

Ntsikana

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*delivered at Dumisani Theological Institute, King William's Town, SA, March, 2015

The First Years

Ntsikana was born around 1780. He was the son of Gaba, a councillor to the important western amaRarhabe king, Ngqika. His mother was Gaba's Right Hand (junior) wife, Nonabe, who, it is believed, brought up Ntsikana among her people until the boy was about five or six. Tradition suggests that because his father's Great Wife, Noyiki, had a daughter but no sons, she adopted Ntsikana who therefore became Gaba's heir. From this time on, Ntsikana's home was the beautiful Thyume valley, north of Alice.¹ It was around the time of Ntsikana's circumcision that he first came in touch with the Christian gospel. In 1799, during a time of great tension and open warfare on the border of the Cape Colony, Johannes van der Kemp, a missionary of the London Missionary Society, arrived among the western amaXhosa and was permitted to set up his camp near to Ngqika's Great Place.

Van der Kemp was not the kind of white man with which the Xhosa had become familiar. Instead of adopting a European lifestyle, van der Kemp ate Xhosa food and slept in a Xhosa hut. Future Xhosa leader, Dyani Tshatshu, who was to become closely associated with the London Missionary Society, remembered him as the one who travelled on foot, without hat, shoes or stockings.² Van der Kemp soon became an attraction both for the king and his people, and in the year that he remained among them they had many opportunities of hearing him preach and of discussing with him his new teaching. They appreciated his emphasis on a spiritual experience of God and the possibility of a new birth, rather more than his strange ideas and hard to understand foreign doctrines.

When van der Kemp departed from the area at the end of 1800, he could

¹ Vuyani Boo, 'Ntsikana', in Ed. Mcebisi Ndletyana, *African Intellectuals in 19th and Early 20th Century South Africa* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2008), p.7

² Jeff Peires, *The House of Phalo: The History of the Xhosa People in the days of their Independence* (Johannesburg and Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2003 ed.), p.87.

claim no converts from among the Xhosa, though he had not left without influence. Indeed, a strong tradition holds that Ntsikana, who had been herding the king's cattle, first heard the gospel as he sat on the edge of a crowd who were listening to the missionary. So it may well have been van der Kemp who first inspired Ntsikana to give his poetry and teaching a Christian content as he travelled the country praising God and praying.³

What passed through Ntsikana's mind at this time is, of course, hidden from us. To all outward appearances he continued as a normal Xhosa lad, passing through circumcision to manhood and by c.1815 going quietly about his business as a respected but unremarkable homestead-head, enjoying what he had inherited of his father's holdings and contently married to two wives.

Spiritual experiences

Like traditional diviners, Ntsikana was susceptible to spiritual traces and mystical experiences, which he referred to as 'this thing' which he couldn't ignore. Later he believed that through these experiences God was calling him to be a Christian. His most famous experience was when he was at the kraal looking contentedly at his much loved prize ox, Hulushe. As he watched, he was intrigued to see a patch of light, brighter than ordinary sunlight, illuminating the hide of the animal. So remarkable was the sight that he turned to his companion, a young herd, to ask for corroboration. But, no, the lad had to admit that he had not seen anything unusual. Recovering from the trance, Ntsikana remarked, "No, you are right. The sight was not for your eyes."

The experience was interpreted by A. C. Jordan, a Xhosa novelist and teacher, as an inner illumination of soul, the dawning on Ntsikana that his life's task was to spread the light of God to others, though at the time it seems he was unclear that that light was in fact the Christian gospel. It took another experience later the same day to bring that home to him.

³ Cf. Booij, op. cit. p.8 and Ido H. Enklaar, *Life and Work of Dr. J. Th. van der Kemp, 1747-1811* (Cape Town: A A Balkema, 1988), p.106. Cf. Ed. Timothy Keegan, *Moravians in the Eastern Cape, 1828-1928: Four Accounts of Moravian Missionary Work on the Eastern Cape Frontier* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 2004), p.18.

