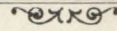


19.15.3

METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTH AFRICA.

SWAZILAND CIRCUIT.



REV. HERBERT S. ROBINSON,
SUPERINTENDENT.

PHONE: No. 4 MAHAMBA.
RAIL BUS: MAHAMBA.
STATION: PIET RETIEF.

P.O. MAHAMBA,
VIA PIET RETIEF,
TRANSVAAL.
April 26 1933.

Dear Mr Rheinallt Jones,

Queer things are going on in Swaziland, the latest being an attempt by the Govt to bring back the old amabuto (soldiers) system. The Cristian people and the missionaries think this is going back to heathenism with a quick trot. But the immediate effect that calls forth this letter is that the Pathfinder movement is as dead as a door nail. We have our troop waiting to be registered at Mahamba but no replies are forthcoming from the Council at Mbabane.

Mahamba school is under the Transvaal Education Dept though we do not parade the fact too much for obvious reasons. But does it not open up the possibility of registering our troop under your council and just going on with the matter quietly. If it is possible then could you not send down Mr Bacon to enrol Piet Tetief and Mahamba, and save our boys from having their enthusiasms quenched at the outset. I will facilitate his movements so as not to delay him here.

Please help us out of this difficulty if you can.

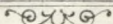
With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

H. S. Robinson.

Methodist Church of South Africa.

SWAZILAND CIRCUIT.



REV. HERBERT S. ROBINSON,
SUPERINTENDENT.

P.O. MAHAMBA,
VIA PIET RETIEF,
TRANSVAAL.

PHONE: NO. 4 MAHAMBA.
RAIL BUS: MAHAMBA.
STATION: PIET RETIEF.

May 20. 1933.

Dear Mr Jones,

I have just received
a circular setting out the
organisation of the amateurs.
I am sorry I have only one copy,
but I think Dr Heynd has others.
At the end there is a fervent
wish expressed that your
organisation will some time
come into line with theirs
and acknowledge them. And the
wayfours ~~also~~. I have not yet
determined my attitude, as I
am wanting to hear what our
Christian people say.

Yours sincerely

H. S. Robinson.

J. Russell per PTF Council

June 17th,

R.R.37.

CONFIDENTIAL.

The Rev. Herbert S. Robinson,
P. O. MAHAMBIA.
via Piet Retief,
Transvaal.

Dear Mr. Robinson,

I have been thinking a good deal about your letters of April 26th, and May 20th, but owing to considerable travelling throughout the Union during the last three months, it has not been possible for me to take any steps.

With regard to the Amabuto system, I have written to the Resident Commissioner, asking him for a full and complete statement as to what is being done, and as to the manner in which he wants the Pathfinder Movement to be associated with this new development. I have also asked him to tell me exactly what his attitude is towards the development of the Pathfinder Movement, and when I have his report, I shall be in a better position to/where I stand in this matter.

know/

I shall be very grateful for any information that you can give me; I am also writing to Dr. Hynd.

In the meantime, I think we should be wise to hold our hand in regard to the registration of the Pathfinder Groups in the Transvaal. In any case, Mr. Beacon is no longer available. His engagement terminates this month, and he has been required during the last two months to give up his work on the Witwatersrand.

With very kind regards,

Your s sincerely,

CHIEF PATHFINDER.

I can well understand the objections of the missionaries.

They could be partly met in the following ways:-

(a). The Administration could be asked to recognise Mission Pathfinder Troops as corresponding to the Regiments, provided that before being admitted to the highest grades the Pathfinders had been instructed in the lore of the Tribe, and provided further that the boys had gone through some form of affirmation of allegiance to their Paramount Chief as well as to the King. The objection to this would be the sharp division of the boys into two classes, perhaps hostile, but it is suggested that this might happen anyhow if Sobhuza were allowed to bring his scheme into operation, and the suggestion here given might help to keep within the Missions boys who ~~were~~ otherwise might be bullied or cajoled into the "heathen" ceremonies.

(b). If the Missionaries were reasonably satisfied as to the bona fides of the new scheme - Dr. Schapera tells me that all the objectionable features have been eliminated among the Bagkatla - they might precede it in every case by a few days of special preparation for the Christian boys, and end it by further instruction leading up to Confirmation or some other special religious rite approved by the denomination concerned.

(c). The Missionaries could simply hold out against the new system being compulsory, but if that is all that they do I think they stand to lose many of their boys.

I believe that the best plan would be in the first place to insist on the most careful study of the new scheme, as being something which may well have repercussions on missionary work, administration and the Pathfinder movement all over Southern Africa. It should emphatically not be rushed. A good Commission would consist of

- (i) An administrator as Chairman;
- (ii) A representative of the Chief;
- (iii) A representative of the General Missionary Conference. (The name of Alexandre Jaques comes to my mind.)
- (iv) A non-Missionary representative of the Pathfinder movement.
- (v). An anthropological research worker, nominated by the Institute, which thereby comes into the picture. (Schapera, who has seen the thing at work among the Bagkatla would be useful, and is willing.)

ER 3/7/33

Medical Superintendent: David Hynd, M. A., B. Sc.,
M. B., Ch. B., D. T. M. and H.
Resident Medical Officer: Mary Tanner, M. B., Ch. B.

Secretary: Mrs. D. Hynd, M. A.

Matron: Miss Myrtle A. Pelley, (R. N., U. S. A.)
Nurses: Miss Evelyn Fox, (R. N., U. S. A.)
Miss Bessie Seay, (R. N., U. S. A.)
Child Welfare Worker: Miss Ruby Sipple, C. M. B.
(London).

Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

Bremeradorp, Swaziland, South Africa.

23rd. June 1933.

CONFIDENTIAL.

Dear Mr. Jones,

I received your letter of June 16th. re the Amabuto system. I am enclosing a copy of Notes on a meeting on the subject. This contains an account of how the regiments are made up. There is probably the framework of a system which could be worked out similar to the Pathfinder system, but at present the difficulty will be to get something that will conform to civilised or christian ideas. Unfortunately the "amabuto" of the past and present have no very good reputation in the country and our christian natives look on the suggestion with no small amount of suspicion. Sobhuza, the Paramount Chief is making great claims for the system. He says "the effects of the regimental system are entirely wholesome, and are not inconsistent with the christian religion. On the contrary they are calculated to inculcate pride of race, continence, self-control, respect for lawful authority, the rendering of communal service, and thus should receive the approval of clergy and laymen, Christian and heathen alike"

The reputation of the present "amabuto" however is not such as would stamp them as very outstanding examples of the above attributes. The communal service rendered consists largely if not entirely of going to the Ingwala dance at the King's kraal at New Year time, hoeing the chiefs' gardens and making the chiefs' cattle kraals. When in the service of the Paramount Chief they get into disrepute with the other natives by demanding food etc. and robbing their gardens or homes. This is apparently a relic of an old custom when the soldiers of the King while on service could help themselves to anything.

There is no doubt that we have here a framework on which a system similar to the Pathfinder or Boy Scout system could be built up. The idea of the Paramount Chief is to make it a general system with almost a touch of compulsion about it., so that you would have a crowd of youths in the system having gone into it not from a voluntary desire to carry out the high ideals which it might have. This would in my opinion be a distinct disadvantage and difficulty.

The other difficulty which I see is the question of the leaders of the movement. In your Scout system I understand that one of the most important steps in forming a contingent is that you first have a

Scout leader who is trained , who knows the rules and ideals of the movement and is a worthy example to those in his troop. How the heathen chiefs are going to find such leaders for some time, at least, I do not know. To make the system so general, and conscript the whole nation into it means that in the present condition of the majority of the Swazis the Ndunas, Amaphini, Itilomo etc. would be polygamists and have ideals that might be far removed from what a movement like the Pathfinders would wish for.

The problem would be to secure all the good things in their heathen system and have leaders who by example would veto the other non-christian things that have been in the system in the past. I cannot in my own mind find a solution to the difficulty that would present itself to us in mission schools of having heathen leaders of the troops. You will notice that the Paramount Chief concedes the point that when in actual school classes one may be looked upon as leader among the scholars, but that leadership goes whenever he is out of school.

To make the Swazi youth and maidens, who at present in heathen conditions, unchaste universally, chaste by a stroke of the amabuto pen is impossible and would only mean that the movement , if it were to adopt Pathfinder ideals, would be a bunch of hypocrites, who automatically at a certain age enter the system. It seems to me that the whole strength of the Scout and Pathfinder system is the absence of compulsion in any shape or form. It is a voluntary decision on the part of the individuals to subscribe to certain ideals.

If you can help us in any way to bridge the gulf I should be very glad. If we could get the "amabuto" system to adopt Pathfinder ideals in its constitution and then leave it as a voluntary joining at a certain age, it might work alright. The "coming of age" time could be used as a special time for propoganda and recruitment.

Could you send me down some literature on the Pathfinder Movement?

We are glad of your interest in the movement and I trust my rather indefinite remarks may help you in your investigation.

Yours sincerely,

David Agudo



RESIDENT COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,
MBABANE, SWAZILAND.

July 1933.

Private.

My dear Rheinallt Jones,

Many thanks for your letter of June 21st. You are quite justified in defining my attitude to the Pathfinder movement in Swaziland as a hesitant one.

The story of this Territory is a startling record of carelessness for native social principles by official, missionary and settler. Each of the two latter has utilised the Swazi for his own particular purpose - labour or conversion; each has been concerned with individuals, and little or no thought has been given to the result of pulling these individual stones out of the block of tribal masonry. Now we are faced with the results; complaints from all sides; a disrespect to parents and elders; breaking of family and tribal ties; wide spread distrust of missionaries as educational agents, and a hardening/.

J.D.Rheinallt Jones Esq., M.A.

hardening of conservative opinion against European influence.

You will say that the Pathfinder movement in encouraging the communal spirit will improve the present position. I agree, I think it may, but we shall ^{make} its teachings more acceptable if we can graft it on to some existing form of tribal organisation. Marwick and Dumbrell believe this "amabuto" system may give us what we seek; I am not sure.

I enclose some memoranda referring to this system. Briefly, it is claimed to be an organisation for social service, and the suggestion that it connives at immorality is denied. Both these contentions ~~must~~ be proved; if satisfactory it is conceivable a modernisation and strengthening of the system could be made by the inculcation of Pathfinder ideas.

As you rightly say, the problem of the town and the reserve native vary enormously, and whereas with the former it is essential to provide bonds of companionship which will save the individual from moral and physical destruction, in the reserve it is desirable to emphasise the responsibility of individuals in maintaining the social integrity of the tribe.

Tell me, to what extent, if any, can the Pathfinder movement/.

movement include non-Christians ? Admittedly Christianity is vital to native development, but the effort made by many missions to segregate converts is against the best interests of the tribe.

This is a very complex subject, and one on which I feel very strongly - we had better meet I think ! When are you likely to be in Johannesburg after the middle of July or August ?

With my kind regards to Mrs Rheinallt Jones,

Yours sincerely,

J. Guinness Dickson

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SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (SAIRR), 1892-1974

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