

Chapter 9: Conclusion to Part 1

9.1 Summary of a History

‘eNkumane’ and ‘Groot Hoek’ have been described in the previous chapters as two separate but overlapping entities. The name eNkumane refers to the southwestern part of the eMbo area that stretches in an easterly direction between the rivers uMlazi and uMkhomazi into the eMlazi ‘township’ in the Durban Metropolis. Although eNkumane falls under the eMbo Vumukwenza Tribal Authority, this part of the eMbo area was situated just west of the location Umlazi. Around 1850, the Government started to survey the eNkumane area and issued it as a farmland. At that time, most of eNkumane, except for a few isolated homesteads, was in use as a hunting area by people, who had fled KwaZulu on the banks of the uThukela River during the 1830's. Some of them had rebuilt their homesteads along the uMkhomazi River, on its northern banks, others had moved about five kilometres in a northerly direction, about six hundred metres above the level of the river.

In 1851, most of the eNkumane area was divided by the Government into two parts to be used as commercial farms. Its western part was renamed ‘Spitzkop’, its eastern part ‘Groot Hoek’. Initially, a small piece of land east of Groot Hoek was left un-surveyed. Apparently, the Government foresaw that, because the density of homesteads downstream increased, Groot Hoek would be the most eastern commercial farm along the east-flowing uMkhomazi River. Being very inaccessible except by foot, bordering a living area on its eastern boundary and only partly suitable as farmland, Groot Hoek was merely a financial investment for most of its successive owners. For a long time, the local population was unaware of the fact that their land was being sold and resold as a private property until the Land Act of 1913 made it easier for commercial farmers to control the local population on their farms. The Act made it more attractive to farm close to ‘native locations’ and as a result, Groot Hoek started to be used as a farm during the 1920's. The Act also facilitated the creation of Trust Farms, ‘native’ areas outside the assigned locations, that were put under direct control of the Government. Most of the area between Groot Hoek (farm) and Umlazi (location) was surveyed as the Natal Trust Farm Mqolombene.

During the 1920's, the use of Groot Hoek as a farm triggered the influx of labour tenants who were given the right to settle on the farm in exchange for about six months of their labour a year. Most of these labour tenant had a history of being turned away from other commercial farms. After the death of the Groot Hoek farmer in 1927, tenant farmers were encouraged to rent part of the farm. In 1940, after the introduction of the Land Act of 1936, which facilitated the creation of national Government Trust Farms, the Government bought Groot Hoek and joined it with the Natal Trust Farm Mqolombene, to form the Government Trust Farm Groothoek. The initial aim of the government might have been to create a new area for subsistence farming to release the population pressure on the neighbouring ‘native location’. However, most families which entered Groothoek were the families of migrant labourers working in cities such as Durban or Johannesburg. They had no place to which to return and were just looking for a living area. During the 1960's, the influx of people into Groothoek accelerated as a result of the implementation of the Group Areas Act of 1950, aimed at the segregation of different ‘ethnic groups’ in South Africa. The Act resulted in the transfer of the Government Trust Farm

Groothoek into the KwaZulu Homeland and the collapse of the system of labour tenant system on neighbouring commercial farms. Many families had to leave these farms and find refuge in areas such as eNkumane.

Socio-geographically speaking, by the end of the 20th century, the population of the former farm Groot Hoek consisted of four different strata. In the first place, there were the families which had arrived as migrants from KwaZulu during the 1830's, for example, the Mkhize, the Ngcongco and the Mhlongo. In the second place, there were the families of the labour tenants who had arrived during the 1920's, for example, the Dlamini, the Kunene and the Phungula. In the third place, there were the families of the tenant farmers who arrived during the 1930's, for example, the Dladla, the Mzizi and the Sithole. Finally, there was an incoherent group of displaced labour tenants, who had entered the area during the 1960's and 1970's.

During the 1980's, when the Group Areas Act of 1950 was no longer implemented and finally withdrawn, many people left the Government Trust Farm Groothoek. Most of them settled in townships near Durban, for example in the eMlazi Township. The growing poverty in rural areas such as eNkumane, disappointment in local tribal authorities unable to provide relief and the departure of the most active and healthy part of the population, caused tensions which exploded around 1990 into the violence that ravaged many parts of the present KwaZulu-Natal. The violence left parts of eNkumane unpopulated, especially those parts that had only been populated since the 1920's.

