

## MISSIONS AND AFRICAN CHRISTIANITY IN THE HISTORY OF THE EASTERN CAPE

By

Natasha Erlank

Historical Studies, RAU

### Abstract

As many researchers have already documented, Christianity has played a pivotal role in shaping both the history of the Eastern Cape since the early 1800s, as well as the history of South Africa more broadly. Generally speaking, these studies have documented either the effects of mission-style Christianity and missionaries on African societies<sup>1</sup>, or have considered the way in which African Christians have cleaved to Christianity and made it their own.<sup>2</sup> From a somewhat different direction, theologians and historians of Christianity have focused on the way in which local belief systems articulated with Christianity to provide potential converts to Christianity with new ways of thinking about their worlds. But most of this literature – certainly the more recent material - relates to the nineteenth century. Christianity as a factor influencing people's lives and identities does not have the same status in more contemporary research on the Eastern Cape, Bob Edgar and Hilary Sapire's excellent recent work on the Prophet Nontetha Nkwenkwe notwithstanding.<sup>3</sup> Although African Christianity remains prominent in the history of the Eastern Cape, its presence is often mediated through biographical and semi-biographical work, most of whose subjects had connections to the African middle class and African nationalism and were practising Christians.<sup>4</sup> It is my intention in this paper to outline the historiography on African Christianity in the Eastern Cape for the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries, as well as to suggest some fruitful avenues of further research, based on working with archival material located in the Eastern Cape and Johannesburg. In particular I shall be looking at the way in which black residents of the Eastern Cape used their religious affiliation to negotiate some of the difficulties contingent on living in a rapidly modernising – although not necessarily in any western sense - society.

During the 1990s one of the one exciting and stimulating trends within African history lay in work which revisited the impact of missions and Christianity on African societies. The impetus for this trend was the publication of Jean and John Comaroff's path breaking volume on mission encounters amongst the Sotho-Tswana.<sup>5</sup> However, the last few years have seen a tapering off of interest in this field for a number of reasons, including the filling of this historiographical gap. In addition, as research moved from the nineteenth to the twentieth century and from the colonial to the post-colonial moment, its focus moved from missions to African Christianity, a subject requiring a very different intellectual lens. The subject, though is by no means exhausted and in this paper I want to suggest some new ways for looking at Christianity in the history of South Africa, using the Eastern Cape as my area of study.

Perhaps one of the factors concerning little recent scholarship lies in an historical inability to conceptualise faith. Many historians of South Africa remain wary of religion, not sure how to deal with spiritual matters at a secular level. In particular, historians are reluctant or unable (because of the difficulty of researching the subject) to grapple with the issue of African initiated churches and their widespread adherence, leaving this work to scholars based in religious studies or theological departments. Religious scholars have always made more of an attempt to integrate the work of historians, but have often done so naively. The net effect of this is that both religious scholars and historians haven't paid as much attention as they might to religion as everyday discourse. What I want to suggest in this paper are some ways of doing this, working from the idea that, while faith itself remains conceptually outside the capacity of historical research, the effects of faith do not. It is possible, therefore, to study the consequences of Christianity.<sup>6</sup>

### **Part 1: The Historiography of the Nineteenth Century**

The historiography of missions in South Africa, much of which relates to the Eastern Cape, is fairly well known.<sup>7</sup> The first mission histories, dating from the late nineteenth century, were adulatory, written by missionaries themselves or historians sympathetic to the missionary cause.<sup>8</sup> This sort of writing is often referred to as pious hagiography.<sup>9</sup> Much of the writing on South African missions during this period was published at Lovedale Institution.<sup>10</sup>

During the early twentieth century mission writing moved away from surveys of missions and the memoirs of individual missionaries to work by historians and anthropologists, many of whom had links to mission societies or stations.<sup>11</sup> Donovan William's work on the Eastern Cape, including his comprehensive and comparative studies of mission in the areas is the quintessential example of this.<sup>12</sup> William's work, though, is less than critical of the missionaries, while he himself had an often sometimes problematic relationship with students at Fort Hare, because of his conservative views. In a similar vein,

A.E. du Toit's study of relations on the Cape Frontier during the nineteenth century is archivally rich and historically extensive but inclined to view colonialism as a benefit to the frontier.<sup>13</sup>

### **Figure 1: List of Publications from Lovedale**

At the same time that du Toit and Williams were engaged in their work, the work of missions began to be viewed more critically.<sup>14</sup> Historians and other Africanists began to study missions and their relation to the wider historical context, rather than as discrete settings for the meeting of European and African cultures. This move heralded the problematisation of missionary endeavour from the African perspective and introduced the idea that missionaries were agents of colonialism, promoting and propagating the rule of colonial states to the detriment of the people whom they were trying to convert.<sup>15</sup>

the full extent of the political role of the missionaries in the subjugation of the Bantu tribes becomes apparent during the twenties, thirties and forties of the nineteenth century.