Ntsikana was an accomplished singer and highly regarded traditional dancer, who had often taken part in the ritual wedding dance, the *umdudo*. On the afternoon of the day when Ntiskana had seen his ox transformed by a vision of light, he was attending a wedding party and it came as a great surprise to his companions when he refused to take part in the dance. Disappointed they would not see his contribution, the party insisted he took part. Ntsikana eventually conceded and produced a tremendous performance. But even as he danced a storm broke, with a powerful wind, flashes of lightening and deep rumbles of thunder. As he sat down, so the storm subsided, only to begin all over again when he once more stood up to dance. John Knox Bokwe connects the two visions:

Ntsikana returns to his seat, as crest-fallen as ever; and the wind ceases. A third time, he gets up, and a third time this horrid gale arises as furiously as ever. The interested and superstitious gazers exchange looks of astonishment at this strange occurrence repeating itself each time the son of Gaba rises to join the dance! Who has bewitched him? All at once, the vision of bright rays which he saw in the morning shining gloriously on the side of his favourite ox, Hulushe, is recalled to his remembrance, and without a single word of explanation, or apology to any one, he orders his people to get ready to return home! All of them, surprised, and whispering puzzled enquiries as to the cause of so early a departure, obey the order and march home, greatly vexed that their pleasure had been so abruptly brought to an end, with no explanation hinted as to the reason why. As they neared home, they came to a small river. Here Ntsikana threw aside his blanket, plunged himself into the water and washed off all the red ochre that painted his body. He then proceeded on his way, while his followers were yet more surprised at this additional strangeness and eccentricity of behaviour.⁴

⁴ John Knox Bokwe, *Ntsikana: The Story of an African Convert* (Alice: Lovedale Press, 1914) at <http://pzacad.pitzer.edu/NAM/newafrre/writers/nontetha/nontethaS.htm> accessed 24 June, 2014.

The two gestures of washing off the red ochre and throwing away his blanket assumed a symbolic importance for Xhosa Christianity; they were to become the traditional expression of what Christian baptism symbolised: the turning from traditional religion to embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ. For Ntsikana, there was no going back: committing himself to his new life, he renounced polygamy, making a generous settlement for his second wife, Nomonto.

A more excellent way

At this point in his experience, Ntsikana could be likened to Apollos, the first century Alexandrian Jewish Christian mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. In chapter 18 we read of Apollos coming to Ephesus enthusiastic to teach 'the things concerning Jesus'. Although eloquent, competent in handling the Bible and skilled in communicating what he did know, there were important aspects of the Faith which he had yet to discover. A Christian couple, Priscilla and Aquila, became his mentors and 'took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.' Who would be Ntsikana's mentor?

At this point two more missionaries of the London Missionary Society entered his life, James Read and Joseph Williams. Read's strong sympathies for the Khoi led his enemy, Sir George Cory, to call him "the most dangerous and wicked man on the frontier."⁵ Read's marriage in 1803 to a Khoi woman upset many whites and some of his LMS colleagues too. As Christopher Saunders says, "Put simply, [to the settlers and some of the missionaries] he seemed to commit the unforgivable sin of always being on the side of the blacks."⁶

Williams, with his wife Elizabeth, had landed at Cape Town in 1814 and for a while settled at the Moravian missionary centre at Bethelsdorp where he met the young Dyani Tshatshu, son of the Xhosa chief whose village was on the

⁵ Cited by Christopher Saunders, *James Read: Towards a Reassessment*, typed manuscript at http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/4036/1/Christopher_Saunders_-_James_Read,_Towards_a_reassessment.pdf accessed 24 July, 2014.

⁶ Saunders, op. cit.

Buffalo River, near where King William's Town now stands. He became William's assistant and interpreter. In April 1816 Read, Williams and Tshatshu travelled east searching for a suitable place to establish a missionary station among the Xhosa. Their journey took them more or less along the line of the modern N2 road, crossing the Fish River, the boundary of the Colony, at Trompetter's Drift near Peddie, before turning north to reach the headwaters of the Keiskamma River. After some difficulty locating the king, they were eventually granted permission to settle at Kat River, later renamed Fort Beaufort.

