The Berlin Mission Society and its Theology: the Bapedi Mission Church and the independent Bapedi Lutheran Church. By Karla Poewe and Ulrich van der Heyden.


Abstract

The task of this paper is to understand how some Berlin missionaries portrayed the formation of the Bapedi Lutheran Church, an independent church, in what was north Transvaal, South Africa. To that end, we should be clear about three things: (1) the inner logic of missionary endeavours; (2) the impact of African spirituality and thinking on missionary narrative; and (3) the appropriation by Africans of missionary teachings to shape their own institutions and politics despite mission resistance. The different genres of missionary narratives, especially those of the Berlin mission director Hermann Theodor Wangemann (1818-1894), were deeply affected by African initiatives and thinking at the same time that African thinking was an accommodation to the Christian metanarrative learned from missionaries. The irony is that, while Berlin missionaries taught indigenisation in order to avoid independency, their narratives are a portrayal of precisely that which they wanted to avoid.

My story you will hear from others, for this story will be talked about in the whole world, in Africa and in Europe. The work that I started in 1856 I have now completed (Martinus Sebusane, 1890, Historische Angaben n.d.:36, Berliner Missionswerk).

It was the wish of the first heroes who came to us, and who were our benefactors that the natives were not always to be supported by the societies in Europe, but should learn to stand on their own feet. What we
are now doing, is nothing more than an answer to the request of the missionaries of the churches and friends here and yonder (Mangena Mokone, 1890, (Wesleyan) quoted in Brian Kennedy, 1992:210).

I. Introduction

In this paper we want to look at the complexity of the early Berlin mission endeavours in Transvaal, South Africa. This means looking at the Berlin mission’s historical and Christian perspective, its roots, its activities, the communities it created, and the genres in which Berlin missionaries wrote about their part in Transvaal history. Because mission sources can not easily be interpreted in terms of a generalizing theory, we shall look at the founding of the Lutheran Bapedi Church in terms of relationship patterns and specific conflicts (not to be confused with conflict theory) and rivalries. The aim is to remain close and true to missionary reports and letters.

The paper is organized into several sections. First, we review some of the current scholarly literature that is based on archival mission material in order to face squarely the Christianity-avoidance syndrome. Second, we describe the roots of the Berlin mission’s Christianity in German romantic-pietism in order to understand better the motivation and perspective of Berlin missionaries. Third, we look at Neander’s method of writing church history and its impact on mission pedagogy, on field methods of missionaries, and on their historical writing. Fourth, we look at published documents in which missionaries explain local events in terms of a world historical framework. Fifth, we show how initial missionary bumbling in the unstable political, economic and social environment of Transvaal took on a specific pattern of community creation, one having as much to do with African ways as with Berlin mission methods. It is at this point,
perhaps earlier, that the Berlin mission’s romantic Christian paradigm bursts to reveal specific quarrels and conflicts that turn the Berlin mission endeavour in Pediland on its head. Using unpublished and published letters, the final section confronts the rivalries that culminate in the founding of the independent Lutheran Bapedi Church.

II. Review of Some Scholarly Literature: the Christianity-Avoidance Syndrome

Christianity is a world tradition that should be subject to anthropological and historical research like any other tradition. And yet, as Burridge (1991:xii) points out people are ignorant about Christianity or have misconceptions, and this despite the fact that we have had four hundred years of missionary ethnographies and missionary aid to anthropology. The aim of this section is to make us aware of the futility of scholarly wriggling vis-a-vis an important tradition.