It is not enough to say that they acted as peaceful forerunners paving the way for the governor and the military. They participated in a very positive sense in conquest.<sup>16</sup>

This role continued to be a feature of mission historical writing by both mainstream and church historians until the present, receiving gradual refinement along the way. By their very inefficiency (in some cases their well-meaning paternalism) they promoted the colonial cause. According to James Cochrane, the integrity, character and genuine charity of the missionaries is irrelevant since they could not avoid their status as agents of capitalism.<sup>17</sup>

During the late 1960s and 1970s liberation theology also contributed to the way in which missions and the established churches were written about. Its academic impact led many Christian academics to reanalyse the role of the churches and their complicity in the historical foundations of apartheid.<sup>18</sup> As a result prominent theologians and church historians working in South Africa during this period also began to write of missionaries as colonial agents. This period also saw the writing of the first histories of black independent churches.<sup>19</sup> During the 1960s and 1970s liberal and radical Africanists also began focusing on missions through their focus on political economy in South African history.<sup>20</sup>

Inasmuch as a body of literature on missions existed, the creation of an African national elite and missionaries as colonial agents remained prominent as themes until the late 1980s.<sup>21</sup> At this point, scholars began to examine the anthropology of missions, the intersection of missionary and local culture systems, the development of indigenous Christianity among early converts and so on.<sup>22</sup> "A new generation of critical scholars concerned primarily with culture as a material system effectively transformed the historical agenda of the 1970s and 1980s".<sup>23</sup> This was possible because of the growing importance of culture and ideology as explanatory factors for historical events.

Among the researchers influenced by the cultural turn in the humanities were John and Jean Comaroff. In volume one of *Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa* they announced their intention of doing a historical anthropology of missions in South Africa, concentrating on the ‘long conversation’ that took place between the Tswana and non-conformist missionaries. Terence Ranger has described this work as one “destined to become the classic treatment of nineteenth-century Southern African mission”.<sup>24</sup> The flurry of reviews, both negative and positive, it prompted reflect its impact on the recent upsurge of interest in mission history.<sup>25</sup>

One of the principal criticism of the Comaroffs has centred on the degree to which their research re-inscribes European hegemony in conditions of contact, through their emphasis on missionaries rather than Africans.<sup>26</sup> Valid or not, this critique was answered by a proliferation of work which introduced agency and African initiative to the African reception of missionaries.<sup>27</sup> Elizabeth Elbourne’s work on the Eastern Cape paid particular attention to the efforts of some of the first African converts, while her more recent work has looked at the role of religion in the Kat River Rebellion.<sup>28</sup> Elbourne’s research echoes, though with more emphasis on cultures of contact, that of Janet Hodgson, whose own work examined the origins and nature of early indigenous Christianity in the Eastern Cape.<sup>29</sup>

## **Figure 2: Missions and Christianity in the Eastern Cape – Work from the 1990s**

In the mid- to late 1990s the publication of two edited volumes on the history of Christianity and missions in South Africa marked the recognition of the importance of these two fields. Of the two, the most important and the one more concerned with developments in the Eastern Cape was Henry Bredekamp and Robert Ross’s *Missions and Christianity in South African History*. The volume was based on a 1992 conference at the University of the Western Cape, which looked at issues around early African Christianity and missions in the history of South Africa.<sup>30</sup> It includes several on the missions and Christianity in the history of the Eastern Cape, as well as a very able historiographical introduction.<sup>31</sup>

While the volume by Bredekamp and Ross concerned itself primarily with the nineteenth century, Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport’s *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social & Cultural History* discusses the history of missions and Christianity via regional and thematic chapters dealing with the role of missionaries amongst different African communities, the contribution of the mainline churches to South African history and the growth of the AICs.<sup>32</sup> The Eastern Cape is covered in Janet Hodgson’s chapter on early Christianity in the region, as well as more peripherally in other chapters.

Since 1997 the production of work on the intersection of mission history with African society has continued. Some of this is to be found in John de Gruchy’s edited volume on the London Missionary

Society, including Robert Ross's piece on the pivotal role of conflict involving the Reads in the reconfiguration of the mission endeavour in South Africa.<sup>33</sup>

While the work mentioned above has paid attention to the intricate operation of colonial power and the varied nature of black/white relationships in the nineteenth century, attention to gender has been the concern of work that I, together with Julie Wells, have published. Indeed, this interest goes further to include attention to issues of sexuality which were so prominent in African and mission encounters, given the disjuncture between Xhosa understandings of sexuality and sexual rights and the missionary emphasis on monogamous heterosexuality.<sup>34</sup> The importance of examining the mission encounter in this way heralded in the 2001 special edition of *Le Fait Missionnaire* devoted to the subject of 'Sex and Mission' in which both Julie Wells and myself had papers on the Eastern Cape.

If the above discussion would seem to indicate that the subject of missions in the Eastern Cape has been comprehensively covered, that is not entirely the case. Patrick Harries' recent work on the power of literacy and the meaning of authority conferred through acquaintance with the Bible, for late-nineteenth century South-East Africa points to the importance of examining converts own strategies, not just to indigenise their churches, but also to take control of the word of God.<sup>35</sup> Given the intense importance of Lovedale Press in the production of an African literate culture (starting from the nineteenth century) this is a subject that needs much further research. To my knowledge very little work has been done on the vernacular archive that is part of the Lovedale Collection at the Cory Library in Grahamstown. Some of the issues around literacy and power were picked up by Leon de Kock in his account of the textual battles between African converts and missionaries during the nineteenth century, but I think more could be done.<sup>36</sup>

Another interesting field of research – and here I am thinking of a recent special edition of the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* – lies in an examination of mission photography.<sup>37</sup> As a recent volume on the construction of colonial imaginations through images has indicated, the creation of ordered landscapes through the genre of photography was central to the mission project.<sup>38</sup> Both the Lovedale Collection and the School of Oriental and African Studies have rich holdings of mission photography for the Eastern Cape.

