By WALTON R. JOHNSON

The History of the A.M.E. Church In Zambia

In all the literature that has been compiled about the black church in America, very little has been written about its rather extensive missionary activity. This fact is surprising since the major black denominations have had branches in Africa for over one hundred years. Given the desire to understand the history of relationships between black America and Africa, as well as amass more data on the black church, more attention should have been paid to the missionary activities of black denominations.

The history of the A.M.E. Church in Zambia is but one example of how a major black denomination became established in a relatively remote part of Africa, how it thrived, how it had a great future, but how time passed it by. It is also an example of how the most significant black American institution — the black church — was transferred back to Africa, becoming a cultural contribution from black America to mother Africa.

The story could be told for other black denominations in other parts of Africa. The purpose of this article is to provide ethnography about one case — the A.M.E. church in Zambia[1] — and to demonstrate the need for more research on black missionary activities in Africa.

African Methodism in South Africa

African Methodism reached southern Africa in 1896, about ten years after arriving in West Africa. At this time, African congregations in South Africa were reacting to white domination in the churches and to increased segregation and discrimination in religious life. Just as in America one hundred years before, this African rejection of racialist religious organization found expression in the establishment of independent churches. Many scholars have recorded this history of the early independent African church in South Africa.[2]

One of the most important of these churches was organized in 1892 by Rev. Mangena Mokone, who formed the Ethiopian Church in Pretoria.[3] During the first two years of the Ethiopian Church, Mokone

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[1]The Zambian church presently has about eighty congregations and a membership in excess of 10,000. Exact membership figures, however, are difficult to obtain. Some estimates go as high as 25,000.

[2]Sundkler, 1961: Roux, 1964, Shepperson, 1968.

[3]The Transvaal government recognized the Ethiopian Church in 1893. It was this church which gave the name to the 'Ethopian' movement and to the type of independent church characterized as 'Ethopian.'

was introduced to the A.M.E. church through his contact with Miss Charlotte Manye, a South African woman, who went to the United States as part of a touring singing group and who was then studying at the A.M.E. university in Wilberforce, Ohio. She had apparently sent some of the A.M.E. publications to South Africa and Mokone initiated correspondence with Bishop H. M. Turner concerning the possibility of sending his son to the A.M.E. university. As a result of the expansion of this correspondence, the Ethiopian Church decided at its 1896 Conference to 'consolidate the union of the Ethiopian Church and the A.M.E. Church' and two delegates were chosen to go to the United States to consummate the the union.[4] The Ethiopian Church was admitted and two years later, in 1898, Bishop Turner visited South Africa and firmly established African Methodism in that country.[5]

The appeal of the A.M.E. church was strong and it grew. In March of 1901, it had been officially recognized by the Cape government and for at least 25 years it was the only 'native separatist church' which the government regarded as 'long established and enjoying universal public recognition.'[6] By 1948, it reported 100,000 members, 400 churches and over 300 ordained ministers. It operated 30 schools in South Africa and was the only non-white Christian church which had an institution of higher learning and a theological college.[7]

Willie Mokalapa

It is significant when considering the appeal of the A.M.E. church to note that it reached into Northern and Southern Rhodesia about 1900, only four years after the Ethiopian Church was incorporated into the A.M.E. church and only two years after Bishop Turner came to South Africa representing the A.M.E. Bishop's Council. It was the heavy traffic of persons and ideas to and from South Africa which accounts for the rapid expansion of the church.

The first appearance of the A.M.E. church in Northern Rhodesia was in Barotseland where the sucesses of Willie Mokalapa contributed significantly to the near panic fear which developed in southern Africa with regard to 'Ethiopianism.'[8] Willie Mokalapa was a Suto Pastor who had originally gone to Barotseland as an evangelist with the Paris Missionary Society, under the leadership of the well known French missionary Francois Coillard. Several reports state that, after working ten years with Coillard, Mokalapa and some of his colleagues became agitated by the discriminatory policy in the Paris Missionary Society concerning pay and

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[4]Roux, 1964:81.
[5]The Ethiopian Church was almost entirely absorbed at the time of Turner's visit, the Transvaal Annual Conference had a membership of 7,175 and the South African Conference had a membership of 10,800. Reported in *Christian Recorder*, June 30, 1898.
[6]See Lusaka archives file B 1/2/327 and *Christian Recorder*, August 29, 1901.
[7]See Mokintinu, 1947.
[8]Because of the historical connection with the Ethiopian Church the A.M.E. church was often referred to 'as the 'Ethiopian Church'.

