helped Jews to continue to worship Jehovah in foreign lands where they lived and conducted their business.

This system of having distant churches has helped give the NKST a national spread today, with Churches and "Mission Stations" in many towns and cities all over the country. Tiv people living in such cities and towns have the opportunity to worship God in the same way that they used to do when they were still at home. But the ministry is not restricted to the Tiv alone, as we shall soon see.

VOLUNTEER LAY APOSTOLATE WORK IN THE NKST:

A new development has just come on the scene in the NKST that is very rewarding, and which holds a lot of potential. Many of her elite members recently felt a large burden for the many unsaved brethren in their midst, and decided to start evangelistic action in this regard to supplement the efforts of the NKST and her Mission Board. In 1989 the NKST Synod approved the setting up of the "NKST League," a body of lay members of the NKST with the vision and the means to help her in her God-given mandate. Among the activities of this body are attempts to add to the work of evangelism of the NKST from outside the confines of the Church's activities. This they hope to achieve through organized crusades, field evangelism activities, film shows and many other activities, at no direct cost to the NKST, and after these have taken root, handing over all converts and established worship centres to the NKST Mission Board for follow-up.

Through such an added input by these **lay apostolates**, many stations have been opened in the last few years in the Ugbe area of Kwande Local Government area close to the Camerounian border, and

in Gwer West (Ihyarev) regions. What the NKST Mission Board only needed to do in this case was co-ordinate the whole activity. This is a continuing effort, and is being maintained by the Mission Board.

We would like to believe that the Good Lord who first used a similar lay service to open up Tiv land to His Gospel in 1933-37 can cause similar results to obtain even today in this way. We praise the Lord for raising the lay apostolates among us today to contribute their own quota to evangelization work in Tiv land.

However, it is very true that there is still a lot of pessimism about the contributions of these young, educated, and sometimes quite rich brethren in this regard. Such a reservation has justification, and we quote Herbert Kane on the subject:

Some general observations are in order before we discuss the pros and cons of such an arrangement:

1. **There is nothing new about the lay apostolate.** In the first century there were no missionary societies such as we have today, and there were few professional missionaries outside the apostolic group. The gospel was spread far and wide in the Roman Empire by laymen — soldiers, slaves, merchants and even displaced persons. Luke informs us that those that were scattered abroad upon the persecution of Stephen went everywhere preaching the Gospel (Acts 8:2)...

2. **There is nothing wrong or undesirable about the lay apostolate.** Jesus Christ needs His witness in all walks of life. In the body of Christ there are various offices and ministries. Not all are apostles, prophets or teachers. In fact this professional class represents a tiny minority of the whole church. The important thing is not whether one is a professional minister or missionary, but whether he is dedicated to the proposition that the Gospel by its very nature must be shared with all the world. Whether a person becomes by profession a merchant or a missionary is for God to decide. The merchant is not a second-class citizen in the Kingdom of Heaven...

3. **The lay apostolate is subject to, not substitute for, regular missionary work...** The nonprofessional missionary is not working in competition with the professional missionary... There should be no rivalry between the two kinds of missionary. Both

represent the same Lord; both serve the same cause; both seek to extend the kingdom...

4. Members of the lay apostolate should be aware of the limitations of their calling. Few of them have theological training... One must have a thorough understanding of his own faith before he can explain it to a person of another faith... Not every Christian layman can articulate his own faith in terms that are meaningful to non-Christians...

5. The nonprofessional missionary will need to be a strong character with firm convictions and much courage. The professional missionary has many built-in safeguards. He is a member of a team and has all the advantages of Christian fellowship and counsel... More than one lay Christian has started out with high hopes and great expectations, only to fall on the way when the going got rough. Unable to "go it alone", he has ended up a moral and spiritual shipwreck...

8. Volunteers for the lay apostolate would do well to search their hearts to make sure that their motives are pure in God's sight... When we are emotionally involved in our own decisions, it is easy to misinterpret the will of God... It is just possible that a person may be called by God to full-time missionary work; but for reasons of his own he prefers to settle for the nonprofessional status. This kind of temptation...enables him to function without the restrictions necessarily imposed by a mission board... Under such conditions it is easy for a dedicated person to assume that the more attractive role is God's will for him. It *may* be God's will... Only let him be sure that he is not mistaking his own preferences and predilections for the will of God...¹¹²

We praise God for raising many from our number today to offer to help in this direction, and we thank Him for leading the NKST Synod to accepting to work with them. We want to believe that He who began the good work in these people will not abandon them to fall by the

¹¹²Kane, J.H.; Understanding Christian Missions; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan; p. 387.

wayside, but just like He did before in the early thirties, so will He do again today to the glory of His name among us.

NKST Mission Stations in Tiv land:

Stations started by the lay apostolates, which have been taken over and are being manned by the NKST Mission Board, include:

1. NKST Mission Ajigba: Ikyor, Iyongo, Korkaav.
2. NKST Isherev: Yogbo, Udei, Uikpan.
3. NKST Atukpu: Bonaka, Nyamti, Imbor.
4. NKST Mission Ugbe: Kwaghper, Ugbe.

b. Cross-cultural Mission of the NKST:

Here we are thinking of NKST mission work to those who are not Tiv, no matter where they are living. All the NKST Churches have been given the go-ahead to see what needs be done, and to do it with regard to reaching out to others who are not Tiv and who may like to join the Church. Thus in many urban consistories today English language services and activities have been organized to cater for all such people groups.

A great deal of the cross-cultural mission activity that the NKST Mission Board is engaged in is the ministry to people who are not Tiv and who are not living in Tiv land. Here too we are pleased to note that the Mission Board is recording a lot of progress. Mission activities are going on in many large centres in Nigeria and beyond. There is a lot of Mission activity in Abuja, Minna, Ilorin, Calabar, Port Harcourt, Keffi, Kafanchan, and also in neighbouring Chad and Cameroun Republics, with plans to extend to the Republic of Sudan very soon. On most of these locations the NKST has trained some people and sent there to carry on the work.

Examples of some Mission Field works going on in various places:

1. **Abuja:** Here the Mission has commenced English services and activities like Choir, Regular mass evangelism outreaches,

Counselling programmes, Bible Study etc, and these are bearing much fruit for the Lord.

2. **Eka Mission Field (Idachi):** The NKST Mission Board is working this field in co-operation with the Sudan United Mission (Christian Reformed Church Branch). The NKST is providing the personnel while the CRC is providing the finances. Currently, five NKST missionaries are serving in that field, comprising four evangelists and one teacher. Work is progressing fine there too.
3. **Enugu:** Here the Mission Board is involved in follow-up activities and witnessing among the Igbo-speaking people.
4. **Kanuri Ministry:** The NKST is working within Maiduguri metropolis and satellite settlements around the city. A pastor is stationed there for the ministry, which extends all the way into the Chad Republic. The pastor was trained by the NKST, but is not Tiv. This ministry is going on with co-operation from COCIN, a sister evangelical church based in Jos.
5. **Fulani Ministry:** NKST has trained some Fulani converts, one of them as a pastor and the others as evangelists and they are taking on evangelistic work among the nomadic Fulani in the Tiv region. The ministry is based at Katsina Ala, where a lot of cattle Fulani come to trade.
6. **Hausa Ministry:** The Hausa people in our midst comprise mainly settlers, and the ministry aims at reaching them in their language. Because they are settlers, the NKST has a division that is Hausa-speaking, which is organized in the same way as all other Tiv-speaking Churches. When they are mature they are installed as Churches, and they call a pastor who ministers to them. Currently there are three such (EKAN) churches in the NKST, with two in Makurdi and one in Gboko. By using their own in this way, the NKST is able to reach out to many Hausa speakers with the Gospel message.

Activities:

The NKST Mission Board is the organ responsible for taking the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the unreached areas within Nigeria and beyond. Their

main function is to propagate the Gospel of the salvation in Jesus Christ. Their activities include church planting, film shows, organizing of seminars, conferences, crusades and other public evangelism activities. It also takes care of the personnel on the field and funds their programmes and activities.