## **Part 2: African Christianity in the Twentieth Century**

In what follows, rather than provide a comprehensive overview of the literature on Christianity in the Eastern Cape in the twentieth century, I shall rather focus on some of the issues the historical literature does not cover.

### Figure 3: Bibliographic Extract: 20<sup>th</sup> century work on Christianity and the Eastern Cape

Historical literature on missions in both South Africa and the Eastern Cape in the twentieth century (apart from the contemporary work emanating from Lovedale) is somewhat sparse. It neither matches the volume of literature on the nineteenth century, nor does it compare to twentieth century work on the rest of Africa.<sup>39</sup> Part of the explanation for this lies in the way in which the era of mission endeavour in South Africa ends with the nineteenth century. North of the Limpopo, and for parts of East Africa for example, the later date of colonial penetration tends to correspond (though not entirely) with the entry of European missionaries into these areas. For this reason, there is a greater amount of work on missions more specifically for these areas than for South Africa although, as Brian Stanley put it at a recent conference on 'Missions, Nationalism and the End of Empire, 'Christian missions in the twentieth century, despite their greatly extended geographical scope and numerical weight in comparison with the nineteenth century, have to date received only a fraction of the scholarly attention that has been lavished on the Victorian mission enterprise.'<sup>40</sup> A more noteworthy development for twentieth century South Africa lies in the development of indigenous Christianity and, as a result, work on the twentieth century focuses on the mainstream and African indigenous churches. However, most of this is work by theologians and scholars of religious studies rather than historians. While rich and valuable, the faith-based imperatives of some of this work mean that it does not always ask the kinds of questions historians would ask.

Historians, by contrast, have remained nervous of religion. Instead, for many historians the central historical questions of the long twentieth century, beginning with the mineral revolutions, have turned on issues of class and race. The metanarrative of much South African history has been the struggle for freedom from either class or racial oppression. As a result, for many historians attention to the issue of Christianity or faith has been in a 'so what has Christianity contributed (or not contributed) to the struggle' kind of way. This approach obscures as much as it reveals.

Every scholar of South African history of the twentieth century knows that Christianity was one of the most important influences on the development of early African nationalism. Andre Odendaal states this quite unequivocally in his seminal study of the rise of African nationalism, *Vukani Bantu*:

The political awareness of this new class was shaped by three main factors: the influence of Christian missions ... Of these factors the missionary stimulus was undoubtedly the strongest ... The members of the new educated class of Africans which emerged in consequence of these developments soon became aware of the overall discrepancy between Christian doctrine and western political ideals on one hand and the realities of white conquest on the other.<sup>41</sup>

This view is repeated in a variety of other standard texts on the twentieth century history of South Africa, particularly those dealing with the origins of protest politics.

There are, however, problems with this mantra as Jim Campbell and others indicate.<sup>42</sup> He picks up on the subject of the influence of Ethiopianism - in this case the AME - on African nationalism: "Nationalist historians elaborated the interpretation in the 1950s and 1960s, firmly locating the AME Church in a teleology which reached its fulfilment in the formation of the South African Native National Congress [the original name of the ANC] in 1912".<sup>43</sup> However, according to Campbell "the equation of Ethiopianism and African nationalism conceals as much as it reveals".<sup>44</sup> His contention, quite rightly so, is that Ethiopianism went further and took in a broader constituency than that catered to by early African nationalism.

Campbell's work is important because it is one of the few within the discipline of history rather than religious studies to breakaway from the self-referential relationship normally posed between the two factors. Scholars of religious movements in South Africa have paid attention to these connections, but the lack of rapprochement that has traditionally existed between the two fields has restricted the dissemination of this idea.<sup>45</sup> Biographies of African nationalist leaders cover this issue but often in unsatisfactory detail for people for whom their Christian belief was supposed to be such an issue.<sup>46</sup> Two recent biographies by Catherine Higgs on D. D. T. Jabavu and Willem Saayman on Z. K. Matthews manage much more successfully to integrate belief and political consciousness, but these are exceptions which discuss the work of less 'national' political figures.<sup>47</sup> Richard Elphick's work on Christianity and African nationalism also escapes some of the instrumentality of the work referred to above.<sup>48</sup> While not specifically located in the Eastern Cape, Elphick pays both attention to missionaries and the different ways in which Christianity fed into twentieth century social consciousness. In particular, I think his ideas around social Christianity could be applied to good effect to the Christian social and philanthropic networks built up in South African in the early twentieth century, many of them located in the Eastern Cape.<sup>49</sup>

However, not all historians have viewed Christianity only as a way to understanding the development of African nationalism. Ironically here I want to refer to some work which takes us back almost two decades and locates us firmly in the Eastern Cape. In 1986 Terence Ranger performed an exercise somewhat similar in intent (though much more extensive in size and scope) to mine.<sup>50</sup> In his focus on religious movements in the twentieth century he commented upon the need to take them more seriously at a number of levels, focusing on the need to understand religious idioms and practices as powerful forms of everyday consciousness, permeating people's negotiations of their lives across a range of contexts. He held up the then forthcoming volume by William Beinart and Colin Bundy on rural consciousness in the Transkei as an exemplar of this kind of approach.<sup>51</sup> While Beinart and Bundy's volume concerned itself more with examining the different facets of popular consciousness it nevertheless took serious account of

the way in which religious belief played a role in constructing the different types of identities on which people drew to motivate popular struggles.<sup>52</sup> However, despite this auspicious start and Ranger's suggestions, few authors since have cared to delve into the implications of religious consciousness in the construction of identity. Perhaps one of the reasons for this lies in the way in which the urban, particularly in the context of the late 1980s and early 1990s, displaced the rural as a site of focus in the South African consciousness.