What scholars should research and how they should use mission archives has been defined largely by English language scholars working in English language mission archives.¹ It is their advice we must review first, keeping in mind the question whether it is equally applicable to the archive of the Berliner Missionswerk

One of the most careful evaluators of English language mission archives and research is J.D.Y. Peel. We start with his three suggestions first. To begin with, Peel (1996) suggests that scholars should use primary unpublished sources like journals and letters because these documents bring one close to the originating experiences (p.70). We agree. Journals and letters take the reader to where the action is. Höckner’s book (1998) about myth and reality of the rain queen Modjadji is a good example. The book is based primarily on Berlin missionary Friedrich Reuter’s unpublished journals. Nevertheless, many of her interpretations of Reuter’s words lack conviction because
Höckner blocks out the very thing that informs his assessments of situations and motivates or brakes his actions, we mean his Christianity. Consequently, if Reuter makes an unfavourable remark about queen Modjadji’s councillors, Höckner contradicts it by offering another perspective, often that of a social scientist (p. 71). But the social scientist, for example the anthropologist named Jaque, speaks from the distanced perspective of a generalizing description and theory, while Reuter speaks from hard specific experiences with distinct individuals and, in his journal, from the heat of passion (cf. Malinowski 1968). As Höckner points out herself, the social science publications of the Kriges do not easily lend themselves to synthesization with Reuter’s Tagebücher (journals) and mission reports.2

Second, Peel argues that anthropologists need to do a much fuller reading of missionary resources in order to gain a deeper understanding as to their potentials and limitations. To make his point, he contrasts anthropological fieldwork which he sees as being guided by prior theories and hypotheses with the more open “historian’s craft” which he sees as having “much less control over his data” (p.72). Contrary to Peel, however, the common experience of anthropologists is to be so profoundly affected by fieldwork as to toss out any theories and hypotheses they took with them to the field (Geertz 1997; Cesara 1982; Wolcott 1995). In fact, where this anthropologist is concerned, the impact of the field and the archive were equally strong (Poewe 1996). Both led the researcher in unanticipated directions (Poewe 1999). Peel’s suggestion that historians have less control over their data does not seem to hold either. The historian Peter Delius’s theoretical perspective based on conflict theory and French Marxism predetermined his attitude toward, and treatment of, Berlin missionary
resources. His use of the Berlin archive was limited to confirming what he wanted to demonstrate (1984:5, 6, 7).

Third, Peel suggests that scholars study especially the letters and journals of black evangelists and converts (1995, 1996). There is no question that unpublished resources of black evangelists and converts, when they exist, are vital aspects of African history and anthropology. It is, for example, an ingredient that is largely missing in Delius’s (1984) portrayal of the Pedi polity. But something else needs to be in place first. Where Berlin missionaries are concerned, scholars need to understand how missionary methods of fieldwork guided missionary work, perceptions and, importantly, their published and unpublished documents.³

It is in their published documents, which are written from the Berlin mission framework of historical writing, that we glimpse the fascinating fact that black pioneers, evangelists or, as Berliners called them, national helpers saw themselves early on, as potential autonomous missionaries in charge of specific Christian communities (Gemeinde) or as founders of independent African churches (Beyer 1913; Hoffmann 1914; Merensky 1899; Sauberzweig-Schmidt 1904; Jooste 1991). It is the battle for a new symbolic universe and its distinct community and status identity that explains the many quarrels, sometimes life threatening ones, between sacred chiefs or chieftainesses and black evangelists. These quarrels are particularly unrelenting when the black evangelist is of royal descent, that is, a potential legitimate contender of office. Some of the most telling quarrels are over land and followers, royal death rituals, and/or a chief’s power to make rain. Unwillingness to comply with these customs threatened the end of chieftainship, its radical transformation, or the seizing of control by, heaven
forbid, a Christian royal contender. Likewise, the realization that Christianity is instrumental in creating a new way of life explains the battles between missionaries and national helpers or converts over initiation rituals, cutting or shaving of hair, dress, beer drinking and polygyny. The important issue is not the allowing or disallowing of anyone of these customs. After all, it is not always nor only the missionary who insisted that polygyny or beer drinking must go (Fiedler 1993; Sandeman 1975:164). The issue is an African-style contest for control. And most missionaries understood this only too well.