FUNDING FOR NKST MISSION ACTIVITIES:

This is mainly through levies charged by the NKST on all her communicant members. In addition, because this is always inadequate to run the budget of the Department for a whole year, grants do come in from foreign missions (especially the SUM-CRC), the NKST Women's Fellowship, and from other philanthropic individuals. These funds are utilized in paying staff salaries, travels and transportation, servicing of equipment and others.

2. MEDICAL MISSIONS:

We recall that apart from the Mkar Christian Hospital, which the American Christian Reformed Church inherited from the South Africans, they established no other Hospital in Tiv land. Even the medical centre at Mbaakon in Kunav region of Tiv land, which had appeared very promising, was not developed further. When the NKST took over the Health Care Department, one of the first things she did was to **establish more hospitals** in Tiv land. Agreed, these hospitals were not as sophisticated as the one at Mkar, yet reasonable quality of hospital care was spread out over the whole land. Today there are seven new NKST hospitals in Tiv land to add to the two at Mkar (being NKST Hospital, Mkar and NKST Leprosy and Rehabilitation Hospital, Mkar). These include Zaki Biam, Saai, Anyiin, Adikpo, Mbaakon, Apir and Jato Aka.

The NKST also runs a comprehensive primary health care scheme with a network of over 100 health clinics spread all over Tiv land. The Scheme owns and runs a School of Health Technology at Mkar, where primary Health team workers of all cadres outside the university, are trained. This school has over the many years of its existence produced so many people in the lower cadre of Health Care

that Tiv land is generally very well covered in Primary Health Care delivery staffing.

The NKST Health Services Department also runs the **Schools of Nursing and Midwifery**, which she "inherited" from the Mission at Mkar. Through these, the NKST has contributed immensely to equipping the nation with very much-needed skilled manpower in these vital fields.

Many of the former Mission friends still send in help to the NKST to assist in these capital-intensive institutions. The Benue Leprosy and Rehabilitation Hospital (formerly BLS), and the NKST Eye Project are almost fully funded by philanthropic missionary organisations from overseas. Still it is not at all easy to run these medical missions because of financial constraints. Drugs and medicaments as well as paying personal emoluments to medical team staff cost a lot, and it is always very difficult for the NKST Church to stretch her meagre resources and cover adequately. But what they have, they have always willingly put in to service these ministries, and we are grateful to our God that all of them are still running today.

NKST HOSPITAL MKAR:

The Christian Reformed Church Mission handed over this hospital to the NKST in November 1980. It was by all standards a center of excellence, offering invaluable high-quality service to the community at a time when Government had nothing like it to offer in this part of the country. Over the years experts from all specialized branches of medicine came to Mkar and taught some techniques to the resident doctors there, thus pooling vital skills for use at the Hospital. By this method therefore, even though no specialists ever resided at Mkar for any significant length of time, yet their skills came to stay at Mkar, and have been put to use to serve the people.

Managing such a very highly specialized business has proved to be a big problem to the NKST, especially in two main areas. First of all, the **money** to purchase and maintain the "high-tech" equipment that a "centre of excellence" requires to run properly is not there. Also, **maintenance** of the facilities is a problem because the **technical manpower** and necessary **maintenance inputs** are not there. A good

example is the very large and efficient electricity generating set that was installed by the Mission, and which no local mechanic has ever seen before, talk less of discovering faults in it. Whenever it breaks down (which is more often than not), the Hospital has to depend exclusively on the National Electric Power supply and wait till such a time that a maintenance personnel is coming in from the United States, to come and help out. We do not know if that particular plant is marketed and serviced in Nigeria by the manufacturers at all.

Such "problems" are not peculiar to the NKST, but are a major problem of the whole Third World. The World Health Organization has been devising ways to circumvent the problem of inadequate highly skilled manpower and sophisticated equipment procurement and maintenance to run "essential services" in the developing countries. We are happy to note that even though the NKST did not have this top-level knowledge at its disposal, yet the good Lord again led them to make decisions that have proved very helpful and correct.

Decentralizing Mkar Hospital:

When Mkar Hospital was handed over to the NKST on November 25, 1980, it was at its peak level of performance, but the existing facilities big as they were, were not enough for the needs of the population. The outpatient department was always overcrowded, and on the wards patients had to sleep on the floor for want of bed space. Even maternity patients were often "floored" in this way, and sometimes two children were admitted in one bed. For a referral centre this was far from correct. Following a wise suggestion, the NKST approved a move that would decongest the Hospital by opening up some more "secondary level" cottage hospitals in the land.

Three hospitals: **Zaki Biam, Mbaakon and Adikpo**, were approved for opening in the first batch, and later another four: **Sai, Anyiin, Apir and Jato Aka**. This roughly corresponded with the first Mission stations that the DRCM had set up when they first came into the land (the only exception being Anyiin).

This decentralization move set up a chain of reactions that plunged the hospital into a downturn in performance. Firstly, no longer was Mkar receiving all the secondary health care referral cases, for

these new hospitals became referral centres in their catchment areas. This contributed in a large measure to reducing patient attendance at Mkar. Beside this, many more hospitals were opened in the land by bodies other than the NKST. Among them are the State Government (six hospitals, sited in Gboko, Makurdi, Katsina Ala, Adikpo, Vandekya and Aliade), the Roman Catholic Church (four hospitals, sited in Aliade, Makurdi, Ihugh and Zaki Biam), and the private sector (very many small hospitals and clinics all over Tiv land). No longer was Mkar the one and only health institution to be patronized. In addition, the NKST Church opened many new dispensaries and health centres all over the land.

Another very important reason that affected the fortunes of Mkar Hospital was the funding. During the time she was being run by the Mission most of its funding came from the Mission Board back home, and most of the inputs like drugs and instruments, were also coming from overseas. When the NKST took over, the only source of revenue became the receipted medical bills. Government grants virtually ceased in the 80s. The Nigerian economy being what it has been, this did not allow for any significant growth again.

The fortunes of Mkar Hospital became so bad by 1997 that it was on the verge of a total shutdown. However, by the grace of our God, some former missionaries overseas came to its rescue. They constituted themselves into "Friends of Mkar", and campaigned to raise capital and inputs overseas which they brought and injected into the Hospital till the place started picking up again. Since most of them were medical personnel themselves, they also created time and came back for a short time each year to put in some free service in the Hospital, as a way of reviving the place.

Table to show Comparative Performance at Mkar Hospital:¹¹³

	1970	1981	1997	1999
Clinic Attend.	120,000		12,062	7,928
Admissions	7,732	1,844	1,500	
Bed Occupancy	400	409	293	
Deaths	924	190		
Deliveries Normal			324	192
Deliveries Abnormal			184	116
Surgery Major	600		292	300
Surgery Minor	1,200		281	76

We praise God very much because today the Hospital has started picking up again, even though it not yet anywhere near what it used to be. What is more, this time around it is aiming at providing a "tertiary care service" that is not available in the many secondary centres around, especially in the areas of investigations and sophisticated procedures. This way it hopes to continue to exist despite the existence of many other hospitals.

The other seven NKST Hospitals have not been performing very well either. Today, more than ten years after they have been on their feet, most of them are still no better than community health centres by way of performance. Some cannot even afford to employ a medical doctor to head the unit, and they are making do with the Community Health and Nursing hands they have. One might be tempted to criticize the NKST for making "bad investments" here, but that may not be the issue. When one looks at the sheer courage and determination of the staff in these various places, and the fact that they are still very willing to continue suffering in these places, trusting God that things will get better in the end, one cannot but praise God for such a beautiful testimony in His children. We quote here a few "encouraging" words from those beautiful children of our God.

¹¹³Source: NKST Hospital Mkar Medical Records/Statistics Department.

NKST HOSPITAL APIR:

The hospital has no resident doctor; it has a covering doctor... who agrees to help his people by responding to our calls any time the need for surgery arises, and then getting his share from the bill. There are seven staff which comprise one...acting Administrator, one clinical attendant, one birth attendant, one untrained laboratory attendant, one labourer and one staff nurse on a one-year contract to terminate in December... Three staff resigned during this period...