conditions and that Mokalapa withdrew his allegiance after quarrelling with Coillard over these matters.[9]

When he returned in 1903 from Capetown where he had been appointed A.M.E. Presiding Elder for Barotseland, Mokalapa was encouraged and actively assisted by the Lozi administration. "And with the help of . . . three other educated colonial natives, also members of the Ethiopian Church, and indirect support from Lewanika and other chiefs, he has built a large station a few miles from Lealui and has now a very large following and a large and enthusiastic congregation. He has been joined by one of Lewanika's nephews . . . and by many of the smaller chiefs, and counts many of the principal indunas' sons among his school children . . ."[10]

Because Coillard's mission was reduced almost one-half, the French missionaries and the British South Africa Company did all in their power to prevent Mokalapa from continuing.[11] The feeling during this period what that it was ". . . most desirable to rid this country of all 'deacons' and other dignitaries of the Ethiopian Church . . . In view of the unrest the Ethiopians caused, this administration is determined to resist their return to this territory".[12] However, in view of the appeal which Mokalapa had personally with the chiefs, the administration thought it expedient not to expel him.[13] Rather it passed a law which prevented other A.M.E. missionaries and teachers from entering the country. As late as 1906, this legislation was used to prevent A.M.E. ministers from entering Barotseland.

At the same time, the administration actively tried to persuade the Lozi not to follow the A.M.E. The Administrator in a letter to Chief Lewanika, dated January 3, 1905, argued, ". . . I do not want Willie and the other Ethiopians to leave your country because I am friends with the French missionaries, but because I am sure that they will harm you . . . I have told you plainly in Lealui that the Ethiopian is not a good church. You like them because their missionaries are black people and because they talk nicely to you and do not tell you when you do wrong as Mr. Coillard did . . ."[14]

Fortunately, though, for Mokalapa, he did enjoy the protection of the Lozi aristocracy. They supported him primarily because of their dissatisfaction with the education in the Paris Missionary Society mission school.[15] The A.M.E. school, by contrast, promised to teach English, mathematics, and other subjects which could 'assist in the modernization of Lozi society'. It was also aparent to the Lozi aristocracy that Mokalapa

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[9]See Lusaka archives file IN 1/7. and Favre, 1913:446. Ranger (1965:32); however, indicates that Mokalapa clashed with Coillard over the issue of the Lochner Treaty, which Coillard supported and which Mokalapa urged Paramount Chief Lewanika to reject.

[10]Lusaka archives file IN 1/2.

[11]Lusaka archives file IN 1/2.

[12]Lusaka archives file IN 1/7.

[13]Lusaka archives file IN 1/7.

[14]Lusaka archives file IN 1/7.

[15]Shillito, 1923: 226-227.

and his missionaries were genuinely interested in the progress of the Barotse nation. Coillard's mission was too closely associated with outside interests.[16]

Despite the factors in its favour, Mokalapa's work was not successful. In 1904, while progressing satisfactorily, he was sent by King Lewanika to Capetown to purchase several river boats and carts. He was accompanied by Lewanika's half brother and they carried £700 of state funds. In Capetown they were advised by Rev. Attaway of the A.M.E. church to patronize certain auctioneers to whom £636 was paid with the assurance that the goods would be sent along later. The river boats and carts never arrived at Lealui. Forced to return to Capetown to inquire into the matter, Mokalapa discovered that the auctioneers had gone bankrupt and that the money had been lost.[17]

It is not clear what happened to Mokalapa after this, but the A.M.E. church in Barotseland never recovered from his absence and after several years it withered. A.M.E. missionaries remained in Lealui until 1906 and Lewanika actively campaigned for more A.M.E. teachers, even suggesting the British South Africa Company administration should pay their salaries.[18] It is likely that the church simply died a natural death as a result of the administration's law prohibiting more A.M.E. teachers and missionaries entering Barotseland.[19]

The Church Takes Root in Northern Rhodesia

The church eventually reappeared on the Copperbelt about 1930, at a time when there was a great deal of expansion in the mining industry. Whereas in 1924, there were only 1,300 Africans employed on the Copperbelt, by 1930 there were nearly 30,000.[20] Yet the European missions were extraordinarily slow in establishing missions on Copperbelt. In 1932, there were only three European clergymen resident on the Copperbelt.[21] This was apparently due to their belief that Africans were not to be permanent residents in the towns and that therefore evangelical efforts should be concentrated in the rural homelands.[22]