The ease with which problems of missionary methods and Christianity are sidestepped can also be seen in the work of Landau (1995:xxi). He concludes that, because there are lots of problems with what religion is, one should “focus on what people themselves show through their behaviour and expressions.” The short-comings of this approach is that it does not take into account that the Christian tradition is not necessarily the same as Christian behaviour (Shils 1981). More importantly, it fails to recognize that Christianity itself may be, indeed, often is the main weapon in contests of power. To make non-western converts’ use of language the main focus of one’s research (Landau1995:xxv), when the focus should be African converts’ use of a world tradition, is like advising Africans to use sticks against their bomb-throwing enemies.

Related to Peel’s and Landau’s call that researchers study the letters and journals of black evangelists and converts is the question of voice or of who speaks for whom (Salamone 1997). The postmodern emphasis on achieving multi-vocality in one’s writing by including transcribed interviews (Crapanzano 1985) or by telling it “through their eyes” (Ritchie 1996:10), is playing havoc with serious research. While witness accounts, books of transcribed interviews, or books in “their voice” have their place, we
have to understand that “their voices” are as subject to bias, vested interest, deception, or exaggeration as “our voices” (Menchú 1983 versus Stoll 1997). In fact, anthropologists and historians usually do not “speak for” anyone, nor should they. Rather, their task is to offer analyses and interpretations based on defined sets of data in terms of theoretical concepts or interpretive frameworks. And if these data were collected, analysed, and written by missionaries than we must know, as mentioned above, what they consider their data to be and what conceptual or interpretive framework informed their reports and analyses.

Unfortunately, the pioneering work of Delius on the Bapedi among whom Berlin missionaries worked makes no attempt to understand Merensky’s and Wangemann’s epistemological quest nor their methods of learning and writing about Pedi culture. Instead, he talks about “the mythology of the Lutheran Church ... and the Berlin missionary society” (1984:108), as if mission endeavours did not also sit on rational pedagogy, practical action, and objective reporting. Consequently, Delius often misrepresents what a missionary actually wrote. For example, he writes that Berlin missionaries concluded that “Christian advance depended on the destruction of chiefly power” (1984:109 and 123, note 4). To prove this he cites Merensky’s Erinnerungen ((1888) 1899:166-7).

Far from arguing the need for the “destruction of chiefly power” as Delius claims, Merensky muses, in line with the Berlin mission approach, that it usually takes two to three generations before, especially, chiefs begin to show an interest in Christianity (ibid.) and he was right. Furthermore, Merensky explains that it is understandably difficult for sacred chiefs to convert because of the religious nature of their office. Delius,
however, dismisses the religious underpinning of chiefly power, although earlier he
gives a superficial functionalist rendition of chiefly rainmaking rituals (Delius 1984:53).
The numerous anthropological studies of sacred chiefdoms, and the understanding of
them offered by Berlin missionaries, are ignored by Delius (Evans-Pritchard 1948; Krige
1943; missionary Beyer 1913). In the process, he eliminates a vital explanatory factor of
the grim conflict between sacred chiefs and black Christian evangelists, on one hand,
and between sacred chiefs and missionaries, on the other. It is not only Merensky or
Reuter (Höckner 1996) who were pressured to adapt their ways to those of an African
chief, Posselt (1888:101) reports from Natal that:

... the Zulu cling to their chiefs like bees to their queen. A Black can barely
live without a chief, and converts downright pressure their teacher to be a
ruler whose decision they are then willing to follow.

Like Delius, other researchers too may take theoretical perspectives that ignore,
are incompatible with, or are hostile to mission endeavours and motives. Stanley
(1996:41-42) recognizes, quite rightly, a tension between the work of academic
historians and missionaries who lived the experience that the historian wants to discuss
as themes, conflicts, and problems. According to Stanley, missionaries worry that too
little is said about their personal contributions, while historians worry that missionary
concerns may compromise the task of writing a properly critical narrative. In our view,
however, Stanley misses a vital point. What is more commonly ignored and
compromised is not the historian’s rendition of things in terms of themes, conflicts, and
problems, but the missionary’s.