Patronage to the hospital during the first half of the year was very poor, we could see no patient in 3 weeks time, but as from later part of July to this time there is a slight improvement. We see at least one patient daily...

[Since] the main source of income of the Hospital is from patients' medical bills, the first half of the year had almost nothing to talk about except that this actually brought about resignation of three staff within the period. But with the slight improvement as has been said before, the income is [being] used mainly for salaries, drugs, electricity and others...¹¹⁴

Have you ever seen more courage than this? We praise our God for this place and salute the courage of this "Hospital Administrator" who, by the way, was a young, unmarried girl.

NKST HOSPITAL JATO AKA:

The Board/Management on her scale of preference would like to tackle some necessary issues, which can improve the welfare of the place:

1. A moderate stock of essential drugs...
2. A modern laboratory [to help us do] Culture and Sensitivity, Widal Test etc, [and] a refrigerator for blood banking and cold chains.
3. A private room... At present there is none.
4. Renovation of theatre - to a standard of at least a cottage hospital.

¹¹⁴Miss Doosur Adzam, *Annual Hospital Report January to September 1998*. p. 1.

5. A communication gadget [probably an amplifier and cassette] to link the Central Church with the hospital, for evangelical purpose...

All the above-mentioned... are very difficult to meet. However, it is our sincere prayer that the Lord God will provide us with the means... [We will] leave no stone un-turned... to make this dream a reality.¹¹⁵

NKST HOSPITAL ZAKI BIAM:

1. Low Cash income - this has had a direct co-relationship with the low attendance recorded this year... This has had an adverse effect on our operations as most of our obligations could not be met as desired.

2. Competition: Gone are the days when NKST Hospital used to enjoy the monopoly of service in Ukum Local Government. Today there are about 24 other health clinics in Zaki Biam town alone... To compound matters, more than 1/2 of the 24 private clinics are owned and operated by former key staff of NKST Hospital Zaki Biam who resigned...

In order to avert this situation and withstand the competition, the Hospital will have to improve on its services, making them next to none...

7. Court cases: Following the Central Board decision to suspend ..., the above took the Hospital to ... court, claiming the sum of 2 million naira. The case is still on, and has cost the Hospital quite a substantial amount of money. So far the legal fees is 80,000 naira. Also the Hospital has been joined in a suit preferred... by ... claiming his outstanding salary of 3 months...

Conclusion: ... The past four years have been showing consistent decline in progress and the overall picture does not look bright. If the Hospital is to survive..., concerted effort must be made towards improving services... We therefore impress on the authorities... to evaluate the Hospitals' activities with a view to

¹¹⁵Daniel Dooior, *Annual Hospital Report to the Executive Secretary, NKST Health Services, 1999*, p. 1.

revamping and strengthening the whole system. God bless you all!¹¹⁶

NKST HOSPITAL SAI:

Presently this hospital has no Medical Officer... There is urgent need to deploy a medical officer to this hospital...

Total number [of out-patients seen in a one whole year period]: 963. In-patient admission records: Adults 156, children 83, total 249 patients...

Income for the period [1 year] is N1,467,009.34. This represents an average of N122,250.78 per month. The expenditure for the period is N1,496,556, representing N124,713 per month. The result shows that expenditure is more than the income by N29,546.66. During this year, about eight months' salaries are owed to the staff of this Hospital. The number of debtors are still high...

...You can't talk of providing infrastructures [here and now], but instead you will talk of repairing and maintaining the old ones pending the improvement of the financial aspect of the Hospital...¹¹⁷

NKST HOSPITAL MBAAKON:

I assumed duty at NKST Hospital Mbaakon as the Medical Officer in charge... to be faced with so much challenge I could never have imagined... enormous liabilities ranging from salary arrears...[to] un-ethical and unpatriotic, nonchalant attitude of staff toward their duties... The Hospital was battling with court cases for non-payment of salaries... The political atmosphere was disjointed as there was disharmony and sectionalism among staff. I was alarmed at the state of fraud involving staff [to] the tunes of over hundreds of thousands of naira...

¹¹⁶Martin Luther Yakobu, *Summary of Annual Report January to September 1999 - NKST Hospital Zaki Biam*, p. 2.

¹¹⁷John Mnengega Gbilin, *End of the Year Report, 1998-1999*, p. 3.

With the help of God I am succeeding, and believe that this improvement will be sustained as there is now a new Chairman and Administrator...

I pray God touches the hearts of all those workers here to recognize that work attitude is for the glory of God...¹¹⁸

We have quoted these letters exhaustively here to show that of a truth many of the NKST health institutions are in great need. But more than that, we also would like everyone to see with us the courage of the Christian workers in these places, and how all the difficulties encountered have failed to dampen their hope that by God's grace things will improve one day. This is the firm belief of the entire NKST Church as well. Our God has said that His arm is not too short to save. For this we praise Him and sing, "Glory in the highest!"

Today two of the NKST hospitals, **Anyiin** and **Mbaakon** have been included on the list of hospitals that the British Donor Agency, BHF (Benue Health Fund), is helping to resuscitate and put on a sound footing. For this and many more such acts of His grace, again we want to return thanks to our God publicly.

APPROXIMATE HOSPITAL STATISTICS FOR THE NEW NKST HOSPITALS, 1998/99:¹¹⁹

Hospital	J. Aka	Apir	Anyiin	Z. Biam	Mbaakon	Adikpo
Clinic Attend		385	3307	2867	963	1666
Beds	40				107	
Deliveries	71	47	337	809	80	120
Surgeries	53	14	72	234	344	63

¹¹⁸Dr. O.U. Okoi, *Annual Report*, p. 1.

¹¹⁹Source: Annual Reports of the various Hospitals to the NKST Health Secretary.

THE NKST EYE PROJECT, MKAR:

This was started in 1983 at the Mkar Hospital when NKST members felt the need for this specialist service in the land. Initially it started as an arm of the Mkar Hospital, under Dr: Matthew. Later mobile eye health services were established in some of the NKST Hospitals and in neighbouring Cross River and Kogi States. Support for the programme has been coming steadily from CBM, who have supplied two vehicles and a motor cycle for outreach work. CBM has also been providing capital development grants to help the Project acquire its own premises.

With our Lord's blessings and the evident expansion and progress, the Eye Project administration was removed from the NKST Hospital Mkar and made independent and given its own Board of Governors in 1999. The Medical Director of the project was trained at ECWA Eye Hospital Kano, and he takes charge of the project.

Today the NKST Eye Project has outreach programmes in Mangu (Plateau State), Gombe (Gombe State), Zin, Gembu (Adamawa State), Bali, Akpodim, Akwanga (Plateau State), and Oju (Benue State). This outreach programme is also actively aided by CBM.

Summary of Activities at NKST Eye Project:

	Outreach	Base Hospital
Total Attendance	4,894	5,482
Cataract Surgery	389	201
Glaucoma Surgery	23	31
Other Surgeries	96	152
Total Surgeries	508	384

THE BENUE LEPROSY AND REHABILITATION HOSPITAL, MKAR:

Here we will highlight the current services available at this Hospital. The Hospital's main service is to disabled people. It is a Referral Hospital for leprosy in Benue State under the Benue State Leprosy Control Programme, and also a Referral Centre for NKST Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR). In addition, Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Services are available in this hospital, with patients coming in from Benue, Adamawa, Taraba, Nasarawa, Federal Capital and Kogi states, as well as the northern parts of Akwa Ibom and Enugu states. There also exists in this hospital a functional Physiotherapy Unit. This unit was started in 1963 while Dr. S. A. Kok was heading the Hospital.

The Orthopaedic Outreach Programme was started in 1995 by the Hospital staff and aimed at making orthopaedic services available in various places without all the patients having to come to Mkar. Outreach centres are spread over 10 Christian Medical Centres in Akwa Ibom, Plateau, Enugu, Cross River, Taraba, Nasarawa, Benue, Kogi and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. A surgeon from Mkar travels to these areas every quarter, and carries out consultations and minor surgical services, while the major ones are referred back to Mkar.