Somewhere beneath the Amathole mountains, near the present town Read and Williams met Ntsikana, who shared with them what was on his heart. They listened keenly to what he said, offered words of encouragement and some further Scriptural teaching, before inviting him to travel with them back to Bethelsdorp when they returned. But such a journey was impossible, neither his chiefs nor the British authorities would allow him to travel into the colony, so the missionaries advised him to remain where he was until Williams could return to establish the new mission station and offer him further instruction.⁷

That night Ntsikana slept at the kraal of a local chief and shared what he understood of the gospel with them. Whenever he had attempted to speak of these things before he had been regarded as mad, but now the people realised that what he said was not madness at all, but believed it truly was the Word of God.

Read and Williams then returned to Bethlesdorp to gain the approval of the missionaries and the Cape government before setting out again with their families to establish a mission station on the frontier. It was on this journey that Mrs Williams was shocked by the attitudes both of Boers and British settlers who, she said, had told her that only when "they had sent a good lot of [the Xhosa] to hell, would it be the time to go and preach salvation to them, and not before." In a letter to a friend in London, Mrs Williams recounted

⁷ Basil Holt, *Joseph Williams and the Pioneer Mission to the South-Eastern Bantu* (Alice: The Lovedale Press, 1954), p.106.

how many of the farmers they met en route treated them with utter contempt and refused to sell them even the most basic commodities. On leaving the Colony behind, far from feeling alarm that they were beyond 'civilisation' she felt a sense of relief: "I was truly thankful when we crossed the frontier, and escaped from the clamour of bloody and vengeful men."⁸

When Williams returned he found Ntsikana had patiently waited for him and had moved his family from Thyume to establish his home in the Mankazana hills, close to where the new mission station was built. Each Saturday, with his complete household, he visited Williams to receive instruction and stayed until Sunday to join in worship. By all accounts he grew in understanding and deepened his Christian experience.

Inevitably, the missionaries and their supporters were keen to register Ntsikana's conversion as a direct result of their work, and Basil Holt goes a long way in his attempt to prove the point.⁹ Others, for equally understandable reasons have argued that Ntsikana came to faith in Christ as a result of direct revelation from God apart from any missionary influence whatsoever. These two, conflicting, perspectives illustrate the tension that Ntsikana never fully resolved; the tension between his indigenous Xhosa worldview and that of the new belief system he had largely accepted. He understood well that Christianity claimed for itself exclusivity, demanding the abandonment of all religious notions that conflicted with it; but irrationally so too did the white man's general culture. It alone was thought to be the only culture from which true civilisation proceeded. Perhaps Ntsikana's refusal to be baptised symbolised his acceptance of the gospel but his reluctance totally to capitulate to the white man's ways. We might argue that that was not the best point at which to draw the line, but as a pioneer believer, with no Xhosa example to follow, it is perfectly understandable. Had Williams not died in 1818 Ntsikana may have in time found ways to resolve these tensions without denying his Xhosa identity, but as it was he now found himself thrust into the leadership of the small groups of believers

⁸ Holt, op. cit. p. 42. The Xhosa historian, J. H. Soga was of the same mind too, cf. John Henderson Soga, *The South-Eastern Bantu* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1930), p. 163.

⁹ Holt, op. cit. p.108, fn1.

connected not only with the mission station at Kat River, but resulting from his own evangelistic work. He was used by God to establish the first Christian communities in the Mankazana valley, and at Burnshill, Somerset East, Debe Nek, King William's Town, and Mgwali. Ntsikan's Christian influence touched the lives of leaders such as King Ngqika, and his counsellor Old Soga, the father of Tiyo Soga, and Tiyo's older brother, Festiri. Vuyani Booi indicates that Ntsikana himself celebrated in one of his hymns the calling of the Soga household to faith, though whether this influence led in all cases to personal conversion is debatable.¹⁰ It was nevertheless quite remarkable that a Christian leader who was never baptised and who never went through a course of missionary catechesis, should have so wide an influence as a prophet, poet and man of peace. Man of peace he may have been, but as we must now note his life was not without conflict.