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[16]Coillard supported the British South Africa Company's efforts to persuade Lewankia to sign the Lochner Treaty – the document which gave the company control of the sub-soil rights on Zambia's Copperbelt. See Stokes, 1966. Referring to the Administrative plan to gather taxes in Barotseland, Coillard told Lewanika "The Lord Jesus paid tribute, why should we?" He explained to Lewanika that "... the revenue was not private money which the King put in his pocket, but a treasure for public works, etc. etc...." See Public Records Office, London, C.O. 417 – vol. 401.

[17]Lusaka archives file IN 1/7.

[18]Lusaka archives file KDE 1/5/2.

[19]Lusaka archives file IN 1/7. The administration considered banning Mokalapa since he was a 'foreign native'. However, it decided it was wiser not to antagonize the Lozi chiefs by attacking Mokalapa personally. They did not impede Mokalapa's movement but prohibited all other A.M.E. teachers and missionaries from entering or re-entering the country. The Proclamation approved by the British South Africa Company's board on March 9, 1904 requiring all alien natives entering Northern Rhodesia to have passes see Public Records Office, London, file C.O. 417 – vol. 397.

[20]Hall, 1965:260.

[21]Davis, 1933: 296.

[22]Taylor and Lehman, 1961:36.

Consequently, there were no mission churches where Africans could worship in towns like Ndola. The result of this situation was the spontaneous formation of an African church in 1925 by a Nyasa, Zebediya Chiuma.[23] This self-governing 'Union Church' was composed of many different denominations and nationalities and became the church for all Africans in Ndola. Similar congregations grew up at Bwana Mkubwa, Nchanga, Mufulira and Roan Antelope, apparently all being referred to as the Union Church.[24] Some of the members of these congregations found out about the A.M.E. church and eventually started an A.M.E. congregation at Ndola.

There appear to have been several sources of contact between the Union Church members and the A.M.E. church. It is difficult to determine definitively the exact relationship of these contacts to the eventual establishment of the church in Northern Rhodesia because various groups within the church consider only one version to be factual. The versions are not at all incompatible and there is objective information which confirms much of each version. What is most significant, however, and what is certain, is that the A.M.E. church in Zambia was an outgrowth of the Union Church in Ndola.

One version of the history stresses that among the membership in the Union Church in Ndola, there were a number of Northern Rhodesians who had joined the Methodist Episcopal Church in Elizabethville while they were there working. When they returned to work in the Northern Rhodesia mines, they were obliged, like all other Africans, to join the Union Church. However, they 'decided to resign' from the Union Church and they wrote to Bishop Springer of the American Methodist Church in Elizabethville informing him of their situation and requesting that he send a preacher to minister to them. The bishop replied that his church did not have a permit from the Northern Rhodesia government, but that they might try to contact the African Methodist Episcopal Church. At a later date, when returning from a conference in Southern Rhodesia, the bishop stopped in Ndola and gave them more information about the A.M.E. church in Bulawayo.[25]

Rev. J. L. C. Membe, who has been a presiding elder in the church longer than any other Zambian and who has written the only history of the church in Zambia, says that they first brought the A.M.E. Church to Northern Rhodesia. He recounts how he was employed in 1928 as a government clerk in Livingstone and how he joined the A.M.E. circut at Victoria Falls. At this time, the church did not have a permit to operate in Northern Rhodesia. In November, 1928, Membe was transferred to Broken Hill as a clerk/typist in the District Commissioner's office. He started an A.M.E. congregation there and received a weekly permit to

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[23]Muwamba, 1931:125.
[24]Cross, 1929:413. Taylor and Lehman, 1961:34.
[25]This version was given to me by several original members of the church. It is supported in Membe, 1969.

preach from the Provincial Commissioner in March, 1930. Membe says he was in correspondence with the A.M.E. General Superintendent in Bulawayo about establishing the church in Northern Rhodesia, so he was able to provide his friends in the Union Church in Ndola with the information which finally resulted in the church being established.[26]