III. The Romantic-Pietistic Roots of the Berlin Mission’s Lutheranism: founding the Berlin
Mission Society

In 1824, ten men, primarily aristocrats, high civil servants, and professors who practised a patriotic-romantic Christianity, met in Berlin to draw up a statute for what would become the Berlin Mission Society. It was August Neander’s appeal that they heeded (Richter 1924; Raupp 1990:250). The initial aim of the mission was to collect money in order to educate and support students, to pay for their trips abroad, and to support them in the field where they, in turn, would educate fellow human beings in Christianity.

Berlin mission roots are buried in the eastern Provinces of Prussia, including Pommern (Pomerania), Schlesien (Silesia), and East Prussia, areas that were lost, or returned, to Poland, the Czech Republic, and Russia following Germany’s defeat in the Second World War. Silesia, especially, was the general area to which the Bohemian Brethren (also known as Moravians) moved and where Christian David (1690-1751) built Herrnhut in 1727 on the Berthelsdorf estate of Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760). The general area between Prague to the south, Wrocław (Breslau) to the east, Berlin to the north, and Halle to the west practised a religion of the heart, as Zinzendorf called his trope of Moravian and Lutheran Pietism. Zinzendorf’s maternal grandmother belonged to the Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705) circle, and Zinzendorf himself was educated in August Hermann Francke’s (1663-1727) college in Halle.

From this region, with its Christianity of the heart, early interest in mission, and more than one awakening, came the various groups of Christians who founded the Berlin Mission Society. Berlin had witnessed decades of stormy revolutions, the Napoleonic era, and the enlightenment. But by the 1820s the physical, material, and
sensory deprivations of the past were forgotten (Richter 1924). Romanticism replaced
dry rationalism, and this Romanticism, filtered through Brethren Pietism, shaped the
Prussian awakening and the Christianity of Berlin missionaries.

The groups that helped found and support the Berlin Mission Society included
people from different status groups. For the sake of brevity, only those groups are
mentioned that had the greatest influence on the nature of the mission.

One such group formed around the Silesian Baron Hans Ernst von Kottwitz
(1757-1843). Kottwitz experienced his awakening under the influence of the Brethren.
Initially wealthy, he lost most of his wealth supporting Berlin’s unemployed and poor
students. The men around Kottwitz included young romantic officers and, importantly,
such famous theologians as Tholuck (1799-1877), Hengstenberg (1802-1869), and
Neander (1789-1850).

Tholuck was influenced by Pietism, Moravianism, Schleiermacher, and Neander.
If the latter two inclined him toward Christianity, it was Kottwitz who converted him.
Tholuck was professor of orientalism and theology in Halle. While both Hengstenberg
and Tholuck were part of the 1824 awakening that swept through Berlin, and both
opposed rationalism, Tholuck criticized Lutheran orthodoxy because he saw in it the
roots of rationalism. Consequently, he felt equally comfortable in Calvinist and Lutheran
circles and, like Wangemann (1818-1894) later, belonged to the Prussian Union.\(^6\) By
contrast, Hengstenberg who initially was a Calvinist became a staunch defender of
Lutheranism. The two men, as well as Wangemann, were the source of the
confessional ambivalence in the early years of the Berlin mission. What is important
here is the fact that Tholuck was theologically, practically, and spiritually at home with
Kottwitz, Schleiermacher, and especially Neander. Together they formed the ground in which the Berlin mission approach was rooted. Opposed to form, theirs was a living, liberal, and generous faith (Richter 1924:2; Burckhardt et al 1978:313-4, 257-8, 508; Schaff 1891).

The Berlin circle that developed around Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), born in Breslau, Silesia, also supported founding the mission. While Schleiermacher was a Calvinist, he too was influenced by the Brethren and Halle Pietists. But he was also influenced by pre-Romantics and Romantics. Schleiermacher’s book Reden über die Religion, published 1799, was especially popular in the 1820s with the educated who had nothing but contempt for religion. Among them were Hengstenberg and, especially, Tholuck and Neander. They were initially attracted to Schleiermacher’s method of writing about religiosity and his own religious experiences, rather than theology. But between Tholuck and Schleiermacher a gulf soon formed that is peculiarly reflected in the unbridgeable gap between the older Wangemann and his son-in-law missionary Johannes Winter. In 1818 Tholuck wrote in his journal that Schleiermacher’s Monologues offer “words and ideas and words that can never be turned into reality” (Witte 1884:102). The criticism could also be made of Winter. Even in 1824, when his relationship with Schleiermacher became collegial, Tholuck still criticized what he called the former’s “pantheism” (ibid).