### **Part 3: New Avenues of Research: Christianity and Identity**

This particular section of the paper will of necessity be quite brief because it outlines work in progress. In part it is influenced by some recent work on Indian and other nationalisms, drawing links between religion, gender and nationalism.<sup>53</sup> I am also thinking here of Talal Asad's point that religion is always central to the formation of national identities.<sup>54</sup> At this point I am principally concerned to examine new ways of thinking about the role of faith, as well as the critical public space religion provided in the formation of masculine identity and the imagining of citizenship.

One of the requirements of this approach is an uncoupling of modernity and secularity in theoretical train on which studies of this nature ride. Nationalism – for many perceived to be the religion of modernity – is all too often viewed as requiring the abandonment of faith. In South Africa this takes a particular inflection, where modernity and tradition segue into variants of Christianity and custom respectively. This prevents the possibility of investigating the role of religion in the creation of modern identities, where modernity and secularity (nor modernity and westernization) are not assumed to be contingent upon one another and where the possibility of the co-existence of different national identities is allowed for.<sup>55</sup> This vantage point allows the unpacking of some of the currents and influences involved in processes of identity formation for Christian men in the Eastern Cape in the early twentieth century.<sup>56</sup>

A standard narrative of Eastern Cape history for this time period goes something like this. Towards the end of the nineteenth century some African men converted to Christianity and became educated in the western mould in mission schools. These men embraced modernity, moving away from older, more traditional practices and allegiances, including religious beliefs and superstitions. These men became the first generation of African nationalists in South Africa, advocating cross-ethnic alliances in the fashioning of an anti-state politics.<sup>57</sup> This group would have included men like D.D.T Jabavu, but also the host of African teachers who staffed missions schools during this period.

Such a modernist narrative has little space for the idea that allegiances to pre-colonial beliefs and practices were anything but regressions or, alternatively, instrumental uses of the past to further present aims. Here I am referring to the status of custom, particularly lobola and polygamy, in the creation of an early-twentieth century Christian and national identity. The place of custom in modern identity, however,

was not a throwback to the past and rather a deeply significant part of a newly modern identity – an identity which saw no incongruity between Christianity, custom and modernity, or alternatively no disjuncture between the sacred and the secular. In fact, the negotiation of faith was a field of disciplinary practice quintessential to the production of the modern, African subject, in the sense that none of the identities which were produced in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century can be understood apart from their negotiation of Christianity and custom.<sup>58</sup>

These are tentative thoughts, based on work which I have been doing on Christian communities of different sorts in the Eastern Cape in the 1920s and 1930s, for instance, the various institutions and committees attached to the mainstream and their African affiliated churches which had principally African membership. In the Minutes of the Teachers' and Preachers' Meetings of the Diocese of St John's, St Mark's Mission, the first meeting of 1920 included a discussion of African Christian marriage.<sup>59</sup> Apart from Bishop Callaway, all the participants were the African preachers and lay elders. After considerable discussion the meeting eventually agreed to the formulation of eight rules for application to African weddings. Except for the last, which concerned the taking of communion, all the rules contained the implicit acceptance of the idea that such a thing as an African Christian marriage, markedly different to a European Christian marriage, could and did exist.

### **Figure 3: The Rules of Marriage**

This was not the only meeting at which the issue of Christian marriage was raised. It was raised throughout 1920, again in 1921, 1924, 1926 and at regular intervals until the start of the Second World War.<sup>60</sup> Not all the discussion was identical, but it does indicate a very serious interest in the form and sacrament of marriage. Moreover, the discussion was clearly not all issuing forth on the direction of the bishop, but was emanating from the preachers themselves. Not only that, but on a few occasions the meeting took it upon itself to reprimand its own members for not observing either the eight rules of marriage or Bishop Key's widely circulated pamphlet *Umtshato Ongcwele*.

### **Figure 4: *Umtshato Ongcwele***

In 1921 Callaway asked the local preachers about a report that he had heard of mother's preventing their daughters from attending communion on account of their daughters' menstruation.<sup>61</sup> According to the preachers themselves, it was the first time that they had heard of such a thing. Now, it is entirely possible that such a thing was happening, given the status of taboos around menstrual blood in Xhosa society. However, since this was a women's matter, it is also possible that the male preachers would not have known of such a thing. Callaway might either have gained the information first hand or through one of the mission's female adjuncts. This discussion, though, was entirely incongruous for a group of white

and black men. Concern about ritual impurity had been normalised to the extent that it had become a legitimate subject of enquiry for a local church community.

