

8th. January, 1949.

The Native Commissioner:
Nkandhla.

Sir,

Re: Church Building at Mandaba (Oplate)
Ref. NO.2/3/2/11/2. Ethiopian Church of
South Africa.

Rev. Zabulon Z. Mhlengo who I understand is very ill sent to me two of his Church men with your letter dated the 3rd, Inst.,

In your letter you remind this Minister of your warning to him to discontinue holding services in the Church building which he has used for the past eight (8) years. The messengers who came to see me in his behalf one of them was present in the meetings you had in the Mandaba (Oplate) and also in your Office. The point which seems very much obscure is that while it is ordered that this church house should be demolished no other site has been given to him. According to these men it is stated that no such Church is wanted in that district. From the correspondence the matter is of long standing. He claims to have put up the building with the permission of the then Native Commissioner and the Chief. Although there seems to be no record found in your office vide your letter dated the 2nd. December, 1946, NO.2/3/6 but the church building was at that time in existence.

In the circumstances I wish to bring to your notice that the Department gave me to understand that while the Native Controlled Churches will not be given recognition until they fulfill certain requirements but they will not be stopped from building up their own Congregations for a long period. In this case these people put up a building some many years ago. I ask that they should not be ordered to demolish their building while still building up their congregation for the necessary qualification for recognition.

I request you to have this matter referred to the Chief Native Commissioner for the Secretary for Native Affairs. This matter involves a great principle. It is not Rev. Mhlengo who is involved but many other churches.

Yours faithfully,

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