

LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY, CHURCH AND STATE IN A COLONIAL BECHUANALAND: The case of BaNgwato¹ 1857 - 1923

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Abstract

The interaction of church and state in a colonial situation has rarely been explored, particularly when the colonial setting is the scene of intense missionary activity. The situation among the BaNgwato during the second half of the nineteenth century and into the first quarter of the twentieth reveals several of the dynamics that are unleashed when a foreign world-view intersects with a traditional culture where civil and religious authority overlap. A central issue here is that LMS activities inevitably affected many aspects of BaNgwato social life: religion, health, education, economics and political structures. From the BaNgwato cultural point of view, these aspects were under the political authority of the king. The latter point led to several conflicts between the BaNgwato and the missionaries in the years 1860 to 1923.²

1. Introduction

While missionaries and colonialists belonged to two European agencies, each with different interests and objectives in Southern Africa, the former saw their specific goals as the founding of churches or the spreading of Christianity in general. They however hoped that the theoretical stated goals of the colonial power of maintaining peace, order and the formation of good government would facilitate their work in Southern Africa. The problematic issue with this approach was that the missionaries and the colonial administrators ended up supporting each other's interests at the expense of the BaNgwato.³

1. The BaNgwato were Tswana *merafe* (ethnic groups or states) of what came or used to be known as Bechuanaland. The Ngwato themselves, and the Kwena and the Ngwaketse were said to have formed when three brothers broke away from their father, Malope- a- Melora, to establish their independent states with a number of followers. The Ngwato became firmly established as a *morafe* under Mathiba I in 1780. Among his successors were Kgama I, Kgari, Kgama II, Sekgoma I, Macheng and Khama III. See James Chapman, (1868), *Travels in the Interior of South Africa*, Vol.1, p. 35; MacKenzie, J, (1871) *Ten Years North of the Orange River*, p. 36.5; E Lloyd, (1895), *Three Great African Chiefs*, p. 76.
2. Jean and John Comaroff (1991 :xii-xii) describe this as 'a brutal system of domination, which resulted in 'cultural subversion' and contributed to the people's 'own subordination'.
3. The factors which led to the dominance of Africans by Europeans and its implications are also well documented by nationalist writers such as Thomas Tlou (1984) and Mutero Chirenje (1977). This paper stands to benefit from these works, especially the book entitled, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa* (1991) by Jean and John Comaroff, who describe the domination of Europeans in the past as 'the colonization of consciousness'. The conceptual framework they have adopted is very interesting one. They expressed the aim of their study as 'the colonization of consciousness and the consciousness of colonization'. The early missionaries are understood to have sought to change the hearts and minds, the signs and practices of the Southern Batswana. This is described as 'a historical anthropology of cultural confrontation, of domination and reaction, struggle and innovation'. (xi, xii). The European missionaries undermined Tswana traditional institutions, and this facilitated European imperialism. This role of missionaries among the BaNgwato is one of the most controversial issues. First, the missionary enterprise acted as a precursor and later on as faithful allies of the imperial powers. To this general trend and attitude, however, there were those who stood out as exceptions. Livingstone, for instance, had for

Prevailing historical and political situations influenced missionary attitudes to Ngwato way of life. In the early 1860s, the missionaries resident at Shoshong, the BaNgwato capital, for instance, did not only respect the BaNgwato authorities but relied on them for protection and support in their endeavours. But with the establishment of the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1885, the missionaries began to challenge the legitimacy of kingly power and increasingly allied with the colonial administrators.

Three main factors influenced missionary involvement in political issues: first, their judgement of how the Ngwato or colonial policies would affect their work in Bechuanaland; second, their European superiority mentality, inspired their anti-African cultural institutions. For example, they saw BaNgwato cultural systems as a hindrance to the spread of Christianity, so they felt that colonialism was justified. Third, the LMS desired to monopolise Bechuanaland as their own missionary. In order to eliminate other Christian organizations, such as those of the Anglican Church, they either tried to form strong connections with Ngwato traditional authorities or the colonial state.