After South Africa's first general democratic elections in 1994, the eNkumane area also entered a new period. The area was transformed into a private property held in trust by the Ngonyama Trust of which the Zulu King Goodwill Zwelethini is the only trust holder. In the year 2000, the area was also placed under the Richmond Municipality. Yet, without jobs other than in forestry and on neighbouring farms, a substantial part of the population is continually being drained away and absorbed by big cities such as Durban and Johannesburg. The inhabitants of eNkumane can take no bonds on their land, as it is not their own property. Although agriculture appears to present a limited option for people to become economically active, traditional farming methods prevail and no attempts are made to sell produce to the market. Developmental projects since 1994 include the improvement of the main road in the area and the assistance with small scale commercial projects, such as the manufacture of cement blocks and the planting of sugarcane. Most of the inhabitants of eNkumane therefore are financially dependent on Government grants or on family members working far away.

9.2 Reformed Mission under Question

So far, in Part 1 of this research, it has been shown that the population dynamics of the eNkumane area have constantly changed. Many people entered the area out of the need for a place to stay, for employment on surrounding farms or as a result of the Government Policy of Apartheid. Many left the area again as a result of the accelerated process of urbanization since the 1980's. During the 1960's, when the Reformed Mission was established in eNkumane, the area saw an influx of displaced families of labour tenants, many of them moving out again during the period of violence around 1990. As a result of the migrations, the eNkumane area has become part of fast social networks. For a church to be relevant in an area such as eNkumane, it must

explore the networks which are essential for its inhabitants' identities.¹ It has to be open to the opportunities offered by a community to be part of it. For a church to be missionary it should be involved and actively participate in the margins of the community's networks. However, a community, especially a poor one, expects a church to establish itself in the area and deliver. Consequently, the church runs the risk of standing in an isolated position, depending on support from outside the area and struggling to become part of the community networks. To use a metaphor, a missionary project can effectively only be successful, when it resembles a two-way bridge and not simply a pipeline.²

In Part 2 of this research, it will be argued that many people who moved into eNkumane and came in contact with the Reformed Mission, already had well-founded expectations about what the Reformed Mission could offer them on the basis of their experiences with missionary projects in the surrounding areas. It might be assumed that on the basis of previous experiences with other missionary projects these transient families were more willing, or may even have actively sought, to make contact with the Reformed Mission Enkumane.³ Three of the missionary projects in the areas around eNkumane will be discussed in the following chapters: the Methodist Indaleni Mission (chapter 11), the Anglican Springvale Mission (chapter 12) and the Roman Catholic St Bernard Mission (chapter 13). The missionary work in these three Mission Stations set a context for expectations about the Reformed Mission Enkumane.

The description of the area and its history, in Part 1, raises questions about the Reformed Mission Enkumane to be answered in the following chapters. For example, how did the different population groups in eNkumane react to and interact with the Reformed Mission? How did the Mission deal with the population dynamics? Part 2 will deal with general questions about missionary projects by describing three missionary projects in the areas surrounding eNkumane. In Part 3, the specific case of the Reformed Mission Enkumane will be described. It will deal with the specific character of the Reformed Mission and its place in the history of eNkumane. Part 4 will deal with its prospects.

¹ According to Mission & Public Affairs Council (2004, p.70) "explore has five key values: community, communication, commitment, caring and celebrating."

² According to Mission & Public Affairs Council (2004, p.122), "Protective 'sending' churches need to discover how to give away control and power and celebrate the independence and interdependence of the new church."

³ An example of the openness for Christian churches among transient families is found in the Mkhize families. In general in the eNkumane area, the openness in many Mkhize families for churches is found to be limited. A significant exception is found among the descendants of Nsele Mkhize (par.4.5), who almost from the start became migrant labour tenants moving from eNgilanyoni to commercial farms on the southern side of the uMkhomazi River and scattered over a wide area. Independent from each other, several descendants of Nsele became members in an European Initiated Church or an African Initiated Church, among them: Ndabesabelungu (Zionist), Magayisa Ezekiya (Reformed), Dumezweni (for a few years) and his son Zenzele (Reformed), the family of Kwenzakwakhe (Reformed), Jakobe and his son Simone (Methodist), Mncane and his brother John and their families (Reformed).