Another version of the history records that, at about the same time, the A.M.E. church was introduced to the Union Church members by Rev. Phiri, who visited Ndola several times en route from Southern Rhodesia to Nyasaland. It was on such a journey in 1929 that Phiri met a friend and former classmate from Nyasaland, Earnest Alexander Muwamba, and told him of the A.M.E. church. Muwamba and his friends were also worshipping at the Union Church and they were dissatisfied with the fact that there was no ordained person among them. For much of its existence, the Union Church had been forced to rely on the pastoral services of Rev. A. J. Cross of the South Africa Baptist Mission located 20 miles south of Ndola at Kafulafuta. Since the relationship was not entirely satisfactory, many of the members found the possibility of forming an A.M.E. church an exciting one.[27]

In January, 1931, some of the members of the Union Church had actually started a new congregation in Ndola, with Muwamba as the Chief Steward.[28] Within several months Revs. Mtshwello and Sangweni visited Ndola and officially received the group as a branch of the A.M.E. church. By 1932 it had churches in Ndola,Luanshya, Nkana and several villages with an estimated membership 500, making it one of the largest protestant churches on the Copperbelt.[29]

The church was started in Livingstone shortly after it began in Ndola. Primarily because it was the administrative capital of Northern Rhodesia and because it was the closest point in Northern Rhodesia to the A.M.E. church headquarters in Bulawayo, Rev. D. D. Khomela was moved to Livingstone as presiding elder in order to supervise the growth of the church throughout the country. Khomela established the church in Livingstone in 1931, just after government approval of the church had been granted. By the end of 1931, there were about 68 members temporarily worshipping in an old building in Maramba Compound. One year later, membership had increased to about 130, consisting primarily of civil servants.[30]

By 1930 the economic exploitation of Northern Rhodesia was assured, there was a colonial government staffed by professional civil

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[26]Membe, 1969.

[27]This version of the history was given to me by several original members of the church and Hanock Msokera Phiri.

[28]Lusaka archives file ZA 1/9/1/1. The Union Church continued, incidentally, and in about 1934 the European missionaries decided to work together with it. The United Missions of the Copperbelt was a direct outgrowth of this merger.

[29]See Lusaka archives KSN 3/1/4. The other protestant denominations had the following membership: South African Baptist, 500; Dutch Reformed Church, 200; Anglican Church, 250. The Roman Catholic Church appears to have been larger than the protestant denominations.

[30]See Lusaka archives ZA 7/2/5/7 and ZA 7/2/6/5.

servants and the memories of Mokalapa and Chilembwe were not fresh in people's minds. The Northern Rhodesian government remained suspicious, but seemed less intent on crushing the church. It was considered a 'recognized religious denomination' and was entitled to certain privileges as a result.

There seems to have been more contempt than fear for the A.M.E. after the late 1930's. Government records indicate that several A.M.E. ministers had been convicted of embezzlement (which probably meant collecting money without giving an official receipt) or other petty offenses. Sedition of course was always a possibility from the government's point of view, so it did occasionally send plainclothes CID police officers to report on A.M.E. activities.[31]

A.M.E. preachers did sometimes encounter difficulty with the Native Schools Ordinance and the church certainly was not granted the freedom to which it was legally entitled as a recognized denomination. Rev. Membe records the following incident which occurred in the Mporokoso district in 1934.

> Before Rev. C. went back to his headquarters at Chanda he appointed brothers A and B as local preachers to preach at Chibuta, Songa and Lupele. But some members of the London Missionary Society and Roman Catholic Church leaders, they went to Chief Mporokoso and reported to him that there are some men who are preaching in your area in the name of the church they never heard of Chief Mporokoso was worried and went to report to the District Commissioner of Mporokoso. These two young men were summoned to appear before the District Commissioner to answer charges. These young men A and B were imprisioned for one month for preaching in that area without permission from the Chief and the government.[32]

Government attention was not focused on the A.M.E. in particular, however. The 1930's was characterised by all African churches being classified together in European minds as 'Ethiopian' or 'Watchtower.' Little effort was made to distinguish between them. The government was thus sensitive to pressure brought upon it by the missionaries and other interests who wanted to limit the scope of the A.M.E.[33] At the same time, however, it was willing in some instances to grant permission for the A.M.E. church to build schools and churches.