NKST Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR).

This is a programme that aims at reaching disabled persons at their doorsteps. Mrs. Emily Akpem started it in the 1980s as a unit in the Hospital. Since then it has grown to the level of an independent unit. It is now wholly supported and ran by the CBM (Christoffell Blinden Mission).

INTERNATIONAL BODIES AIDING THE NKST IN VARIOUS AREAS:

Mention must be made here of the International Organizations that are still in our midst in the NKST, helping in various areas of departmental

service, especially in the health services sector. Among them are the Netherlands Leprosy Relief, and the Christoffell Blinden Mission (CBM)

- a. **Netherlands Leprosy Relief (NLR).** This organization was formerly known as Netherlands Leprosy Relief Association (NSL). It has interest in the management and control of leprosy worldwide. Their headquarters is in Amsterdam, in the Netherlands, and their Nigerian office is in Jos, Plateau State. Over the years, NLR has been of immense help to the NKST at the Benue Leprosy and Rehabilitation Hospital, Mkar. We praise the Lord our God for such true friends of the NKST, who have committed lots of resources and energy, as well as valuable time, to continue to help the NKST, moreso as they are not bound to do this.
- b. **Christoffell Blinden Mission (CBM).** This is an international organization that has interest in the prevention of blindness and the treatment of eye diseases, as well as the management of disabled persons. It was formerly known as CBM - Germany, but now that many other countries have joined in, notably the US, Britain, Switzerland, Canada and some others, it is now known as CBM International. It is a Christian charity organization with headquarters in Bensheim, Germany, and its national headquartes in Nigeria is at Abuja.

In addition, a team of Dutch workers from the Netherlands has recently arrived ICMS Mkar to co-operate with that NKST tertiary institution and help it optimize its potential and dreams. Because of all these, we will continue to praise the Lord our God for all the help He is always giving to us through His many children worldwide. He says that all the cattle on the hills belong to Him, and He has been demonstrating this to us repeatedly by calling on His children from very far away to come and render us help. All glory to Him alone.

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SERVICES:

The NKST inherited and took on very seriously the training of lower levels of health practice personnel, which was a step in the right direction. The emphasis all over the world today is to concentrate on Primary Health. With good encouragement and assistance from the Federal and State ministries of Health, a lot has been achieved in health care delivery in Tiv land. This service is no longer the exclusive concern of the NKST Church alone as it used to be at the start. Today Government and many other voluntary agencies and private individuals have all pooled efforts together to provide the health service to the people. We praise the Lord our God very much for this.

The primary health care service accounts for 70-80% of all the nation's health care needs, leaving a mere thirty percent or less for specialist care. And with the good input from Government and the private sector, referral to some next level of care is not too difficult today.

The NKST Primary Health Care services Department has in its care more than 100 health institutions comprising health clinics and posts, among others. They are organized into units (zones) as follows:

1. Isherev Unit:
All clinics in Guma, Makurdi, Gwer, Gwer West Local Government areas in Benue State, and Awe Local Government Area in Nasarawa State.
2. Mbaakpur Unit: All clinics in Koshisha Local Government Area.
3. Aku Unit: All clinics in Ushongo Local Government Area.
4. Shangbum Unit: All clinics in Vandekya Local Government Area.
5. Gboko Unit: All clinics in Gboko Local Government Area.
6. Garagboghohol Unit: All clinics in Buruku Local Government Area.
7. Pevikyaa Unit: All clinics in Ukum Local Government Area.
8. Ugba Unit: All units in Katsina Ala and Logo LGA's.
9. Shagu Unit: All units in Donga & Takum LGAs in Taraba State.
10. Awange Unit: Units in Bali, Ibi and Wukari LGA's (Taraba St.).
11. Ahôbee Unit:
Units in Kwande LGA (Benue State), and Obudu LGA in Cross River State

We praise God who, knowing that we would be unable to run the Hospital Medical Mission optimally, gave us this alternative method that is helping us serve our people with a reasonable quality of medical care. He has richly blessed His gift to us, and it is amply sufficient for our needs. A good example from the Bible comes readily to mind from the incident when Jesus used the little food that was available to feed thousands after blessing it and multiplying it manifold:

Philip answered him, "Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!" Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand of them. Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted. [John 6:7-12].

3. THE EDUCATIONAL MISSIONS:

We have seen what a solid foundation in this regard was laid down for us by the missionaries who brought us the Gospel. Through the ministry of education they helped us to better appreciate the Gospel message, making us able to read the message ourselves. This greatly helped the spread of the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. The ministry did not stop at making us barely literate in our vernacular and only making us minimally educated. Our Lord's plans for us went beyond that. The missionaries had at a certain time thought that their responsibility to us with regard to education would be over once they had taught us to read the Bible in our vernacular. But when the time was ripe in His divine plans, the Lord God moved them to take a further step in educating the Tiv people by starting a post primary school in the land. We will continue to praise our God for this.

Primary Education:

NKST took over a total of 62 primary schools from the CRC in 1965, and promptly went into action, establishing 63 more in the period between 1967 and 1975 in Tiv land. However the NKST proprietorship of her over one hundred and twenty primary schools did not last very long, for the Local Education Authority took over all primary schools in 1976 for the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme. The NKST was still allowed to teach religious education in her schools. It was also allowed the power to go ahead and open more schools. Much later all her schools were returned to her again.

Secondary Education:

Through Bristow Secondary School, the Lord God opened our eyes to behold the beauty of His love for us through Christian secondary education. And when the NKST took over from the Mission in 1980, she continued with the ministry by opening more such schools to spread the service all over the land. Today many young people are proud "old students" of the many NKST secondary schools in the land.

The NKST has 33 secondary schools in Benue State, and one of them is Uavande Girls' Secondary School — the girls' school that the DRCM missionaries had started in 1956, and which had to be closed due to poor finances of the NKST. Uavande has re-opened at this higher level, and many young ladies today have been graduating from there and have attained enviable heights in society. Out of the thirty-three NKST secondary schools, thirteen are fully grant-aided by the State Government with regard to staff salaries, capitation and other grants.

The ultimate goal to Christianize the young people is being realized through these schools. Discipline and character shaping has continued along very good Christian models. The State Government appreciates this, and has not deterred moral and religious education even though she is grant-aiding the schools.

NKST SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF LOCATION:¹²⁰

S/N	Name of School	LGA	Year Opened
1.	Bristow	Gboko	1960
2.	Uavande	Kônshisha	1971
3.	Adikpo	Kwande	1970
4.	Korinya	Kônshisha	1972
5.	Zaki Biam	Ukum	1973
6.	Vandekya	Vandekya	1974
7.	Mkar Sec. School	Gboko	1974
8.	Makurdi	Makurdi	1975
9.	Saai	Katsina Ala	1976
10.	Mkar TC	Gboko	1952
11.	Kuhe	Gboko	1993
12.	Wuese	Kônshisha	1982
13.	Achia	Kwande	1982
14.	Katsina Ala	Katsina Ala	1982
15.	Jato Aka	Kwande	1982
16.	Gawa	Katsina Ala	1982
17.	Mbaakpur	Kônshisha	1989
18.	Pevikyaa	Ukum	1989
19.	Gbagir	Ukum	1989
20.	Atukpu	Gwer-West	1982
21.	Hôn (Mbayion)	Gboko	1995
22.	Hôm (Mbagen)	Buruku	1982
23.	Tavaku	Gwer	1982
24.	Wuna	Buruku	1982
25.	Ichol	Kwande	1982
26.	Faajir	Ushongo	1996
27.	Ayima	Kônshisha	1996
28.	Ishan	Guma	1982
29.	Ugugu	Kwande	1995
30.	Anber	Katsina Ala	1995

¹²⁰Source: NKST Education Department, Mkar.