Nevertheless, Schleiermacher’s “receptive-thinking” (Troeltsch 1925:579) or what Polanyi (1964) called “tacit knowledge,” that is, the knowledge that comes from heeding and being affected by, rather than acting in, the universe (Poewe 1994), shaped the attitude of most early Berlin missionaries, including the younger Wangemann (1871).
Heeding was an essential part of Romanticism, of Wangemann’s pedagogy, and of anthropology’s method of participant-observation (Cesara 1982; Poewe 1996; Wolff 1964). Schleiermacher and Neander were forerunners of liberal theology.¹⁰

A lasting influence on the Berlin mission, especially during Wangemann’s tenure, was August Neander (1789-1850). Neander was born as David Mendel of Jewish parents. As a student in Halle, he came under the influence of Schleiermacher with whom he worked closely until the latter’s death. Neander became a renowned church historian and professor at the University of Berlin who treated church history as a chain of Christian biographies. In volume two of his church history (1843:7), Neander remembers the great legacy of Baron von Kottwitz. With Tholuck, among others, he founded a journal that emphasized both knowledge and faith (Burckhardt et al 1978:508). Hermann Theodor Wangemann who would become the Berlin mission’s most illustrious director, was Neander’s assistant (Richter 1924:177; Petrich 1895:16).¹¹

To Neander Christianity was a historical development best expressed, as said, through interlocking biographies. He based his seminal works on historical sources but saw author and subject as kindred spirit. The aim of his approach was to lay bare the “innermost principle” of a person’s life, not because he saw Christianity as born from the depth of man’s nature, but precisely because Christianity was a “power” external to man that was capable of transforming him (Schaff 1891:1613). This approach pervades the works, and became the organizing framework, of Wangemann’s and other Berlin missionaries’ church historical writings.

Many other circles participated in the founding and support of the Berlin Mission Society, from the first founder of a German mission seminary, the Bohemian-Lutheran
pastor Johannes Jänicke (1748-1827), to Prussia’s landed gentry, right up to the courts of Friedrich Wilhelm III and his son, Friedrich Wilhelm IV. Foreign encouragement came from the Danish and London missions and that of the Church of England. But the methods and theories that defined mission practice and writing during Wangemann’s administration, the time period up to 1890, were those of Kottwitz, Hengstenberg, Tholuck, Schleiermacher, and Neander. And of these, Neander’s approach was most important as even the titles of Wangemann’s books Maléo und Sekukuni and Lebensbilder (Life Portraits or Biographies) suggest.

Hermann Theodor Wangemann was one of seven children. He was born in the town of Wilsnack, near Berlin. His family was child rich and money poor. Nevertheless, because his father was renowned for his outstanding musical talent and served as musical director in Berlin, Wangemann did not lack status. Between 1836-40, he studied theology and philology under Neander in Berlin’s university. After he passed his first theological examination in 1840 and to finance further study, while simultaneously satisfying his curiosity about Calvinism, he became a tutor in Bern, Switzerland. Following his PhD in 1844, he became a rector, seminary director, and archdeacon, before becoming the director of the Berlin mission. While Wangemann was a member of the Lutheran Society whose newsletter he edited (Petrich 1895:28), he was comfortable, like Tholuck and Neander, in the Prussian Union.

Wangemann was at home in all strata of society, something that expressed itself in his publication policy, as well as in his choice of wife. Thus his first wife, a von Mittelstedt who died in childbirth, and his second wife, a von Blankenberg who also died early, came from the upper strata of society. In 1858 Wangemann married Helene
Merensky, the sister of the Pedi missionary Alexander Merensky.