Rivalry with Nxele

Nxele had a real problem with his name. He should have been known by the name his parents gave him, Makana, Makana ka Balala, but it is said that owing to a superstition connected with pronouncing his name and because he was left-handed, he was given the nickname Nxele. The Dutch therefore called him Links ('left' in Dutch is 'links') but the British misunderstood this and thought that his name was Lynx, that is 'caracal' (Xhosa: ngada) an animal considered powerful, secretive and cunning. Nxele seems to have been fascinated by the European world at the Cape, especially what he saw as the natural and supernatural dimensions of white power. Like Ntsikana, he was attracted to Christianity, and through his conversations with James Read the missionary and Gottlieb van der Lingen, the military chaplain at Grahamstown, Nxele's understanding grew. But his experience of white hostility led him away from Christianity, to a reaffirmation of traditional religion.

Scholars contrast Nxele's and Ntsikana's different approaches to change and the clash between colonial and Xhosa societies through the invasion of Xhosa land by the whites, the arrival of Christianity and western style education

¹⁰ Booi, *op. cit.* p.12.

and the potential offered by technologies new to the Xhosa. After an initial fascination, Nxele rejected Christianity and western innovations, resisting by force the arrival of Europeans on the frontier. Ntsikana, however, accepted Christianity, embraced and welcomed technological change, and sought to live in peace with his new neighbours.

Up to 1816 Nxele thought of missionaries as potential allies, but faced with their refusal to accept him as a spiritual equal he rejected their authority as teachers and turned from them to forge a new theology, fusing together aspects of traditional Xhosa beliefs with aspects of Christian teaching. Nxele saw behind the emerging conflict between European and African world views a contest between Thixo, the god of the whites, and Mdalidiphu, the god of the blacks. He taught that the whites had murdered the son of their god, a reference to the crucifixion of Christ, and had been punished by being driven out of their country to roam the oceans. Their landing in South Africa and attempt to occupy Xhosa territory would be resisted by Mdalidiphu who would empower the Xhosa to drive them back into the sea. Ridiculing and rejecting Christian worship of Thixo, as taught by Ntsikana, Nxele, who was now the war doctor of Ndlambe, counselled the Xhosa to invoke Mdalidiphu's help by dancing, enjoying life and making love so that their offspring would increase, outnumber the whites and fill the world.

Allying himself with Ndlambe, the rival of Nquika, Nxele poured scorn on the ruler of the amaRarhabe for his addiction to alcohol, his incestuous relationship with Thuthula, one of Ndlambe's junior wives, but above all for his alliance with the British. In 1819 these tensions and divisions led to the battle of Amalinde, near Debe Nek, when heavy losses were inflicted on Ngqika's followers.

Ngqika now turned to the British for aid. The Governor of the Cape sent a force under Colonel Brereton to cross the frontier and seize 23,000 Xhosa cattle. Nxele counselled retaliation and on 22 April 1819 after successfully decoying some of the colonial troops from the town, he boldly led between 6,000 and 10,000 Xhosa warriors in an all out daylight attack of Grahamstown. Assured of victory by Nxele's predictions that white bullets

would 'turn to water', three divisions of Xhosa fighters engaged the British at various points around town. But bravery and spears were no match for British artillery firing grapeshot, and the attacking force was devastated. Within a hour the battle was over, leaving 1,000 Xhosa dead on the field. Shortly after Nxele surrendered to the British, who sent him to Robben Island. He died on Christmas Day 1819, drowned when the boat in which he was attempting to escape capsized.