2. The period prior the establishment of the protectorate

The origin of the Tswana Missions dates as early as 1812 when John Campbell was sent by the LMS to South Africa with the responsibility of selecting sites for new centres of work and to report back to the Board of Directors. His journeys took him to the northern outskirts of the Cape Colony and into the borders of the BaTswana country, in the territory of present-day Botswana. Here he came into contact with the BaThaping, the people inhabiting the southern part of what came to be known as the British Bechuanaland and their great king, Molehabangwe. When Campbell explained the reason for his visit, and that he wished to settle missionaries among his people, Molehabangwe replied, 'Send them, and I will be a father unto them'.⁴ While this was a decisive achievement for the missionary, Molehabangwe's declaration had important political connotations. It underlined his political intentions to see kingly power (*bogosi*) staying above every institution or sphere of life in his town. Campbell's visit however led to an important discovery about the hitherto unknown Batswana people to the LMS Directors.

The most important development among the Batswana began with the arrival of Robert Moffat in 1821 and the establishment of the Kudumane Mission. Subsequently this station became the headquarters of the Tswana Mission, from which the influence of Christianity spread to most of the key Tswana capitals.⁵

Moffat's missionary policy was culturally conservative, apolitical and evangelical and anti-pre-colonial political systems. He therefore openly denounced any attempt to mix religion and politics. He was very critical of John Philip's involvement in Cape politics. Philip became a famous LMS missionary who struggled to achieve equal legal rights between Africans and Europeans in the Cape Colony in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Moffat saw the role of a missionary very narrowly: converting the dying and lost souls. So he refused either to be seen as advancing British political interests or as protecting Africans from unjust measures by involving himself in African politics.⁶ As a result, relations between Moffat and such missionaries as Philip, and Livingstone were far from

eleven years of his missionary activities among the BaKwena persistently supported Tswana political and economic aspirations.

4. Robert Moffat (1842).

5. John MacKenzie, (1871) *Ten Years north of the Orange River*, pp. 67-83.

6. R Moffat (1842), *Missionary Labours in Southern Africa*, pp. 243ff; R Moffat (Kudumane) to LMS, October 8, 1850, SOAS: B25 F1 JD.

cordial. Moffat's experience taught him to distrust any cooperation with Cape politicians and thus he tried to avoid anything that would have resulted in misunderstanding. On the other hand, Livingstone, like Philip, openly took sides with the Batswana against the Boers.

Despite the allegedly apolitical stance taken by missionaries of Moffat's view, they were sometimes compelled to adapt their work to the views of Batswana kings on whom they depended for political protection and material support. Although Moffat in particular refused to conciliate with African kings, he also found that to effectively carry out his missionary work he needed support of the kingly power.

Cape Colony politics are the background for the conflict among LMS missionaries concerning political issues. The expansion of the missionary work beyond the borders of the Cape Colony was unwelcome because Christianity, spreading beyond the colonial boundaries was seen as a threat to European interests⁷.

The cruelties and oppressive measures perpetrated by the Transvaal Boers on the Batswana, also influenced missionary attitudes. Livingstone's missionary activities in Bechuanaland and his open support for Africans aspirations became very unpopular with the Boers, because he unmasked their cruelties and strongly condemned the superiority they assumed over the Africans.⁸

The Boer aggressive attitude on the Batswana made it very difficult for African teachers to work among their own people as evangelists. It was for this reason that when in 1849 William Ashton, another LMS missionary, made an effort to train African teachers, the scheme was not popular. The following cry raised by the Batswana for European missionaries explains it all: 'We won't have a black teacher like ourselves; we will have a white teacher who can guide and protect us.'⁹ The Batswana hoped that the presence of European missionaries would act as a shield against the attacks of the Boers. European missionaries also attracted European traders and trade in goods greatly needed by the Batswana, such as firearms and other essential material necessities.