Mkar Teacher Training College:

This very useful institution was handed over to the NKST in 1974. However, after only three years (in 1977), the Benue State Government took over the college, and it was re-named Government Teachers' College, Mkar. This was in order to organize the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme, which was a national programme. Under this programme, teachers were trained at mass level to feed the many UPE primary schools. Students comprised mainly secondary school leavers who did not make their grades. These were trained for two years and converted into Grade Two teachers. Later in 1985, the proprietorship of the Teachers College was returned to the NKST, and its name was NKST Teachers' College, Mkar.

In 1992, when the Federal government phased out the Grade Two teachers' programme, the school changed to NKST College, Mkar. She now offers full secondary education to our youth. The remaining part of the former Mkar TC complex is currently housing the **Institute of Christian and Management Studies**, one of the tertiary schools owned and run by the NKST.

NKST TERTIARY EDUCATION:

The NKST is offering tertiary education to her own in many areas. In the health sector she has two large schools which are capable of providing most of her manpower needs except those that have to be trained in the universities. The NKST has a **School of Nursing and Midwifery** and a **School of Health Technology**, both of which are situated at Mkar. These provide all the needed manpower in the health services subsector except doctors, pharmacists and physiotherapists.

In the education subsector, NKST has set up the **Institute of Christian and Management Studies**, which operates at the same level as a Polytechnic, offering diplomas and advanced diplomas in various management sciences. There are very serious intentions and plans that in the near future this institution, which was opened in 1988, would be

upgraded to the status of a **private university**. Currently ICMS is an affiliate of the Benue State University. The NKST Church looks forward to the day when she can have her own Christian University, and we want to believe our God that it shall be so, in Jesus' name!

In the theological subsector we have the **Benue Bible Institute at Harga**, which offers the Diploma and Certificate in Religious Education. This institution trains evangelists for the NKST. They are good for teaching religious education in secondary schools and for all manner of church work.

THE REFORMED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF NIGERIA (RTCN):

We have already learnt about the background events that led to the setting up of this seminary in the NKST. We will continue to praise God very much for this ministry among us.

In June 1970, the Synod of the NKST resolved to establish a Reformed Seminary where mature and committed Christian men would be trained to meet the needs of this rapidly growing church. This decision was taken because TCNN, the "union seminary" that was envisioned to cater for all the needs of the young churches just emerged from the Sudan Mission work was not adequate to supply all the needs of the NKST. Following the resolution, building work was commenced immediately, and the school took off in January 1971.

Initially the school was offering Diplomas in Theology (including Higher Diplomas), and later it started offering the first degree (Bachelor of Theology). This degree is offered as a full-time training course lasting four years, and also as a part-time, seasonal course for serving pastors who graduated some time ago with the Diploma. In 1999 the Institution commenced the Postgraduate Programme, offering the Master of Arts degree in Theology. Between 1974 and 2000, the school has graduated about 300 pastors with the Diploma in Theology, and over 50 with the Bachelor of Theology Degree of RTCN. The Diploma in Theology course continues, but is increasingly being de-emphasized.

RTCN has been affiliated with the University of Calabar, but that University does not recognize or participate in the degree programmes offered by the school. Rather, it offers its own University

Diploma courses at the Institution, and graduates only these ones at convocation. Yet the degree work done at RTCN is recognized internationally, and graduates at RTCN have been offered admission in many theological universities of highest repute in the United States, South Korea and other places, to commence postgraduate work in various fields of theology.

In addition, RTCN caters for Women, especially the wives of students, training them to be articulate and useful in serving among the womenfolk alongside their husbands. Depending on their entry academic qualifications any one of these courses is offered to them: Diploma in Religious Education (DRE), Certificate in Religious Education (CRE), or Certificate of Attendance (AC).

RTCN also runs a Childrens' School to help train the children of students and staff, forming them along good Christian principles. The cost is low enough to be affordable, because good private schools are too expensive, and public ones cannot be relied upon to run smoothly without incessant breaks and strike actions.

Quality of Products:

Our God has greatly blessed us all at RTCN, and her products have been of first-rate quality, and are accepted even at face-value everywhere they go. Many churches are training their pastors here at the full-time undergraduate, part-time and postgraduate levels. It is very heartening to come to RTCN any time and see the General Secretary or President of one or another of the national churches in Nigeria enrolled as a student. It says more than words can convey here, and we thank our God very much for this. In addition, the Nigerian Army Chaplaincy Department relies very heavily on RTCN to train her Chaplains both on full-time and part-time basis.

RTCN staffing is wholly local these days. Many of her sons who went overseas and received postgraduate training in the various academic disciplines in the ministry are now ably manning all the chairs in the seminary. Re-training is a very current thing at RTCN, and many international institutions deserve mention here for their role in facilitating academic work at RTCN through their postgraduate training of our pastors and RTCN staff. These include Calvin Seminary and

Westminster Theological Seminary and many others in the United States of America, The Presbyterian Theological Seminary and others in South Korea, and many others we cannot enumerate exhaustively. We praise God and we thank all involved for all the various inputs into RTCN, whether in cash or in kind.

Funding of RTCN:

The NKST cares for the RTCN by way of contributions by all her member churches. Out of the pledges that all communicant and catechumen members are expected to pay annually to the NKST Secretariat, a fixed percentage is paid directly to the school. This is either cash or food items, which are used to feed the on-campus students. Through this method, feeding of the students is made quite easy for the school, and in return, the fees charged NKST students is kept very low and affordable.

Other sources of funding include donations from Christian bodies, both local and international. Of the local sources, the NKST Women's Fellowship deserves special mention, as well as the recently instituted "Friends of RTCN." This is a body of well-to-do and well-meaning NKST members who meet regularly to make efforts to help RTCN financially or otherwise.

International sources of funding come from many donor agencies, individuals and Missions, especially in the United States of America. We praise God for all whom He has burdened to carry on this great evangelistic ministry at RTCN by helping in the training of Christ's shepherds who will in turn lead His flock in the various congregations all over Nigeria and beyond.

THE INSTITUTE OF CHRISTIAN AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES (ICMS), MKAR:

This institution was established in 1988 by the NKST. Its is currently housed on a temporary site at the former Mkar Teachers' College. As we have already heard, this institute functions at the level of a polytechnic, and offers Diplomas and Higher Diplomas in many of the Management and Social Sciences, as well as in Religious Education. At

a stage there were serious attempts to convert it to a university, called the "Hilltop University," but the attempts had to be shelved for now, and more groundwork will need to be done before this can actualize. Meanwhile the Institute is affiliated to the Benue State University, Makurdi.

4. THE NKST DIACONAL SERVICES MINISTRY:

This ministry has only recently been organized in the NKST church and its benefits are still to be understood and appreciated even by the people. However, many of the activities expected to be carried out in this ministry have been in operation in the NKST a long time. Basically the Diaconal Services scope of activities is expected to cover the entire **Humanitarian Services** offered (or supposed to be offered) by a Church of God. The Missions that serviced Tiv land and brought the Gospel of Jesus Christ to us were very actively involved in virtually all the good aspects of the Diaconal service, and many have been inherited by the NKST Church and are still being carried out. Yet there is a need to sharpen this some more in the NKST Church, in order that her evangelism to the changed society will be even more relevant.

This is supposed to cover all the areas of **medical and health services**, where human lives are saved directly by such services. The early missionaries introduced health care service everywhere they went to preach the Gospel. The NKST has inherited this very important ministry, and continues to run it zealously. Such a ministry also covers all areas of **education**, where the training offered helps the people to understand the world in a new light. It also helps them secure jobs they would not otherwise have qualified to hold. The DRCM Mission believed that education was one very important tool for evangelism, and by enlightening the illiterate masses, did help very much to fight many other social ills as well. The NKST is also very busy propagating this ministry among her own.

Humanitarian services also include **Agricultural services**, where the people are taught improved farming techniques, and improved seeds and varieties are introduced to help the farmer get better yields, thus improving his living standards.

Other humanitarian services could also include training in various **trades and crafts** like carpentry, bookbinding, printing, soap making and many others. This ministry was brought to the fore by Mr. Loedolff, the Mission Builder who later organized the Benue Leprosy Settlement. He helped train many Tiv young people in various crafts and small-scale professions.