Ntsikana's Doctrine

It has become customary for historians to allege that Ntsikana skilfully fused together carefully selected elements of Christianity and Xhosa traditional religion to make his message more culturally acceptable to his listeners.¹¹ But the ability deliberately to construct such a syncretistic system assumes a high degree of theological sophistication, far more in fact than Ntsikana possessed. Indeed it unfair to think that Ntsikana, after only two years sporadic instruction, was in any sense a 'theologian', especially when we consider that his mentor, Joseph Williams' letters and missionary reports reveal a man for whom even the elementary conventions of grammar and spelling were unfamiliar, and who was himself of very modest intellectual attainment. J. B. Peires is not unfair in casting doubt on the depth of instruction Ntsikana was given and that he only learned "something of Christianity" from Williams.¹²

Moreover, during the two years before his death in 1818, the period he was influential in Ntsikana's life, Williams was under immense pressure. In addition to the stress of establishing his home and mission station, he had also to cope with depression resulting from having his credibility with the Xhosa undermined by the British effectively forcing him gather intelligence for them. He also faced the huge disappointment of seeing Dyani Tshatshu depart from Kat River under a cloud of moral censure. Apart from his own

¹¹ J. B. Peires, "Nxele, Ntsikana and the Origins of the Xhosa Religious Reaction" in *Journal of African History*, 20, 1 (1979), pp. 51- 61. Richard Price, *Making Empire: Colonial Encounters and the Creation of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-Century Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.52.

¹² Peires (1979) op. cit. p.59.

intellectual limitations, Williams was much too distracted to provide Ntsikana with comprehensive Christian instruction.¹³ Ntsikana suffered another important disadvantage, that of being unable to read. He was therefore unable to study the Bible or any of the few books Williams possessed.

One area of Ntsikana's developing thought that betrays this lack of awareness of Biblical ethics, is his justification of Nqgika's incestuous relationship through his marriage to Thuthula, the ex-wife of his uncle Ndlambe. So, rather than seeing Ntsikana's teaching as the product of a deliberate selection and careful fusion of Christian and Xhosa elements, it fits the evidence far better to recognise that he taught what were his own earnest, intelligent but unaided gropings towards a fuller understanding. In addition, the scarcity of any reliable sources of Ntsikana's thought, apart from his hymns, makes it unwise to speculate on the boundaries of Ntsikana's belief. The reality seems to be that at times the fervency of his spirit outran his grasp of theology.

To balance this, however, the hymns we show that Ntsikana did have an understanding of basic Christian teaching. For example, the "Ahomna homna" hymn contains allusions to the transcendence and uniqueness of God, his role as creator and upholder of the universe and his care and protection of his people. There is a remarkable reference to the mystery of providence: "You created the blind – did you create them for a purpose?" He was absolutely clear about God's determination to save men and women ("You're the hunter who hunts souls"), his effectual calling ("The trumpet sounded, it has called for us"¹⁴) and in the final stanza we read as strong a poetic affirmation of the core Christian doctrine of redemption through the death of Christ as an atoning sacrifice for unworthy sinners as may be found anywhere.

¹³ Cf. Price, *op. cit.* p.49.

¹⁴ It is quite possible that Tiyo Soga's hymn, "Blow the trumpet" is a deliberate echo, affirmation and extension of Ntsikana's thought: "Blow the trumpet,/You, His people;/Sound the trumpet/of His Word"

Undoubtedly aspects of Ntsikana's doctrine were raw and incomplete, such as his understanding of that most difficult of doctrines, the Trinity. When countering Nxele's advocacy of God (Dalidiphu - God of the deep) and his son, Tyli, Ntsikana replies, "Nxele is wrong in saying that God is on earth: God is in the heavens. He is right in saying that there are two Gods, but they are not Tayi and Dalidiphu, but Thixo and his son [Jesus]...".¹⁵ But it would be going much too far to read in this statement either a denial of the doctrine of God's immanence, or an affirmation of a plurality of gods or of theological binitarianism. It is much more realistic to see here a deliberately symmetrical repudiation of Nxele's doctrine using Nxele's structures, but at the same time tinged with an inadequate grasp of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity.