The Years of Expansion

The years 1932 to 1945 were years of expansion for the church in Northern Rhodesia." The advance of this church has been considerable in the Native Compounds, and is the most active rival to the Watchtower church in Ndola. The funds which are almost entirely from native sources are very low, but as the Ndola native population is very poor at present,

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[31]Lusaka archives file ACC 90/28.
[32]Membe, 1969:25.
[33]See Lusaka archives KSJ 1/2/1. Letter from North Charterland Exploration Company objecting to the A.M.E. being granted a building site in Fort Jameson, 16 July, 1934.

this can be expected. The congregation has decreased by about a quarter, as many have left for their homes."[34]

The world economic depression early during this period caused the mining industry on the Copperbelt to reduce its operations. Approximately, 16,500 African mineworkers lost their jobs between 1930 and 1932.[35] The Annual Conference meeting in 1932 decided to give preaching appointments to anyone who would go where there was no A.M.E. church. Candidates were nominated by the presiding elders. Although some refused the appointments because it meant pioneering the church in the rural areas, most of them went to their appointments and opened new fields for the church.[36] Others voluntarily organized on behalf of the church.

Rev. J. L. C. Membe was the major impetus behind the expansion of the church in the Northern and Luapula provinces. His account of a trip to Tanganyika provides an excellent example of how the church moved into the rural areas.

> "On September 21, 1933, I left my place to go to Kasenga in Tanganyika accompanied by my wife, Simpanya and wife Alice, Mr. Ben Chipungu, and a band of choir. There was no other means of transport rather than to walk, so we walked for three days and reached Kasenga. When we were just about to enter the town a group of Christians from the London Missionary Society came to meet us and started to mock on us and speaking all bad words against us without anything wrong to them and started to throw dust on us making a lot of noise, but the Chief was aware of this, he sent his policemen to protect us until they got us through to the Chief's residence. The Chief regretted the action taken by the members of the LMS with their minister, and remarked that the wonders to see that Christians fight each other and make jealousy against one another without a reason which is a matter of discouraging who would be the Christians to come to church.
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> The very day we arrived in the evening the Chief called for the local council to meet and discuss about the A.M.E. church in their area. After having explained about the A.M.E. church, history and its constitution and about the countries in which the A.M.E. church operates, the Chief asked his people's views on the matter and not to try and exercise denominational feelings. When this was put on vote 142 people voted in favour of having the A.M.E. church established in their area, 6 voted against and a few abstained from voting. On Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. an open air prayer meeting was held on the front of the Chief's palace. Over 300 people attended the service including the Chief himself. Brother Ben Chipungu and his Choir rendered some selections and made the people very interested in their singing. Most of the people wanted the A.M.E. church started right away there but I told them the permit is not as yet been granted. On Monday morning a piece of land about 45 acres was given to the A.M.E. church with 27 mango trees, 14 orange trees and 8 lemon trees inside the land for only £50. On Tuesday September 26, 1933, we left Kasanga by boat on Lake Tanganyika back to Northern Rhodesia via Chisanza."[37]

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[34]Lusaka archives file KEN 3/1/4.
[35]Hall, 1965:261.
[36]Membe, 1969. Applications for preacher licenses "...owing to the present depression in the Copperbelt..." were made by Muwamba. See Lusaka archives file ZA 1/9/1/1.
[37]Membe, 1969:32.

Except for the large expansion from the Copperbelt towns into the Northern Luapula provinces, the remaining growth for the church continued to be along the line of rail and in the major towns. By 1933, there were A.M.E. congregations at Livingstone, Kalomo, Choma, Mazabuka, Mapanza, Monze, Lusaka, Mumbwa, Namwala, Broken Hill, Ndola, Nkana, Kitwe, Mufulira, Luanshya, Fort Jackson and Kawambwa.[38] Movement between the urban areas by the miners, clerks, and businessmen account for the growth of the church in the towns.

The tendency of the church was to remain in the towns and along the rail is also in part due to the fact that there were initially few Northern Rhodesians in the A.M.E. leadership. Most of the presiding elders were Rhodesians or South Africans and they usually preferred to live in the urban areas. In many instances, they had to rely on interpreters and the urban areas which were where interpreters were most easily found.