The Batswana themselves consistently blamed the British colonialists for supporting Boer activities in southern African.¹⁰ Moffat for instance wrote saying:

They conceive that they have an especial right to engage in wars, and disposses chiefs of the lands of their forefathers, by virtue of their treaty with the British Government, in which the independence of the Boers north of the Vaal river is acknowledged and proclaimed. This in their judgement includes all the country north of the Vaal River, from its source to the point where it enters the western Ocean. Every act of rapine and bloodshed is now carried on under pretext that the country is theirs by the authority of the Queen of England.¹¹

When the Boers of Transvaal raided several Tswana capitals in 1852, with the aim of trying to force them to live in subjection, Sechele, the king of the BaKwena, attempted to go and see the Queen in London to protest against the acts of the Boers and the role of the British. Due to lack of funds and support from both the Cape government and the missionaries, Sechele had to give up and return from Cape Town to his people.

The Boers opposed the idea of missionaries opening up the interior to Christianity. The Boers felt that the missionary teaching hindered them from maintaining their policy of absolute subjugation. In 1854 William Ashton described the situation:

7. Lovett, R (1945), *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895*, Vol.1, pp. 533-4.

8. Blaikie, WG (1910), *The Life of David Livingstone*, p. 61.

9. Lovett, R (1945), op. cit, p. 594.

10. Ibid.

11. Chronicle, 1853, p. 63, R Moffat, November 22, 1852 in Lovett, (1895), p. 596.

The country is not only given over to the Boers, but with it abundance of ammunition, and they are to have as much as they wish from time to time from the English, whilst natives are most strictly prohibited from purchasing both powder and lead. They are thus delivered over (so far as our Government can do it), bound hand and foot, to the tender mercies of these oppressors. The natives feel this keenly; they have lost all respect for the English; in fact, the respect which we formerly witnessed among them towards all white men is turned to hatred, and we missionaries partable largely in the general odium.¹²

The German Hermansberger Society (G.H.S) co-operated with the Transvaal Government because they were benefitting financially. The intention of the Boers was to replace British missionaries with these German missionaries, who were willing to extend their interest in the region. In 1858 Moffat wrote about the German missionaries:

... it was soon discovered by their own professions that they, and Pretorius were one, that it is their object to 'mumula' (root out) the missionaries of every other Society and introduce their own to every tribe within reach by the co-operation of the republic ... with many fair promises ... from that source.¹³

GHS missionaries and the Transvaal Government had hoped, by this political - religious alliance, to create an empire for themselves. Their venture ended when the Batswana authorities rejected the G.H.S missionaries, realising that they were closely associated with the political interests of the Boers.¹⁴ They were identified as agents of a political power, that was undermining Tswana political sovereignty.

Moffat, critical as he was of any missionary and political alliance, later contributed to the weakening of the Batswana kingship structures. In 1858, he was involved in the Ngwato political events which led to the overthrow of Sekgoma and his replacement by Macheng, for he hoped that the latter would facilitate a massive spread of Christianity in the region. He informed the LMS:

Macheng had willingly submitted to my suggestions that he should be instructed in reading and writing; and soon as all his public affairs were settled he would ... avail himself of the services of a native teacher.¹⁵

This reflected a strategy that realised that kingship structures were the most effective channel for disseminating and establishing Christianity and other missionary interests among the BaNgwato. JD Hepburn, another LMS missionary at Shoshong, the Ngwato capital until 1889, admitted that the LMS missionaries tried to weaken kingly power.¹⁶ However, he agreed with Moffat that political involvement of missionaries led to a poor response to Christianity.¹⁷ Other LMS missionaries however ignored this warning by continuing to perform political activities on behalf of their home government in northern Batswana kingdoms. In 1868, for instance, John Mackenzie encouraged Macheng, the then Ngwato king, to invite the British Government to occupy the Tati Gold area as a way of preventing the Transvaal Government from occupying the field.¹⁸ The British Government did not respond to the request, and Mackenzie suggested that a special council of Europeans be established which would deal with European matters at Shoshong. This council was eventually formed with Mackenzie himself presiding over it.