Ntsikana's Spiritual Influence

An important, though perhaps obvious, thing to say about Ntsikana's ministry is that in contrast to later converts, he continued to live and witness among his own people. Overseas missionaries tended to found mission stations, gathering their converts together into idealistic Christian colonies based on western values, invariably at the cost of alienating the new Christians both from their traditional culture and those who remained loyal to it. Ntsikana, however, maintained integration and cultural continuity by bringing Christian teaching directly to bear on Xhosa life, changing what he believed needed to be changed, and leaving intact and valued what he thought was not in conflict with Christian teaching. This process of claiming for Christ all that was best in Xhosa culture is seen especially in Ntsikana's music, most notably his Great Hymn which drew its form, images and symbols from everyday life, adapting a traditional Xhosa *izibongo* into a hymn of praise to Thixo and his son, Jesus Christ.

Ntsikana's conduct of a service - as we have come to call them - was also very different from the liturgy brought by white missionaries. There is an interesting account from Makapela Noyi Balfour, who attended Ntsikana's

services when a boy.

When he starts this song the people would stand or sit along the wall of the church [Ntsikana's hut] waiting for the Word of God... then he would start telling them what has befallen them which thing he hates, this thing called sin. He would explain to them how they have sinned in their daily lives, pointing at things in them which God does not like. He would then preach until others would find themselves sitting outside because [the hut] was so full... His preaching brought people to tears.¹⁶

Although his period of instruction in the faith had been short, Ntsikana preached on a variety of subjects, tending to prefer narrative material. His subjects included Adam, Noah, David, the Lamb of God and the coming Messiah. At the heart of his message was the Christ's redeeming sacrifice on the cross, as his final emphasis in the Great Hymn makes clear:

Your hands are wounded.
Your feet are wounded.
Your blood – why is it streaming?
Your blood was poured out for us.
Are we worthy of such a ransom?
Are we worthy to enter your homestead?

Unlike the radical revolutionary expectations of Nxele, and later the supernatural interventions hoped for by Mhlakaza and his prophetesses, Ntsikana did not expect sudden change would take place through the preaching of the Gospel, rather it was his hope that God's grace would gradually change individual lives and Christian individuals and groups would influence wider Xhosa society, until God's Kingdom would come, the Messiah return and inaugurate a new era of everlasting peace.

No discussion of Ntsikana and his influence is complete without reference to his poetic and musical gift and his successful use of song in spreading the Good News. I regret that any technical discussion of music is beyond my

¹⁶ Elphick and Davenport. Op. cit., p. 73

ability, as is any linguistic analysis of his Xhosa lyrics, and I must refer the interested student of Ntsikana as a musician to the work of others.¹⁷

Ntsikana had a remarkable ability to compose memorable songs that derived from and spoke to the cultural experiences and lyrical nature of Africans. As Jeff Opland has pointed out, music was integral to Ntsikana's evangelistic method, as was the establishment of a distinctive worshipping community which made use of his four hymns, the most popular of which is his Great Hymn, the earliest surviving Xhosa poem found today in many South African hymnbooks.¹⁸ As we have noted, the Great Hymn particularly, and also the other three, use aspects of traditional Xhosa praise as songs of worship to Almighty God.

For the first fifty years the four hymns - "Intsimbi" (Ntsikana's Bell), "Dalibom (Life-Creator), "Ingoma enqukuva" (Round Hymn) and "Ulo Tixo mkulu" ("Thou Great God" - the Great Hymn) - were preserved and transmitted orally, but in 1876 the Presbyterian minister, John Knox Bokwe transcribed and published them, first in *Isigidimi sama-Xhosa* and then in the *Christian Examiner*.