However, I do not at this point want to get into a discussion about which elements of either this or the diocese's rules about marriage were Christian and which were African, because such questions can tend to create too much of an opposition between modern religion and traditional practice, if not properly contextualised. My argument is similar to that religious scholars have made about the inadequacy of terms like syncretism, where syncretism marginalises the importance of practices like circumcision.<sup>62</sup> What is so intriguing is that this kind of discussion should be taking place in the preachers' meeting. After a century of mission work in the Eastern Cape and despite all their best efforts the missionaries had made about zero headway with the idea that a Christian lifestyle included the complete abandonment of all African practices. Moreover, it was quite accepted that ministering to local converts depended on the acceptance of a number of practices which the white missionaries still, to a large extent, considered unacceptable. The insertion of such concerns into both the diocesan meeting agendas and the agenda of the diffusion of Christianity more broadly had to have come from local converts.

Furthermore, local converts were not hanging on to older customs and practices just for the sake of tradition, but rather were making very strategic interventions into the content and form of local Christianity in order to push ahead their own agendas. Preachers themselves manoeuvred to ensure that only certain customs and practices became legitimate elements of local faith, while others were jettisoned as not being customary. In 1935 the preachers' meeting discussed the subject of 'fallen girls and white wedding dresses'.<sup>63</sup> At the end of it those present had decided that girls who gave birth while still unmarried could not subsequently marry in white, but that girls who had fallen into sin and repented could marry in white. It is interesting though, those girls who married their metsha partners were allowed to repent and marry in white. The minutes, therefore, included acceptance of the prevalence of ukumetsha, but placed no restrictions on the men who make women pregnant.

Given that comments about bad town girls, and the need to assert control over them, proliferated in the minutes, it is apparent that African men were utilising a strategic deployment of custom to augment their status as African Christian men, while downplaying others – like fines on men who made women pregnant – which did not.<sup>64</sup> The space Christianity provided for a discussion of custom to fashion new identities was therefore central to a reconfiguration of gender power relations. The idiom of custom – something suited to the discursive field of the sacred rather than the secular – provided a language through which to assert and declare a more modern male identity. It would be a mistake, though, to view these interleavings of practice as only opportunistic, or geared to material needs. In some cases the focus on custom represented conscious attempts to create space for African belief within a more modern identity. It is possible to see this elsewhere, particularly for instance in discussions of circumcision.

Many African Christian men in the first part of the twentieth century were eager, for instance, to see circumcision emerge as a Christian rite of passage.<sup>65</sup>

Elsewhere, it possible to see more direct efforts to Africanise Christianity, although not in any simple way. In 1917, Tiyo Burnside Soga wrote a history of the Xhosa entitled *Intlalo xa Xosa* (the old orthography), which the Lovedale Press eventually published in the vernacular. In his original version (I'm using a translation of it) he wrote the following. "The mode of life is governed by laws. Xosa's laws were many & very good although there were some dreadful ones. The strange thing about them was that they resembled the Ten Commandments of the Almighty which you can read in the Bible".<sup>66</sup> Soga then went on to write about how the Xhosa had recognised adultery in the past. However, when it came to the subject of European perceptions of the link between lazy Xhosa men and polygamy, this is what he had to write. "Has the Xosa any right to blame the Europeans for not being polygamists and thus decrease the number of Government's people? No!".<sup>67</sup> For a man convinced of the evil of adultery this was an interesting view. Further on in the same piece Soga wrote of the how the coming of white ministers brought light to the Xhosa, then still in darkness.<sup>68</sup> However, this was also not an uncritical acceptance of all things European, since the same section contained an attack on those who abandoned speaking and writing in Xhosa and attempted to become black white men.<sup>69</sup> Soga's case, I hope, shows both the difficulty of seeing Africans as either traditionalists or modern Christians, or people for whom the espousal of custom and tradition was only a matter of expediency. Soga's faith – or at least the results of it – was not merely the tacking on of previous belief when convenient to a more modern faith. Rather, struggles around identity, often articulated as struggles for the maintenance of custom, were critical to the construction of African Christianity.

In the last few paragraphs I have tried to indicate some of the ways in which historians might fruitfully be able to interrogate Christianity in the Eastern Cape in ways which move beyond impact models. Rather than considering how faith either did or did not motivate certain responses to colonialism, a focus on the interrogation of Christianity in the construction of new identities can provide us with ways to understand some of the dynamics of Eastern Cape history at moments which were not directly related to conflict with the colonial state. More work for instance, on Christian associations and communities like the teachers' and parents' associations which proliferated around the mission schools and Fort Hare in the early part of the century, could contribute to this. While the records of many of these have disappeared, the potential for oral histories of such communities exists. Certainly, the CPSA records have ongoing potential in this area. Attention of this kind can only add to the history of the Eastern Cape, particularly for an era in which the standard works tend to be anthropological rather than historical.

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<sup>1</sup> Including but not limited to: D. Williams, 'Social and Economic Aspects of Christian Missions in Caffraria 1816-1854 - Part 1', *Historia*, 30 (1985), pp.33-48; D. Williams, 'Social and Economic Aspects of Christian Missions in Caffraria 1816-1854 - Part 2', *Historia*, 31 (1986), pp.25-58.