As the church moved along the line of rail and into some of the rural areas during the period 1932 to 1945, it was warmly received by the people. Recalling the mood of that period, one person explained, "There was great excitement about having a church which belonged to Africa. They brought cattle and other goods. The people gave gifts and made sacrifices . . . It was the people's first time to see an African minister. He was like Jesus."[39]

Political and social circumstances favored the continued growth of the church in Northern Rhodesia. The white population and government were clearly and deliberately moving in the direction of amalgamation with Southern Rhodesia, which was designed to perpetuate white rule. At the same time, Africans were becoming more conscious of political developments and more opposed to the segregation and discrimination they experienced. Moreover, the white churches were not responsive to the African's needs. The major denominations exercised strict colour bars; separate churches were built in the locations for Africans and they were not generally ordained or allowed to advance to senior posts in the church hierarchies. Politically, the white churches generally supported the official government policies which were often overtly racist.

As a Christian denomination, the A.M.E. church had certain natural advantages under these conditions. The history of the church's birth and growth in the United States and in South Africa was widely known. The obvious similarity between the conditions in Northern Rhodesia and those facing the founding fathers of the church was very great. In a sense membership in the A.M.E. church represented an assertion of African pride in circumstances where it was otherwise suppressed. The A.M.E. church also profited from the fact that it was clearly and genuinely sympathetic to African interests. The result was that the church grew rapidly during its early days.

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[38]Lusaka archives files SEC/NAT 286 and KSN 3/1/4.
[39]Comments of an A.M.E. member who remembers the A.M.E. church entering her village.

The government records after 1940 contain very little information about the A.M.E. church. This fact indicates that the authorities were not anxious about its activities. It was not considered a mission church, so information about it was not kept in the records of missionary activities. Also, the concern about the political consequences of the Watchtower movement had lessened, so there was apparently little reason to give it attention as a 'separatist' church. The general attitude at that time seems to have been that the teachings of the A.M.E. were ". . . purely religious and not political or subversive . . ."[40] "The churches are not very well organized and rather ineffective, but quite harmless except that ministers of the Church are sometimes liable to be light-fingered with the funds. On the whole, the church has a good reputation and as a body gives us no trouble at all."[41]

Later, during the Central African Federation, and until self-government, the government showed little concern for the A.M.E. church. The rise of the political organizations and trade unions which threatened white rule absorbed its attention. Whereas the A.M.E. membership contained a very high percentage of the 'militants' during the 1930's and 1940's, the 1950's saw many of these patriots defecting. The A.M.E. had already begun its decline in importance relative to other denominations. It was no longer an institution of consequence.

The Critical Years

After about 1950, it seems that the A.M.E., while continuing to increase its membership, did not grow as rapidly as some of the other denominations. This fact is the result of two major weaknesses in the church organization. One weakness was its inability to provide the social services which the people needed and which other denominations were providing. The second weakness was its inability to train its ministry and effectively organize its financial administration. These weaknesses were not unnoticed by the local leaders. Indeed, urgent pleas for assistance in these areas have gone forth to the mother church for several decades. The weaknesses in the church continued, though, mainly because the church in the United States was not forthcoming with the funds required to launch effective training and supervision programmes for the ministry and to establish a network of A.M.E. schools and clinics.

During the late 1940's and all of the 1950's, the demand for education among Africans in Northern Rhodesia was very great. However, the colonial administration gave little attention to meeting the African's

[40]Lusaka archives file SEC/NAT 286.

[41]Lusaka archives file SEC/NAT 286. Indeed, it seems that to some extent the A.M.E. did not get the attention it deserved. No reports were made about its missions, the number of members, its schools, and so forth. It is noteworthy in this connection that the decline of government concern about the A.M.E. and other African controlled churches coincides with the rise in activity of the welfare associations, trade unions, and political parties. As the government's intention was to prevent an African revolt, these new organizations became identified with seditious tendencies and concern with African churches waned.

educational needs. The missions were looked to by all to provide schools. "In one district it is said that natives select their church denomination according to the amount of secular education they are likely to obtain rather than from any deep religious conviction and that the greater the facilities for the learning of a trade, the greater the number of people who come to the mission meetings."[42]

Many Africans naturally assumed that the A.M.E., because it was an African-controlled church and because of its well known educational institutions in the United States and South Africa, would provide education which was more relevant. The church itself was aware of the need to teach English language and literature because they are the 'keys to all knowledge' and could teach the local people to 'think for themselves rather than always depending on the energies of others."[43]