Today the NKST does not have much work in this direction, but it is hoped that with the institution of the Diaconal Services Ministry, the promotion of small-scale businesses will be stepped up. This could very well help people to train and obtain useful means of livelihood, and net some income for the church as well.

Some indigenous churches in Nigeria are involved in such businesses as bread bakery, traditional weaving and dyeing of Christian Hotel services. Today the NKST is involved in the running of one Christian Guest House in Makurdi under the auspices of **Word Books.**"

Humanitarian Services could also be involved in encouraging and promoting social and political reforms, especially when the practices requiring reform are obviously harmful and lead to the degradation of human lives. Convinced that the Tiv practice of exchange bride price insulted womanhood, the Mission took a firm stand on it and got it changed. The NKST has not done much in this regard, but its occasional pronouncements on current issues shows that should the need arise, she would surely take such a stand and ensure the correction.

One more area in which humanitarian services of a Church prove very useful to the society is in the area of **disaster relief operations.** This is especially so in times of famine, drought, flood or wars. An NKST disaster relief ministry would speak volumes for the name of Jesus Christ, especially with the refugee problem that has now come into our midst because of the many land fights and tribal feuds. Probably because the Diaconal Services Ministry is still very young, the ministry is not yet very pronounced in the NKST. Even where it has taken place, it has almost always been reserved for helping out **NKST members** in trouble. Today the NKST Diaconal Services Ministry has been concentrating in this regard on **widows.** We believe that the One who helped the NKST Synod to see the need for this ministry and led

them to set it up — even the Lord God Himself — will surely continue to lead them into this very useful service for His glory. Paul says:

...He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. [Philippians 1:6].

It must be noted that Diaconal or Humanitarian Services are not an end in themselves, but are a very powerful tool for propagating the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. The main reason for involving in diaconal services is to sharpen the evangelism ministry to the people being served. Christ Himself excelled at humanitarian services during His lifetime, we too shall be doing well when we are emulating Him in this regard in true love.

5. THE NKST CHRISTIAN AGRICULTURAL COMPANY (CAC) LIMITED:

This Company was incorporated in November 1988 for the purpose of providing the agricultural needs of the people in Tiv land and Benue State. The overall aim is to improve food production in the State, and Nigeria at large. This the Company seeks to achieve through provision and teaching of effective but simple farming methods to the people, and providing them with improved seeds and chemicals as well as demonstration visitations to their farms. Vaccination of livestock and training of interested farmers are other services available from the Company.

The main target group (though by no means the only one), is the Christian farmer in the NKST. Minimal fees are charged for services rendered. Currently, the Company is trying to establish some pilot projects in some selected local church congregations, and some staff is being trained in extension work. Co-operation with similar Christian organizations overseas is being pursued with the aim of improving techniques and receiving financial and other aid.

The idea of this ministry was brought right from the time when the Missionaries set foot in Tiv land, and today nine mango trees that

were planted by the missionaries in 1911 still stand in Saai as proof of this. Similar trees are to be found on all the former Mission stations they set up. However, nothing serious was done in this direction till in 1982 God raised from the Sudan United Mission (CRC) a missionary with the vision and zeal to properly organize this. The man, Mr. Dave Dykgraaf and his wife, put in a lot of effort and time in this ministry, and organized the vague concept into a definite ministry for the NKST.

Progress in this field has not been very significant, probably because the Government Agriculture Ministry is far better equipped and staffed to carry this out today, and is very busy doing so in their various extension stations spread all over the land.

6. "LAMP AND WORD BOOKS" — NKST LITERATURE MINISTRY:

As we have learnt before, the South African Missionaries started this ministry, and during the time of the American CRC Missionaries it developed to its very peak in Makurdi. Makurdi became the headquarters of the Literature Ministry in 1962 when the CRC took over the station. Rev. De Groot took it over from the outgoing South African Missionary, Rev. Cassaleggio.

The scope of cover of literature publications was broadened to cover the Jukun, Hausa and other tribes in present-day Benue, Taraba, Adamawa, Plateau and Niger States. The ministry boomed a great deal in this period.

In 1980, CRC Mission handed over majority ownership and management to NKST (70%), and the remaining 30% to CRCN. Since then NKST has been appointing the Directors and boards to run the Ministry. The first NKST Director for Lamp and Word Books was Rev. J.C. Mtseva, succeeded in turn by Revs. I. Murkpa, D. Aku K. Nyam.

Goals and Objectives of Lamp and Word Books:

1. To preach the Gospel of Christ through the printed page.

2. To publish and distribute Christian Literature to students of Christian religion, like Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers etc.
3. To publish and distribute books in Nigerian languages, including Tiv.
4. To supply Text Books, Stationery and general reading materials like language primers to schools and colleges.
5. To provide Church materials, like communion cups, wine and cassettes.
6. To provide mimeographic services to the immediate community.
7. To provide Christian Guest Housing services.

Progress of the Ministry:

Over the years since this final handing over, Lamp and Word Books Ministry has not been performing optimally again. Procurement and supply of books to the shops suffered greatly, and the funds to run the whole set-up dwindled till the system grounded to a virtual halt by the late 90's.

We want to thank God again that recently a group of concerned lay members of the NKST felt burdened by the plight of this vital NKST Ministry, and came together to try and raise funds and inject into the system to help it run again. This fund-raising was carried out in 1999, and the funds raised were given to Lamp and Word Books. With this amount, plus funds from other sources, the Ministry is trying to pick up again under the able management of the current Director, Rev. K. Nyam. Our God deserves all the praise for His goodness.

7. THE NKST BIBLE REVISION MINISTRY:

We will recall that the Bible translation done by the Missionaries into Tiv had to undergo major revision exercises before it was finally sent in for printing. We shall forever be grateful to God and our Mission brethren for this priceless work. However, times have changed, and today many more Tiv are educated and literate, and it has become very necessary to ensure that the Holy Bible in Tiv is very current in its language, and precise, in order to communicate even more effectively.

Over the years, the NKST has spotted many inadequate expressions and renditions of Scripture in the Tiv Bible, some of which have tended to bury the true and intended meaning of the passages. Consequently, in 1989 the NKST Synod decided to revise the entire Holy Bible in Tiv, and make it more accurate in expression.

Since it is not only the NKST that uses the Tiv Bible, it was decided to include some non-NKST members on the committee charged with the review of work done. Most of those "others" who were invited failed to honour the invitation to be part of the team, but there are a few representatives of the Catholic Church and Government Ministry of Education on the Committee that reviews the Revision work done. A small-unit Committee headed by Rev. Dr. Joshua S. Yakubu is doing the actual work. Other members of the team included Rev. Jacob Mtseva and Rev. John Sule. However, since their appointment in 1989, only Rev. Dr. Joshua Yakubu has remained from the initial team that was put together, the others having resigned their appointments.

At least one international body, the United Bible Society, and the Bible Society of Nigeria are co-operating in this laudable project. The first Consultant of the United Bible Societies was Dr. R. Koops. The international body pays something for the salaries of the working team and also takes on some other technical overheads. NKST also supplements the pay of the staff and covers the whole project as per need according to her ability.

Work on the Bible Revision Project has already reached a very advanced stage, and is progressing fine. A trial portion of the work, the Gospel according to St Mark, was released in January 1991 to the public. Afterwards at a Workshop at Mkar, comments and criticisms were entertained, and noted. Revision work on the whole of New Testament was completed in July 1994, and the Reviewers finished their work by May 1999. This finished portion has already been sent to Ibadan for manuscript examination before publication. We praise our God for this too, and we believe that it is not for man's glory, but His own, that the work is being undertaken. We see His blessings at every turn in the work, and will continue to sing praises to Him for His goodness to us.