<sup>2</sup> Including J. Hodgson, 'A Battle for Sacred Power: Christian Beginnings Among the Xhosa', in R. Elphick and R. Davenport (eds). *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social & Cultural History* (Cape Town, David Philip 1997); J. Hodgson, 'Soga and Dukwana: The Christian Struggle for Liberation in Mid 19th Century South Africa', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, XVI (1986), pp.187-208.

<sup>3</sup> R.R. Edgar and H. Sapire, *African Apocalypse: The Story of Nontetha Nkwenkwe, A Twentieth-Century South African Prophet*, (Athens, Ohio and Johannesburg, Ohio University Centre and University of the Witwatersrand Press 2000).

<sup>4</sup> C. Higgs, *The Ghost of Equality: The Public Lives of D. D. T. Jabavu of South Africa 1885-1959*, (Athens, Ohio, Ohio University Press 1997).

<sup>5</sup> J. Comaroff and J.L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, vol. One, (Chicago, Chicago University Press 1991).

<sup>6</sup> See Jacqueline de Vries, Review Article, forthcoming in *Feminist Review*, pers. comm.

<sup>7</sup> For recent reviews of South African mission historiography see J. Du Bruyn and N. Southey, 'The Treatment of Christianity and Protestant Missionaries in South African Historiography', in H. Bredenkamp and R. Ross (eds). *Missions and Christianity in South African History* (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press 1995); N. Etherington, 'Recent Trends in the Historiography of Christianity in Southern Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 22 (1996), pp.201-219. For a review of mission historiography in Africa more broadly see T.O. Ranger, 'New Approaches to the History of Mission Christianity', in T. Falola (ed.). *African Historiography: Essays in Honour of Jacob Ade Ajayi* (UK and Nigeria, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> For instance, J. Du Plessis, *A History of Christian Missions in South Africa*, (New York, 1911).

<sup>9</sup> G. Cuthbertson, 'Van der Kemp and Philip: The Missionary Debate Revisited', *Missionalia*, 17 (1989), pp.77-94; E. Elbourne, 'Concerning Missionaries: The Case of van der Kemp', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 17 (1991), pp.153-164.

<sup>10</sup> J. Peires, 'The Lovedale Press: Literature for the Bantu Revisited', *History in Africa*, 6 (1979), pp.155-175.

<sup>11</sup> For example, M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest: Effects of Contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa*, Second ed., (Cape Town, Oxford University Press 1961).

<sup>12</sup> D. Williams, 'The Missionaries on the Eastern Frontier of the Colony, 1799-1835' (Ph.D, University of the Witwatersrand, 1959); D. Williams, 'Social and Economic Aspects of Christian Missions in Caffraria 1816-1854 - Part 1', *Historia*, 30 (1985), pp.33-48; D. Williams, 'Social and Economic Aspects of Christian Missions in Caffraria 1816-1854 - Part 2', *Historia*, 31 (1986), pp.25-58.

<sup>13</sup> A.E. Du Toit, *The Cape Frontier: A Study of Native Policy with Special Reference to the Years 1847-1866*, (Cape Town, Government Printer 1954).

<sup>14</sup> N. Majeke, *The Role of Missionaries in Conquest*, (APDUSA 1952).

<sup>15</sup> T. Beidelman, *Colonial Evangelism: A Socio-Historical Study of an East African mission at the Grassroots*, (Bloomington, 1882); N. Etherington, *Preachers, peasants and politics in southeast Africa.*, (London, 1978); E. Isichei, *Varieties of Christian Experience in Nigeria*, (London and Basingstoke, 1982); J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940*, (Cambridge, 1977).

<sup>16</sup> Majeke, *The Role of Missionaries in Conquest*.25. This view was not exactly new. It had been put forward by black nationalists at the end of the nineteenth century, mission-trained and rebelling against their mission teaching. See G. Cuthbertson, 'Christianity, Imperialism and Colonial Warfare', in J. Hofmeyr and G.J. Pillay (eds). *A History of Christianity in South Africa* (Pretoria, 1994).167.

<sup>17</sup> J. Cochrane, *Servants of Power: The Role of the English Speaking Churches in South Africa, 1903-1930*, (Johannesburg, 1987)., 36.

<sup>18</sup> See Chidester, D. *Religions of South Africa* (London, 1992), Cochrane, J. *Servants of Power: The Role of the English Speaking Churches in South Africa, 1903-1930* (Johannesburg, 1987), Hofmeyr, J. and Pillay, G. J. *A History of Christianity in South Africa Vol I* (Pretoria, 1994), Saayman, W. *Christian Mission in South Africa: A Historical Review* (Pretoria, 1991), and Villa-Vicencio, C. *Trapped in Apartheid: A Socio-Theological History of the English Speaking Churches* (Maryknoll, New York, 1988).

<sup>19</sup> Very little academic work on the black African independent churches was produced before the 1970s. B. Sundkler's 1948 *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, (Cape Town, Oxford University Press 1961) is an exception.