Leaders within the church were conscious of the need to build schools. They realized that much of their membership was being forced to leave in favour of joining other denominations so that their children could obtain education. On this issue, the wife of an A.M.E. bishop reported, "The subject of education is of greatest importance because of the extreme shortage of government schools. Each mission is expected to have its own schools, the lack of them hindering the progress of the church . . . several hundred members left the church because of the lack of school facilities. Whenever children from our church go to any of the other mission schools, they are told that their parents must join that particular church before the children may be admitted."[44]

As early as 1925, Rev. H. M. Phiri applied to the government of Northern Rhodesia to build an A.M.E. school near Fort Jameson. In 1932, the A.M.E. church operated one of the two schools for Africans in Luanshya. It was primarily a night school where English was taught but it also gave some instruction in ordinary classroom subjects up to Standard I.[45] About that same time, the A.M.E. was trying to establish a school near Mporokoso.[46] It is likely that there were more schools sponsored by A.M.E. congregations during the church's early days in the country, but government records are inadequate on this point as are the A.M.E. records.

It is significant that the largest growth points for the church during the period 1932 to 1945 were in those places where the schools were successful. In the Northern and Luapula provinces, for instance, there were three A.M.E. schools by 1942 — one at Chiyanga, one at Chilwa and one at Chipwa. They were founded by Rev. J. L. C. Membe and were primary schools. Chilwa school was the largest, having four teachers and approximately 400 students. Chiyanga had three teachers and

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[42]Annual report on Native Affairs (Northern Rhodesia) 1931, p. 40.
[43]Muwamba, 1931.
[44]Jordan, 1960:112.
[45]Lusaka archives file KSN 3/-/4. *The Annual Report on Native Education* 1932, Appendix VII-VIII reports that the A.M.E. church had one school with an enrollment of 20 boys and 10 girls. The government gave a grant of £8.00 for salaries.
[46]Membe, 1969

about 316 students. The Chipwa school had two teachers and about 117 students.[47]

Another of the church's growth points was in the Kaloma/Choma area where Nachula school was located. The A.M.E. mission at Nachula was established in 1932 by Rev. J. Marumo. Nachula was a primary school which concentrated on the teaching of English and Arithmetic. As a result of Marumo's active missionary work, the church and school grew rapidly and the government received applications for more than a half a dozen smaller schools in the nearby villages prior to 1940.[48] Many of the smaller schools failed after some time due to lack of funds.

In the mid-1940's there were 7 A.M.E. schools in Northern Rhodesia — one at Mwinilunga, with two teachers; one at Mulungushi, with one teacher; one at Nachula, with one teacher; one at Molebatsi with two teachers; one at Chisanga with two teachers.[49] The schools, however, did not receive regular support from the Annual Conference or the Episcopal District. Normally they were financed by the local congregations, with the pastors contributing their meagre resources. Most of the schools eventually failed due to the lack of funds to pay the recurrent expenses of teacher's salaries or the inability to meet the government requirements. Mission schools of other denominations were able to survive primarily because of the grants-in-aid and other support they received from the government. The A.M.E. church schools did not receive grants-in-aid 'because they did not have certified teachers' and because the government's policy was 'to discourage schools belonging to this denomination.'[50] Funds were not forthcoming from the church in the United States, so the schools eventually languished.

Throughout the 1950's and 1960's there have been attempts to revive some of the A.M.E. schools. But by 1955, the church had not succeeded in gaining recognition as a proprietor of schools and it had no schools in operation. Zambian clergy and lay leaders continued to press the mother church for funds for education facilities but finance proved to be an insurmountable problem.[51]

With regard to health facilities, records indicate that there has been only one A.M.E. sponsored clinic. Rev. J. M. Mubita, who was appointed to Namitome in Baortseland, noticed the Mongu General Hospital did not meet the needs of all of the A.M.E. members. He therefore started a clinic at his home in 1952 with drugs provided by the Provincial Medical Officer. In 1958, Rev. Mubita purchased another house to use as the clinic and made grants to it to help its operations. The clinic continued functioning until 1962, when the government insisted that the A.M.E. church pay some fees in return for the medications and

[47]This information obtained from Rev. Membe.
[48]See Lusaka archives files ACC 90/31, ACC 90/28.
[49]Wright, 1947:324.
[50]Lusaka archives file ZA 1/9/172/2.
[51]To contrast Northern Rhodesia to the other countries in the 17th Episcopal District, it should be noted that, in 1961, there were six A.M.E. schools in Southern Rhodesia and three in Nyasaland.