8. NKST MEDIA SERVICES DEPARTMENT:

The idea to form this department was first presented to the Executive Committee of the NKST in 1980. It was based on the observation by one of CRC Missionaries in Tiv land, Rev. Sidney Anderson, that virtually every compound in Tiv land today can boast of at least one radio set. He felt that if the NKST could therefore send out Gospel messages on radio in Tiv language through the local coverage stations, such messages would be reaching a very large target audience indeed. Following negotiations with "Radio Benue", forty-five minute weekly preaching on radio was started. This broadcast lasted for a period of three months, after which Radio Benue felt that the air time should be shared among the various churches in the region, not just the NKST. However, after continued discussions, NKST was allowed to continue with this weekly broadcast of "the Good News". The first NKST minister posted to this work was Rev E.V. Wuaor, who carried on from August 1983 till June 1986. Rev. Awuha Udaa took over from then.

Up till 1992, this ministry continued as "NKST Radio Ministry Services," but in 1992 it was proposed to the Synod that the ministry be expanded to include the print media as well. The name was therefore changed to "NKST Media Services". Under this widened ministry scope, the department took over the production of the small NKST Gospel Magazine called "Mkaanem" in 1991. This work is finding it very difficult to stand, but it has not been shelved totally. In addition, the department secured some weekly airtime on Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria at Enugu from May 1999 till January 2000. This however, was not free, and due to a hike in the fees, the services have been temporarily disrupted till funds are available.

Funding of the NKST Media Services is the same as funding of all the other NKST Ministries. The main source of funding comes from levies paid annually by members of the NKST Church. Support also comes from philanthropic organizations like NKST Women's Fellowship and occasionally from some international bodies and individuals.

We would like to praise God very much for His support in the many ministries that the NKST is running today. Even though it is very difficult to run them, yet with His support, they are still running, somehow. He deserves all our praise and worship.



**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
NKST SYNOD.**

CHAPTER 15

THE NKST AMONG OTHER CHURCHES IN NIGERIA AND ABROAD

We will need to look at the NKST Church as a church existing among the many other churches in Nigeria and overseas. The picture of a national church cannot be complete till it is seen to fit in snugly, and relate smoothly with other churches in the community as a whole. How does this church fit in among other churches? How does she relate with other Christian groups? And how does she fit in the overall picture of the Church of Christ? Such questions are very important and necessary, especially in the light of some slighting statements from some people about the Church today. The fact that the name of the Tiv tribe appears on the full name of the NKST has made such "allegations" appear to have weight, and it has become very important to stress the true picture here in order to correct such impressions.

1. THE SUDAN UNITED MISSION:

We started the story of the NKST with a history of the Sudan United Mission and its activity in the Northern Nigeria at the beginning of the twentieth century. We saw how the Lord God raised through the dynamic organization of Dr. Karl Kumm a virile inter-denominational organization called the Sudan United Mission. This organization took upon itself the enormous task of bringing the Gospel message to the vast stretch of grassland that covered the sub-Saharan region of Africa, especially the so-called "West-central Sudan", which was approximately same as Northern Nigeria.

The Sudan United Mission was truly interdenominational, and many denominations in Britain, Norway, United States, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, as well as Canada and many other countries participated in this very important venture. Even though this was the case, the Holy Spirit, who was behind it all, provided a very good spirit of love, tolerance and true friendliness among all the participants in the

field. As a result, all those evangelical churches, despite their diverse practices and shades of belief, were able to work harmoniously together towards one common goal. This goal was to present Christ to the natives, and to produce one United African Church.

With this unity of purpose at the back of their minds, they all started holding joint meetings to share experiences, refresh themselves in the Word of God and to chart guidelines that would help keep this goal in focus all the time. One such meeting, we will recall, was held in Lokoja in 1909. This meeting had a direct bearing on the coming of the Gospel to us in Tiv land at the time it did, for it was at this meeting that it was agreed that mission bodies should initially concentrate on tribes and communities with a population not less than fifty thousand. This decision forced the South African Missionaries to leave their initial settlement among the Mbula people and come to us in Tiv land because that tribe numbered less than ten thousand.

The Dutch Reformed Church pulled out of the Sudan United Mission in 1916 and their own church Mission took over full charge of the Tiv Mission Field. Yet they continued in practice to relate closely with the Sudan United Mission, especially with regard to the vision for the African Church that was going to emerge. Because of this it is easy to see that the NKST was not nurtured along a different pattern from the rest of the "Sudan" Churches that came out of this great missionary campaign.

Regular consultative meetings of the Sudan missionaries from all the different denominations continued, and they became the foundation of unity and fellowship for emergent churches when they all came of age.

2. "TEKAN" (TARAYYAR EKKLESIYOYYIN KRISTI A NIGERIA):

The precursor of this body so known at this time was TEKAS (Tarayyar Ekklesiyoyyin Kristi a Sudan). This Hausa rendition translates in English as "The Fellowship of Churches of Christ "in the Sudan"... now, "in Nigeria)". All the member churches came out of the great missionary crusade pioneered by the Sudan United Mission's work in Northern Nigeria. At the outset five churches were registered as

members of this body, but many more have joined since then, and today not less than ten young national churches are members. These include:

COCIN (Church of Christ in Nigeria, formerly EKAS Plateau), with headquarters at Jos.

EYN (Ekklesiyoyyin Yanuwar a Najeriya), Hqtr. at Mubi

CRCN (Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria), Hqtr. at Wukari

MBCN (Mambila Baptist Convention of Nigeria), Hqtr. at Gembu

LCCN (Lutheran Church of Christ of Nigeria), Hqtr at Numan

UMCN, Hqtr. at Jalingo

ERCC (Evangelical Reformed Church of Christ), Hqtr. at Akwanga.

RCCN (Reformed Christian Church of Nigeria), Hqtr. at Takum

HEKAN (Hadayar Ekklesiyoyyin Kristi a Najeriya), Hqtr. at Kaduna.

NRC (Nigerian Reformed Church), Hqtr. at Izzi

NKST (Nongo u Kristu u ken Sudan hen Tiv), Hqtr. at Mkar.

At first all these churches had names that showed their "Sudan" origin and the fact that they were "churches of Christ". All the names were in Hausa, the language in which the Gospel came to most of the members. In the recent past they have all dropped the Hausa names and adopted English names as can be seen here, and changed the "Sudan" to "Nigeria".

Initially, even after these churches obtained their independence and registered with the Federal Government, they still continued to meet together with their Mission mentors in the regular field meetings that the Sudan missionaries had initiated. This joint forum was called the "Taron Zumunta", meaning the "Conference for Fellowship", and was started in 1943. Meetings comprised Bible studies, prayers and sharing on common problems, and were being rotated all over the field, in order that each national church could have a chance to host the meeting.

In 1954 at Langtang the meeting considered its future on a serious note, and took far-reaching decisions. The most important question was whether all the various churches of the "Sudan" should unite to form one single African Church, or be united only in fellowship. After a lot of prayerful and peaceful, but intense deliberations it was decided that the churches should form as

independent churches, but be united in the Fellowship, to be known as the TEKAS, or the "Fellowship of Churches of Christ in the Sudan". By this time NKST Church had not yet been "born". It was later, at the 1959 meeting at Numan that the NKST, after having applied for membership, was admitted into this body.

Doctrine and Creed:

According to the Constitution of TEKAN, the Bible is the foundation of all the member churches, and the fellowship believes that the Bible teaches the following points:

- a. The Bible is the sure Word of God, entire and wholly reliable.
- b. It is the right and duty of all to study and interpret the word of God.
- c. There is only one God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- d. The total depravity of man, because of the original sin of Adam.
- e. The incarnation of the Son of God. His death and resurrection in order to redeem the sinful children of men, His intercessory life for us, and HIS everlasting kingdom.
- f. The salvation of sinners by faith in Christ alone.
- g. The work of the Holy Spirit in turning sinners to Christ by sanctifying them.
- h. The everlasting life of man. His resurrection from the dead. The Lord Jesus shall judge the world, bringing everlasting blessedness to the faithful, and eternal punishment to the wicked.
- i. The establishment of the ministry in the Church of Christ according to the Word of the Lord and of sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper until He returns.

The Creed of the Church is that commonly called the Apostles' Creed.¹²¹

The motto of the Fellowship is taken from John 17:22b: "...That they may be one as we are one."