As well calling Xhosa people to faith in Christ through his poetry and music, Ntsikana also inspired in others more overtly political thoughts. One image he uses comes from the process of turning an animal skin in a kaross, widely used before blankets replaced them. As part of the process the inside of the skin is scraped and the scrapings of fat, meat and tissue are gathered into a ball which becomes so compacted that you cannot separate out the individual pieces of which it is made. Ntsikana used this powerful image to refer to the unity and fellowship of the Church which combines together believers, often from humble origins. Indeed, the use of this image begs the question of whether or not Ntsikana was aware of the words of St. Paul in 1

¹⁷ See e.g. C. Michael Hawn, *Gather Into One: Praying and Singing Globally* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2003), p.104ff; D. Dargie, 'The Music of Ntsikana' in *South African Journal of Musicology* vol. 2, 1982, pp. 7-27; Jonathan T. Knight, "Sing on, Ntsikana: The Story of Christian Music Among the Xhosa People of South Africa," in *Musical Offerings*: Vol. 1, 2010, No. 1, Article 3; M. M. Somniso, "Echoes of Orality in Christian Xhosa Songs," in *Literator* 26, no. 3 (November 2005): pp. 131-145.

¹⁸ Jeff Opland, 'Nineteenth-century Xhosa literature' in *Kronos*, No. 30, (November 2004), pp. 22-46.

Corinthians 4.13, where, in the English Authorised Version, Christians believers are regarded by a hostile world as the “offscourings of all things”, in Greek περιψηματα, “the scrapings.” Later this image was to be used by the congregational minister, Isaac W. Wauchope, one of the leading figures in the emergent Xhosa political and literary elite, to illustrate a political ideal in which the Gospel might unite diverse black groupings into one nation. In his 1884 poem, *Imbumba Yamayama (A Ball from Scrapings)*, published at Lovedale in *Isigidimi*, Wauchope appeals to Christian Xhosas and Zulus to come together:

The time has come to tend our wounds,
animosities and grudges;
we're all related, common stock,
we all speak a common tongue.

All on his own Christ died for us,
leaving one legacy to us:
power can be found in union,
power from 'A Ball from Scrapings'.¹⁹

Such an image poetically imbedded in Xhosa political thought can easily be applied beyond culture and ethnicity to refer to what became known in the first days of Mandela's democratic South Africa as the “rainbow nation.”

Appendix I

The “Ahomna homna” hymn

You are the Great God who dwells in the heavens.

You are the true shield.

You are the true fortress.

You are the true forest [of refuge].

¹⁹ Opland, op. cit. p.38.

It is you who dwells in the highest.

You created life, you created on high.

You are the creator creates the heavens.

You created the stars and the Pleiades.

A Star flashed forth, being us your message.

You created the blind – did you create them for a purpose?

The trumpet sounded, it has called for us.

You're the hunter who hunts souls.

You gather together flocks rejecting each other.

You are the Great Blanket with which we are clothed.

Your hands are wounded.

Your feet are wounded.

Your blood – why is it streaming?

Your blood was poured out for us.

Are we worthy of such a ransom?

Are we worthy to enter your homestead?

Appendix II

Joseph Williams' Academic Attainments.

Williams was from a very humble artisan background and like many of his missionary contemporaries he had not enjoyed the benefits of a good education. Indeed, it took eight years of dogged persistence for him to persuade the London Missionary Society's Examining Committee to accept him as a candidate and allow him to study at David Bogue's Gosport Academy.²⁰ It is highly unlikely that he completed Gosport's full three years curriculum for ministerial students, and most probable attended only selected lectures over three or four months.²¹ As a result the Committee

²⁰ Holt, op. cit. pp. 5-6.

²¹ For details of the curriculum at Gosport see Noel Gibbard, 'David Bogue and the Gosport Academy' at http://www.affinity.org.uk/downloads/foundations/Foundations%20Archive/20_36.pdf, accessed 25 June, 2014. Cf. Holt, op. cit, p.6 - 9.

refused him ministerial ordination, sending him to Africa following a service of 'Designation' at Silver Street Chapel, London, on December 28, 1814. Unkind and dismissive though it was, the comment by Lord Charles Somerset, the Cape Governor, that William's education did not prepare him intellectually for frontier missionary life, was not, as a statement of fact, very wide of the mark.²²

²² C O 4840, No. 414. Union Archives, Cape Town, cited by Holt, *op. cit.* p.146ff.