salaries it supplied. Neither the Annual Conference or the Episcopal District provided these funds so Namitome Clinic was closed down.[52]

The list of social service facilities begun by A.M.E. ministers can probably never be completed. As most of them were purely local efforts, there was often no record of them. Indeed, the Annual Conference or Episcopal District were never able to take the responsibility for establishing social service facilities. The best they could do was to occasionally give funds to those projects which had begun locally. The consequences of the failure of the mother church to encourage and financially support the Northern Rhodesia church during this critical period cannot be overemphasized. As late as 1961, the bishop assigned to central Africa correctly admonished the mother church, "If we fail them, I can only say our future here as a church will slowly pass into a non-existing organization."[53] This process is at present well under way.

Also during the period of 1945 to 1960, the effects of the absence of a trained ministry became increasingly apparent.[54] Most circuits were poorly administered due to the pastor's lack of knowledge of fundamental organizational procedures and basic financial and record-keeping principles. As knowledge of English and the acquisition of secondary education became symbols of accomplishments and status, and as these skills became more indispensable to life in Zambia, the A.M.E. ministry gradually slipped from being in the vanguard of emerging African talent to a position where it attracted many men who did not have the ability to succeed elsewhere. Increasingly, the church did not attract the bright, young men because it did not provide opportunities for them to receive higher education and, being unsalaried, because it offered no financial security. The absence of skilled leadership has clearly had disastrous long term consequences for the church, aiding its slow decline in appeal.[55]

Relative Decline in Appeal

Thus during the critical years of 1945 to 1960, the church failed to establish the strong foundations of social service facilities and a trained ministry on which its future would depend. These years were still years of growth in membership, however, because the racial and political circumstances of Northern Rhodesia continued to give the A.M.E. church, as an African-controlled church, some advantages vis-a-vis most other denominations. Expansion of the membership during this period was also a function of the increased number of Northern Rhodesian ministers who were familiar with local customs and who could speak local languages.

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[52]This information provided in verbal and written form by Rev. J. Mubita.
[53]*Voice of Missions*, 1961:10
[54]Jordan, 1960.
[55]At the present time, the two most able ministers are 62 and 68 years of age respectively. There are no younger men who are seen to have their talents or who are thought likely to be successful heirs.

But the growth was deceptive. As the Northern Rhodesian society changed and as the policies of the other churches changed, the A.M.E. church was thrust into a poor relative position. The church's main attracting attributes had been providing opportunities for leadership and authority, relating positively to African nationalism, providing the functions of an adaptive institution and helping to meet the need for new forms of social organization in the urbanized society. It performed these functions at a time when few other institutions did so — thus giving it relatively distinctive attributes and enhancing its appeal. However, during the late 1950's and early 1960's, these attributes became increasingly shared by other institutions within the society. No longer having distinctive attributes, the A.M.E.'s weaknesses with regard to trained ministry and social service facilities began to stand out and relegated it to a poor position in terms of mass appeal. The consequences of the church's failure to correct its weaknesses is that today it is declining.

It would take an analysis of the A.M.E. church in America to understand fully why it was unable to maximize the opportunities which existed for it in Zambia. More significant here, however, is that the A.M.E. church is not unlike other black American denominations with congregations in Africa. The attribute of being black churches, controlled by black people, made them distinctive in the African context and gave them an advantage vis-a-vis other foreign denominations.

Unfortunately, black denominations on the whole were not able to capitalize on their attributes. None have been fully able to exploit the opportunities for serving the African people and for expanding the institutions themselves. Africa is now independent. If the A.M.E. church in Zambia is representative, the process of evolving modern societies has changed the needs and circumstances and made the attributes of black denominations less relevant.

Yet, in some instances the black denominations have had a significant impact on the history of Africa. Often they have been important social institutions. Indeed, the prominent role of Africans in starting, building and administering the A.M.E. Church in Zambia testifies to the strong appeal and vitality of this great black institution.

But more research is required. Why was the mother church so uninvolved with Africa that the existence of congregations in places like Zambia is almost unknown? Was the failure of the church to adapt in Africa due to negligence in the United States or due to unavoidable circumstances? What happened with other denominations in Africa?

In short, there is an important dimension of the black church in America which remains to be unfolded. The story of the A.M.E. Church in Zambia is one small part of the total picture.

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