<sup>20</sup> For instance C. Bundy, *Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*, (London, 1979); A. Odendaal, *Vukani Bantu: The Beginnings of Black Protest Politics in South Africa to 1912*, (Cape Town, 1984). For a discussion of these historiographical divisions, see C. Saunders, *The Making of the South African Past:*

- Major Historians on Race and Class*, (Cape Town and Johannesburg, 1988). The introduction to Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa* p.8, contains a summary of trends within the political-economic focus on missions.
- <sup>21</sup> Etherington, 'Recent Trends in the Historiography of Christianity in Southern Africa', pp.201-202.
- <sup>22</sup> Elizabeth Elbourne discusses this development briefly in 'Concerning Missionaries', as does Terence Ranger in 'New Approaches to the History of Mission Christianity'. Work inspired by these trends includes Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*; J.L. Comaroff and J. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*, vol. Two, (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press 1997); E. Elbourne, 'Colonialism, conversion and cultural change: shifting paradigms of religious interaction in South Africa' (paper presented at the Journal of Southern African Studies, York, 1994); E. Elbourne, "'To Colonize the Mind": Evangelical Missionaries in Britain and the Eastern Cape, 1790-1837' (D.Phil, University of Oxford, 1991); P. Landau, *The Realm of the Word: Language, Gender and Christianity in a Southern African Kingdom*, (Portsmouth, London and Cape Town, Heinemann, James Currey and David Philip 1995); P. Scully, *Liberating the Family? Gender and the British Slave Emancipation in the Rural Western Cape, South Africa, 1823-1853*, (Portsmouth, NH and Oxford, Heinemann and James Currey 1997). The later dates here refer to published versions of work first presented in the early '90s. For a more complex discussion of the postmodern implications of such work (especially with regard to Landau's *Realm of the Word*) see L. Switzer, 'Christianity and the Postmodern Project in Southern Africa: Paradigms and Procedures in an Ongoing Debate', *South African Historical Journal*, 36 (1997), pp.284-306.
- <sup>23</sup> Switzer, 'Christianity and the Postmodern Project', p.295.
- <sup>24</sup> T. Ranger, 'Religious Movements and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa', *African Studies Review*, 29, 2 (1986), p.185.
- <sup>25</sup> The book has been reviewed in the *Journal of Religion in Africa*, the *Journal of Southern African Studies* and the *South African Historical Journal* amongst others. In particular the book feature in SAHJ 31 (1994) includes reviews by Clifton Crais, Leon de Kock, Johannes du Bruyn and Doug Stuart.
- <sup>26</sup> The Comaroffs address this criticism in their second volume (*The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*).
- <sup>27</sup> Les Switzer also discusses this trend in Switzer, 'Christianity and the Postmodern Project', p.295.
- <sup>28</sup> Elbourne, see above and also E. Elbourne, 'Race', warfare, and religion in mid-nineteenth century Southern Africa: the Khoikhoi rebellion against the Cape Colony and its uses, 1850-58', *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 13, 1 (2000), pp.17-42.
- <sup>29</sup> J. Hodgson, 'A Battle for Sacred Power: Christian Beginnings Among the Xhosa', in R. Elphick and R. Davenport (eds). *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social & Cultural History* (Cape Town, David Philip 1997); J. Hodgson, 'Soga and Dukwana: The Christian Struggle for Liberation in Mid 19th Century South Africa', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, XVI (1986), pp.187-208.
- <sup>30</sup> H. Bredenkamp and R. Ross, (eds). *Missions and Christianity in South African History*.
- <sup>31</sup> E. Elbourne, 'Early Khoisan Uses of Mission Christianity', in Bredenkamp and Ross (eds). *Missions and Christianity in South African History*; D. Gaitskell, 'Praying and Preaching': The Distinctive Spirituality of African Women's Church Organizations', in the same.
- <sup>32</sup> R. Elphick and R. Davenport, (eds). *Christianity in South Africa*.
- <sup>33</sup> R. Ross, 'Congregations, Missionaries and the Grahamstown Schism of 1842-3', in J. De Gruchy (ed.). *The London Missionary Society in Southern Africa* (Cape Town, David Philip 1999).
- <sup>34</sup> N. Erlank, 'Missionary Views on Sexuality in Xhosaland in the Nineteenth Century', *Le Fait Missionnaire: Histoire et Heritage - Approche Pluridisciplinaire*, 11 (2001), pp.9-44; J. Wells, 'Curing the "Public Evils": The Contested Terrain of Male Missionary Sexuality in the Early 19th Century LMS Missions at the Cape of Good Hope', *Le Fait Missionnaire*, 11 (2001), pp.45-74.
- <sup>35</sup> P. Harries, 'Missionaries, Marxists and Magic: Power and the Politics of Literacy in South-East Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 27, 3 (2001), pp.405-423.
- <sup>36</sup> L. de Kock. *Civilising Barbarians* (Johannesburg, 1997).
- <sup>37</sup> *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, October 2002.
- <sup>38</sup> P.S. Landau and D. Kaspin, (eds). *Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa* (Berkeley, University of California Press 2002).
- <sup>39</sup> T. Spear and I.N. Kimambo, (eds). *East African expressions of Christianity* (Athens, Ohio and Oxford, Ohio University Press and James Currey 1999).
- <sup>40</sup> B. Stanley, 'Missions, Nationalism and the End of Empire: Report on a Conference', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 31, 1 (2001), p.115.
- <sup>41</sup> Odendaal, *Vukani Bantu*, pp.3-4.

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<sup>42</sup> J. Campbell, *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa*, (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press 1995); Ranger, 'Religious Movements and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa'.