Activities:

The cardinal function of TEKAN is to foster unity in Christ among member churches and individuals. Thus an individual from any TEKAN member-church can come into any one of her churches and be allowed to have full fellowship with that church. Such a one may even be allowed full participation at the The Lord's Supper, provided he or she is in good standing with his home church, and current in his contributions there. This gives a big sense of brotherhood to Christians from diverse Christian doctrinal practices as all differences are stripped away and members are allowed to focus on Christ the only Saviour.

Annual meetings are held on rotational basis in all the member churches where Bible Study, prayer and discussions on topics of common interest are taken up. All the delegates according to the pattern practiced by the host church usually round up the four-day activity with an all-night worship and happy fellowship culminating in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. All these practices allow delegates to get a feel of how the Lord Jesus Christ is worshipped in other places. This helps to enrich one, helping him to learn to love and respect other Christians and their worship practices.

Among the major activities of TEKAN is the running of the **Theological College of Northern Nigeria at Bukuru**. This is an inter-denominational seminary that seeks to integrate students (and subsequently all their parishioners), and make them learn to live together with people from other parts of the country in love and true Christian brotherhood.

¹²¹Smith, E.H.; TEKAN Fellowship of Churches. Its Origin and Growth; TEKAN Literature Committee, Jos; 1969; p 41.

Another area of great interest to the TEKAN Fellowship is how to take the Gospel message to other peoples, especially to our Muslim brothers in the North. This she seeks to do by developing a good, friendly, positive and sympathetic relationship with them, while seeking for the "great door for effective work" to be opened to her to preach Christ to them. Paul said:

But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me. [1 Corinthians 16:8-9].

3. CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA:

TEKAN is not the only church organization to which the NKST belongs, for she is also a member of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). This is the main inter-denominational Christian organization that covers the entire country. It is a quasi-political body that caters for the interests of Christians in a country that recognizes more than this one religion in its constitution. On many occasions CAN has spoken out to Government in defence of the rights of Christians in the country with special emphasis on religious conflicts. CAN therefore, is the expression of Christian unity in Nigeria. Its membership is open to all registered churches in Nigeria, including Catholics, Protestant and Pentecostal churches.

4. REFORMED ECUMENICAL COUNCIL (REC):

This is an inter-denominational Reformed organization that allows member churches the whole world over to meet and have good fellowship with one another. They hold regular meetings in all parts of the world, and members attend to study God's word, pray and deliberate on issues of common and global interest. NKST is a member of this organization, and does attend their meetings.

The organization has a membership of 5-6 million Christians in its member churches. The Reformed Churches in North America, the Netherlands and South Africa founded it in 1946. REC emphasises the

authority of the Bible, the importance of the traditional Reformed and Presbyterian Confessions, and the vision of the kingdom of God.

REC has about thirty member church denominations drawn from 20 countries throughout the world. In Africa member churches are found in Malawi, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe. RCCN and NKST are members from Nigeria.

5. REFORMED ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF NIGERIA (RECON):

This was formed in June 1991 by some Reformed Churches in Nigeria, and has the motto: "Burning, yet not consumed", being reference to the burning bush that Moses saw as an image of God. Member churches include the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria (PCN), the NKST, Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN), Evangelical Reformed Church of Nigeria (ERCC), Reformed Christian Church of Nigeria (RCCN) and HEKAN (United Church) in Kaduna. NKST has just completed her term as the first National Chairman of this young organization.

A TREE, OR PART OF THE FOREST?

From all the above, it becomes clear that the NKST Church has not secluded herself, nor has she tried to exist in isolation as a church. This ought to convince critics who fear that the Church is a tribal church that on the contrary, the NKST is an active church organization in the committy of other churches both in Nigeria and beyond, and fully integrated inside the society it exists in.

CHAPTER 16

FRANK TALKING

Even though we have presented the NKST in a beautiful light here and defended her against many attacks, yet we must show Christian honesty and admit that it is not always very rosy in the Church. At times a member of the NKST or a close observer may feel so exasperated because of what he sees that he would be ready to call a work like this a bunch of lies and fraudulent distortions of the truth. In closing this work, we feel burdened to talk frankly about the NKST, and to the NKST. Only by so doing can we help our Church.

There is today a lack of dedication in the leadership of the NKST at many levels. The laudable ideals on which the Church has been founded are sometimes pushed aside and many other interests pushed to the fore when wrong people are placed in positions of authority.

Not once were any of the Missions that worked with us for a period of over sixty years taken to court for charges bordering on abuse of authority. But today such cases have become the order of the day, and the law-courts are finding the NKST guilty in many of such cases. There is arrogance and insensitivity in some places too.

Again the true zeal in serving the Lord in truth and spirit seems to have been lost in many of our congregations. In their place there appears to be a lot of formalism and even antagonism to things of the spirit. Many good spiritual virtues, which we inherited from the Mission fathers, have been put aside: things like good pastoral concern and care, visitations and counselling. These have been replaced by efficient meetings where formal activities have become the order of things. There is no longer sufficient Christian love among the teeming members, because there is no good example to follow coming from the leadership.

True spiritual feeding is treated with suspicion in many places, and Christians who seek "a little extra" outside the scanty that they get in our churches are considered as "unfaithful members." Daily devotions are preached, but rarely practiced. No longer do Churches

organize daily morning devotion services to help "feed Christ's lambs," as shepherds are expected to be doing. The Lord God spoke firmly about this, saying:

You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every hill. They were scattered over all the earth, and no one looked for them...

This is what the Sovereign Lord says, 'I am against the shepherds, and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds will no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them...' [Ezekiel 34:4-6, 10].

This sad state of affairs has led some to leave the Church today, and has also given the NKST the sad nickname of "**DEAD CHURCH.**" Without stopping the work altogether, we appear to have gone asleep on our oars, and therefore are in a desperate need for a re-awakening today.

Our members have not been very different, and are not guiltless either. What the Missionaries noted at the very beginning and which so exasperated them (living comfortably in sin), is the order of the day in our midst today. We attend Church and participate willingly in its many activities, yet soon as we step outside the church we resume doing what we want to do. Arrogance, adultery and idol worship are rampant in our membership, and it appears the leadership cannot contain it. The Lord has this to say about it:

As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will judge you between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats. Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet?

...Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away, I

will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another. I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David... [Ezekiel 34:21-23].

We look very beautiful on the outside, but is that what we are on the inside as well? The Lord Jesus cried "Woe" on those who only look good on the outside:

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. [Matthew 23:27-28].

What will Jesus say about us if He was to come here today? He said some frightening things about some of the churches in the book of Revelations:

I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance... Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove the lampstand from its place. [Revelation 2:2, 4-5].

Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. [Revelation 2:14].

I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So because you are lukewarm — neither hot nor cold — I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked." [Revelation 3:15-17].

Somewhere along the line we have lost our way and are groping in the dark. Ityavgyer Fate says:

We have started getting far away from the Lord God!
 Something [dreadful] has happened.
 There is no more fellowship to encourage
 And to strengthen one another concerning Jesus Christ.
 I weep, for we are all heading to dooms-place.

I come before You, Lord God; with a loin cloth on.
 My child is very sick.
 He has stopped talking and is refusing all food.

Come, my Father, please come!
 Come while my child has not yet breathed his last.
 Come and lay your hand on him...
 So he may live.

Yes it seems gloomy indeed, but we believe all is not lost. We believe that the Lord our God did not lead us this far only to abandon us to damnation. The Bible says:

God is not unjust, and he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. [Hebrews 6:10].

"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are like crimson, they shall be like wool..." [Isaiah 1:18].

"Return, faithless Israel," declares the Lord, "I will frown on you no longer, for I am merciful," declares the Lord, "I will not be angry for ever. Only acknowledge your guilt — you have rebelled against the Lord your God..." [Jeremiah 2:12-13].

Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God. Your sins have been your downfall! Take words with you and return to the Lord. Say to Him: "Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips." [Hosea 14:1-2].

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all sin. [1 John 1:9].

May the Lord our God lead us all back to Himself as members of that one flock He talked about in John 10:16:

I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

Amen, Lord Jesus!



REV. V. AYAKA
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