12. R Lovett, (1945), i, op. cit, p. 598.

13. R Moffat to LMS, Kudumane, 10 February 1858, SOAS: In-Letters, A\5, B31 F1 JA.

14. MacKenzie to LMS, Shoshong, 29 March 1864, SOAS: In-Letters, S\A, B33 F3 JA.

15. R Moffat (Kudumane) to LMS, 14 February 1858, SOAS: B3 I F1 JA.

16. JD Hepburn (Shoshong) to LMS, & January 1880, SOAS: B40 F3 JC.

17. JD Hepburn (Shoshong) to LMS, 20 April 1875, SOAS: B38 F1 JA.

18. WD MacKenzie, (1902), *John MacKenzie: South African Missionary and Statesman*, p. 124.

Mackenzie saw a very close connection between the progress of Christianity and the English law. Thus in 1876 he said:

On the whole, the feudal power of the native chiefs is opposed to Christianity; and the people who are living under English law are in a far more advantageous position as to the reception of the Gospel than when they were living in their own heathen town surrounded by all its thralls and sanctions.

Anthony Sillery has simplistically alleged that the acceptance of Christianity led to the breakdown of Ngwato cultural institutions¹⁹, yet the LMS missionaries like Wesleyans, working among the BaRolong, the southernmost Tswana people at about the same period, complained that kingly power was opposed to Christianity.²⁰ In fact most LMS missionaries in the Bechuana District Committee (B.D.C.), the highest authority in the region, saw the declining power of the kings as a happy development, for they believed that kingship structures were less responsive to the evangelization process. Calling for the replacement of Ngwato political structures with British rule the B. D.C. in 1878 openly said:

... as for the waning of the power of their chiefs, they will grow accustomed to that also, provided a good position is secured them as respectable subjects of the Queen.²¹

It was with this understanding that LMS missionaries played a leading role in the formation of the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1885.

3. The formation of the Bechuanaland Protectorate

Khama III, the BaNgwato king of 1872 - 1923 initiated the process that led to the development of the Bechuanaland Protectorate for both military and political strategies. The move was closely linked to the activities of the LMS in southern Africa. The LMS and its missionaries were very conscious of the connection between Christianity and empire building. They performed this role in a very patriotic style, displaying an overt pro-British sentiment. They regarded the role of the British Government in Southern Africa to be a divine appointment, in contrast to the Transvaal Boers, who were supposedly not guided by any Christian principles in their dealings with the Batswana.

Khama, in an agreeable tone to this judgement, held that the Boers inference to Christianity was incompatible with their belligerent mood on the Batswana. He regarded the role of the British as comparatively Christian. Referring to his own Christian morality, Khama challenged the Boer with deceitfulness and treacherous conduct:

... you call yourselves Christians, and I also am a Christian, a member of a Christian Church. I am doing all that lies in my power to lead my people to give up their old and sinful customs ... to serve the living God and His son Jesus Christ, who I believe died for white and black ... My missionaries have never taught me, and God's book does not teach me, that a man may write anything he likes today and do any other thing he likes tomorrow.²²

The BaNgwato leadership, with the help of the LMS missionaries, formally petitioned for the status of the protectorate in 1876. The British Government only responded in 1885, considering or protecting their own political interests. The British feared that the Germans would extend their colonial boundaries from the western part of Southern Africa northwards and then interfere with British interests of expanding into central Africa.