<sup>43</sup> J. Campbell, 'Like Locusts in Pharaoh's Palace': The Origins and Politics of African Methodism in the Orange Free State, 1895-1914', *African Studies*, 53, 1 (1994), p.41

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 42.

<sup>45</sup> G. Cuthbertson, 'Empire and Religion: Anti-War Nonconformity and the South African War, 1899-1902', *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, XXII, 2 (1996), pp.1-47; M.L. Daneel, 'Healing the Earth: traditional and Christian initiatives in Southern Africa (Part 1)', *Journal for the Study of Religion*, 6, 1 (1993), pp.3-30; M.L. Daneel, 'Healing the Earth: traditional and Christian initiatives in Southern Africa (Part 2)', *Journal for the Study of Religion*, 6, 2 (1993), pp.3-28; Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*. Scholars of religious history have in recent years entered into much discussion on the issue of lack of disciplinary integration - for instance M.M. Goedhals, 'Liberals and Radicals in South African Historiography: The Implications for South African Church History', *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, XX, 2 (1994), pp.95-109; G.J. Pillay, 'The Relation between Church History and General History: Reflections on Adolf von Harnack's View', *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, XX, 2 (1994), pp.156-168.

<sup>46</sup> S.D. Gish, *Alfred B. Xuma : African, American, South African*, (New York, New York University Press 2000); B. Willan, *Sol Plaatje: A Biography*, (Johannesburg, Ravan 1984).

<sup>47</sup> C. Higgs, *The Ghost of Equality: The Public Lives of D. D. T. Jabavu of South Africa 1885-1959*, (Athens, Ohio, Ohio University Press 1997); W. Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow: The Life and Times of Professor ZK Matthews*, (Pretoria, UNISA 1996).

<sup>48</sup> R. Elphick, 'The Benevolent Empire and the Social Gospel: Missionaries and South African Christians in the Age of Segregation', in R. Elphick and R. Davenport (eds). *Christianity in South Africa*; R. Elphick, 'Missiology, Afrikaner Nationalism and the Road to Apartheid' (paper presented at the Missions, Nationalism and the End of Empire, Queen's College, Cambridge, 2000).

<sup>49</sup> Alan Copley's work on Africans and the faith-linked activities on the Rand is an example of this (A. Copley, *The Rules of the Game: Struggles in Black Recreation and Social Welfare in South Africa*, (Connecticut, Greenwood Press 1997)).

<sup>50</sup> Ranger, 'Religious Movements and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa'.

<sup>51</sup> W. Beinart and C. Bundy, *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa: Politics and Popular Movements in the Transkei & Eastern Cape 1890-1930*, (Johannesburg, Ravan 1987).

<sup>52</sup> For example, W. Beinart, 'A Voice in the Big House: The Career of Headman Enoch Mamba', in Beinart and Bundy (eds). *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa*

<sup>53</sup> J.D. Rogers, 'Post-Orientalism and the Interpretation of Premodern and Modern Political Identities: The Case of Sri Lanka', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 53, 1 (1994), pp.10-23; P. van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain*, (Princeton and London, Princeton University Press 2001); P. van der Veer and H. Lehmann, (eds). *Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia* (Princeton, Princeton University Press 1999).

<sup>54</sup> T. Asad, 'Religion, Nation-State, Secularism', in van der Veer and Lehmann (eds). *Nation and Religion*, p.178.

<sup>55</sup> Here I am drawing on Partha Chatterjee's work on alternative modernities. P. Chatterjee, 'On Religious and Linguistic Nationalisms: The Second Partition of Bengal', in van der Veer and Lehmann (eds). *Nation and Religion*.

<sup>56</sup> Christian men includes both what Beinart and Bundy have described as the educated elite as well as those peasant communities with lesser access to education, but nevertheless a commitment to Christianity (Beinart and Bundy, *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa*, p.11).

<sup>57</sup> This paper is about masculine national identities. I plan to address the issue of femininity and national identity at a later stage, including attention to perceptions that women had protests while men had politics!

<sup>58</sup> Pace Peter van der Veer's work in *Imperial Encounters*, p.33.

<sup>59</sup> Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, CPSA AB1653, Diocese of St Johns, Minutes of Preachers and Teachers Meetings, 1-2 Jan 1920.

<sup>60</sup> Wits, CPSA, 29-30 Sep 1920, 30-31 March 1921, 24-25 June 1924, 30-31 December 1926, 30 June – 1 July 1927. I haven't looked at records beyond 1939.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 30-31 March 1921.

<sup>62</sup> L. Pato, 'The African Independent Churches: A Socio-Cultural Approach', *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 72 (1990), pp.24-35. p.26

<sup>63</sup> CPSA AB1653, 2-3 Jan 1935.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 1-21 Jan 1920, 28-29 March 1922 etc.

<sup>65</sup> e.g. Wits CPSA AB787f, Report of the Committee, December 1941, Cory Library for Historical Papers, Grahamstown, Lovedale Press Collection, Ms 16297, Minutes of the Press Sub-Committee.

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<sup>66</sup> The material about publishing the manuscript is to be found in Cory Ms16369c and the translation of the book by C.S. Papu at Ms16369b.

<sup>67</sup> Ms16369b, p.46.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, p.133.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, p.135.