19. A Sillery (1954), Sechele, p. 44.

20. Comaroff, J, & Comaroff, TJ, (1986), pp. 4-6.

21. BDC to Frere, 25 January 1879, SOAS B41 in JM Chirenje, (1977), p. 152.

22. Holub, I: pp. 36 - 37.

Sir Charles Warren, the general who led a British delegation to declare Bechuanaland as a protectorate and to manage its political structural adjustments, was accompanied by John Mackenzie. The latter had formerly worked amongst the BaNgwato for almost fifteen years as a missionary but resigned his LMS post to join the colonial Government in 1884. Khama was aware that this sudden response of the British Government was for its own interests; he welcomed the alliance with them but remained determined to rule his own people:

I have heard, and I accept of (receive) the friendship and protection of Government of England within Bamangwato country ... Nevertheless, I am not baffled in the government of my own town, or in deciding cases among my own people according to custom; ... I have to say that there are certain laws of my country which the Queen ... finds in operation and which are advantageous for my people, and I wish that these laws should be established and not taken away ... the lands of the Bamangwato are not saleable.²³

These words openly rejected any form of imposition of European customs, laws and political structures. In 1876 for instance, John MacKenzie, wrote saying:

Kgama recently proclaimed that the presence of Europeans had not altered the [Ngwato] law as to land and houses: that the ground was unalienable; that no house could be bought or sold; but might be used by its occupant in the transaction of business, or as a residence, so long as he observed the laws of the country.²⁴

Writing about Khama's reforms Mrs Knight - Bruce also told the *Times* in 1893 that:

He [Khama] is a radical reformer who yet develops both himself and his people on the natural lines; he has made himself into a character that can be spoken of as a 'perfect English gentleman', but without losing for a moment his self-respect as an African; he has kept his position as a disciple, not a mimic, of white civilization and he has shown how such a man can raise a nation. He has done it all as he would tell us, because he is a Christian.²⁵

The LMS missionaries were very happy to play this political role because they saw the presence of the British Government in Southern Africa as a divine appointment. They hoped that this would create a conducive environment for the spread of Christianity in the region. The missionaries also feared that African nationalistic tendencies would promote some resistance to Christianity and European missionaries. Further LMS missionaries were patriotic and opposed to the emergence of another European imperial power, since the latter would most likely promote the interests of their own missionary society at the expense of the LMS. A close connection with their home Government was therefore seen as the best political arrangement for their operations in Africa. In 1884 for instance, the *Chronicle* of the LMS stated: '[The Directors] yield[ed] to what seem[ed] to be a providential indication of the will of God in the services of Mackenzie and allowed him to join the new administration.'²⁶ They hoped that Mackenzie would influence Government officials to support the LMS work in Bechuanaland. The LMS Directors, for instance, further wrote to Mackenzie:

That through the development of a just and humane policy on the part of British Government ... there may be inaugurated a future for the Bechuana people, by which the first beginnings of civilization and the early lessons of the Gospel may be carried out in abundant prosperity.²⁷

23. J MacKenzie, (1884), *Austral Africa: Losing it or Ruling it*, Vol.1, pp. 79, 262-4.

24. J MacKenzie to LMS., August 18, 1876, SOAS: B38 F1 JC.

25. *The Times*, 'Khama' September 21, 1893, p. 3.

26. *The Chronicle of the London Missionary Society*, March 10, 1884, pp. 19-120.

27. WD MacKenzie, (1902), *John MacKenzie: South African Missionary and Statesman*, p. 306.

Some members of the BDC such as Moffat and Williams Ashton who especially held apolitical views were against Mackenzie's political appointment. They argued that the colonial officials had a hidden agenda: to use the missionaries as instruments for their political interests. As part of an attempt to resist such an arrangement Ashton wrote to the LMS: 'I think both the missionary position and influence of both Mr Mackenzie and all of the rest of us would suffer by his accepting office.'²⁸ The Batswana were generally critical of such a connection between the missionaries and the British political interests. AJ Wookey, another LMS missionary among the Tswana at Taung in the 1870s wrote to the Directors: 'I have been told again and again that we are deceivers and only trying as agents of the government to get the country.'²⁹ Khama disagreed with the missionaries on various issues, especially the drinking of liquor sometimes. He felt that traders were exploiting his people, and that it was an economic liability for it encouraged laziness and led to a decline in agricultural productivity. He also noted that it encouraged Europeans to violate his political and religious laws, thus subverting his authority. Thus in 1876 he addressed a group of dissident white traders, saying:

You think you can despise my laws because I am a black man. Well, I am black, but I am chief of my country. When you white men rule the country, then you may do what you like; at present I rule, and I shall maintain the laws you insult and despise. ... I am trying to lead ... according to the Word, which we received from you white people and you have shown us an example of wickedness. You know that some of my brothers have learned to like drink, and you tempt them with it, I make an end of it today. Go! take your cattle, leave my town and never come back.³⁰

The traders had refused to observe Khama's laws against liquor trade and drinking because they believed that as Europeans they were above it.

Unlike the pre - colonial era when power was in place, the missionaries tended not to observe kingly power and Ngwato laws. Their views of the kingly power also changed drastically. They now preferred to rely on British officials for political protection and support in their mission work. While the missionary enterprise must be seen as falling into a special category of its own, it must be noted that the missionaries at times served as a pressure group, whose aim was to draw the BaNgwato into the orbit of British colonial rule. At other times, however, the missionaries held an anti - imperial view, such that their presence was a great discomfort to the colonial administrators especially in 1895.

4. The christianization of Ngwato institutions

In 1889 great changes took place for Khama and his Ngwato people. Shoshong, which had been initially chosen for its strategic military location, had to be abandoned because of water shortages. They moved to Palapye, 160 kilometres northeast of Shoshong. At this new residence Hepburn and the BaNgwato undertook to erect an enormous new church building. Unfortunately for Hepburn, a misunderstanding between him and Khama in 1890 and 1891 led to his expulsion as Khama's missionary. After the missionary had offended the dignity of the old king, he paid a brief visit early in 1892, and then left forever the work he had carried on for over twenty years with so much enthusiasm and devotion. The root of their misunderstanding was the fact that in Ngwato cultural thinking was that church and

28. W Ashton (Kudumane) to LMS, 1 September, 1879, SOAS: B41 also J MacKenzie, 25 September, 1879; 10 September 1885, SOAS: B41.

29. AJ Wookey, September 3, 1878, SOAS: B40.

30. *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society*, London, September, 1880, pp. 1215-9 also *Ibid*, (1895), pp. 147-8; *The Scottish Temperance*, Dec. 1880, p. 286.

state could not be separated. Hepburn however rejected this thinking. Khama regarded this as an attempt by the missionaries to impose foreign political ideas on the BaNgwato. Hepburn's view was that those who had become Christians were to be cut off from their cultural duties and to identify themselves with the

European colonial power. Thus Khama concluded that missionaries were friends and supporters of the colonial government. Since missionaries tried to alienate individuals from their traditional loyalties, the BaNgwato officials became very suspicious. This eventually exploded into the conflict between Hepburn and Khama's Government. Hepburn's brand of christianity seemed to erode the traditional loyalties of the people and thus break up the bogosi (kingship or kingly power) system. The native bogosi saw no incongruity in fusing political and religious matters under Khama's authority. For example, Khama sometimes ordered his regiment to cut logs or to make bricks for church buildings regardless of their personal preference in the matter.

Following this rupture, Wardlaw Thompson, the then foreign secretary and Roger Price, an LMS missionary amongst the Batlhaping, visited Palapye in 1892 to put matters straight. That such a visit was called for is portentous. It indicates that BaNgwato church had progressed towards self-government. Khama and his people insisted that they wanted a missionary of their own choice or none at all. They also defined the relation of the missionary to the King, and of the church to the State, from their own perspective, which the LMS found threatening. Upon Thompson's arrival a considerable number of church members assembled early at the Kgotla to meet him and Price. Thompson later described the proceedings of the meeting:

Then I dealt with the more serious question of principle, expressing as emphatically and distinctly as I could the opinion that the Christians were subjects of the State, bound like others by its laws and called to prove their Christian character by being the most loyal and obedient of all the people. At the same time I pointed out that there was another voice, the voice of conscience, which chief and the people alike must listen to, and another law, the law of God, which must be supreme. I dwelt upon the spiritual independence of the church in its worship and work, and pointed out that if a Christian chief was allowed, as chief, to interfere with the liberty of the church a bad chief might claim the right to do so also. I told them that we in England had in past times suffered much from the attempts of our rulers to interfere with our freedom, and that it was only after a long severe struggle that we obtained the recognition of our liberty. And I reminded them that times might come in the life of a man, or in the experience of the Christian community in Bechwanaland, when the law of God must be obeyed even though it might involve the penalty of disobedience to the law of the State.³¹

Although Khama expelled Hepburn, he found that some of his people were influenced by the missionary. They refused to give their loyalty to him. For instance, Thompson informs us that during their interview with the BaNgwato:

At once Raditladi, the chief's brother and a deacon of the church, responded to this that they were well aware that the church was not to be under the control of the State, and that if the chief, as chief, attempted to interfere with them in their Christian life and duty they would speedily let him know that he was interfering in matters beyond his province.³²

In 1896 Khama blamed John Moffat, a LMS missionary who became the Assistant

31. R Lovett, (18990, Vol.1, p. 640.

32. *Ibid*, pp. 640-1.

Commissioner at Palapye (1892 to 1896), for meddling in internal political matters and thus encouraging Khama's opponents to resist his authority. While Hepburn had challenged Khama for claiming authority over the church, Moffat was now aiding Khama's political opponents, who consulted him because of his ecclesiastical status as a former missionary and in his capacity as the senior colonial authority at Palapye. Khama subsequently got rid of him especially for conducting secret prayer meetings at his magistrate's house at the end of 1894. To start with Khama had opposed Moffat's appointment to Palapye, together with his duties: to levy taxes, issue trading licences and hold courts etc. Khama objected since this undermined his kingly position, but the Cape Government simply imposed the office on the BaNgwato.³³

5. Summary, conclusion, and evaluation

Some missionaries zealously supported the establishment of the Bechuanaland Protectorate and later on, the colonial administration. Taking this fact into consideration, as well as their patriotic tendency of leaning towards British imperial interests, it is evident that they paved the way for British imperialism. Their view of empire however at times differed from that of other colonialists. They supported the colonization of Bechuanaland and expected the policies of the colonial Government to promote their missionary enterprise in return.

The paper also established that the LMS missionary approach sometimes differed in space and time. Some missionaries of this society, especially in their early missionary years, vigorously opposed the idea of handing over Bechuanaland to the BSAC in 1895 but strangely got obsessed with the incorporation of that Tswana territory into South Africa in the early twentieth century.

This study of the political activities of the LMS missionaries during the period 1857-1923 illustrates the complex church-state relationship in one colonial setting. It was a problematic relationship for the LMS. For example, John MacKenzie's appointment as the first Deputy Commissioner of the British Protectorate and his role in accompanying the first colonial representative to Bechuanaland, led to objection from other missionaries. On the other hand, this came to symbolise the attitude of the LMS toward the creation of the Protectorate. In allowing Mackenzie to be appointed to this office they were expressing their willingness to be partners in extending the interests of their government in Bechuanaland. They saw a connection between colonial expansion and Christian progress. A key to understanding the missionaries' attitudes is their expectations that advances in colonialism would benefit their missionary efforts. Some missionaries, however, hoped that through their engagement in political activities they would be in a good position to oppose those schemes which were detrimental to BaNgwato interests, but in the process they found themselves coopted by the colonial state. Most of the time the LMS tried to maintain a good relationship with the colonial state in order to gain certain privileges. Before the colonial period for instance the LMS had successfully monopolised the BaNgwato field as its own with the help of Khama.

In conclusion, therefore, evidence suggests that LMS missionaries who co-operated with the colonial administrators did so for the purpose of furthering their own religious interests.

33. QN Parsons, (1972), *Khama's Word*, p. 20.

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