Alexander Merensky (1837-1918), born near Liegnitz, Silesia (now Poland), was the son of a chief forester. Owing to the early death of his father, he grew up in the Schindler orphanage. During his youth, he was influenced by the awakening preacher and poet Gustav Knak (1806-1878) who was Wangemann’s close friend and confidant (Petrich 1895: 18, 81, 84). It is highly significant that G. Knak influenced Merensky to become the kind of missionary that he was, namely, simultaneously a superb organizer and outstanding scholar (van der Heyden 1996). Organizational talent, child-like devotion, and outstanding scholarship or other intellectual gifts are the qualities that Wangemann praised in Gustav Knak and Knak's friend Karl Straube (Wangemann 1895:20). Together the two, for example, organized numerous clubs and societies that raised funds for, or otherwise helped, the poor, missions, and others (p.21-23). Importantly, these were qualities that Merensky (and Wangemann himself had) but Winter did not.

Wangemann, Merensky, Johannes Winter who was Wangemann’s son-in-law, and Carl Knothe who was married to Johannes Winter’s sister, Magdalena, were intermarried. Together they shaped the Romantic epoch of the Transvaal mission (see also Wright 1971:95).

IV. Neander's Method of Writing Church History: its impact on mission pedagogy, on field methods of missionaries, and on their historical writing.

Wangemann’s favourite teacher, Neander, wrote eight volumes of a general history of the Christian religion and church (1842-1845). Of these, volume five, which covers the spread of Christianity to a totally “raw people” (roher Volksstamm), shows his
and the Berlin mission’s approach best (Neander 1834:2, 4). These raw, wild, or primitive peoples were Germanic ones who were converted between the years 590 to 814. What Neander shows is that Christianity, by sharing the seed of godly life, creates the germ of all human Bildung, that is, learning, culture, breeding and erudition, not by imposing a finished product on a people from without, but by emerging fresh from within, accommodated to the peculiarity of a people (ibid:2).

An important implication of this view is that Christianity neither arrives nor leaves a people in pure form, so that the Christianity of no two persons nor any two peoples is ever totally alike. Since the Christian seed germinates to create a metanoia or conversion, it results in that person’s individuality. A black or white missionary, therefore, is an individual who, standing apart from a given moral order, attempts to transcend it and communicate to others the vision of another and more satisfying moral order. Consequently, missionaries “give themselves over to the critique and transformation of other people’s business” (Burridge 1991:3, 8, 97).

Neander works with two sets of interrelated data, on one hand, objective data of physical structures and specific people (Neander 1834:9, 17), on the other, experiential data of visions, signs and wonders, healing, and if-then contracts with God (ibid:11-13). He looks at mission centres, for example, Ireland which was then the seat of famous monasteries and intense learning from which highly motivated missionaries left to plant Christianity and Christian education elsewhere (p.17). There are the sacred kings, difficult to convert because they cannot leave the religion of their fathers and people (p.21, 87), nor their sensual pleasures (p.29). There are the outstanding missionaries from Bonifacius (p.90-128) to Willihad (p.160), the quality of their character and
spirituality, their methods and teachings, as said, a string of vivid life portraits or biographies. In short, there are missionaries, indigenous holy men, superficial mass conversions and mass re-paganization, successes and failures all described in the language that early Berlin missionaries used to describe their experiences in the Transvaal.

Neander’s method is echoed in the pedagogy of the Berlin mission. Its most practical aspect is emphasis on language learning: ancient languages (Greek, Latin, Hebrew) from whence the tradition came, modern languages (English, Dutch, German) of the current transmitters, indigenous languages (Sesotho, Mandarin, Tamil) to which the tradition is transmitted. In the 1860s, the Berlin Mission Society made the explicit decision that only those who had a gift for language learning were trained to become missionaries (Wangemann 1882:30). The study of seven languages, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, German, English, Dutch, and at least one indigenous language in which the new missionary had to give his first sermon before he was ordained and permitted to marry, was central to their five year program of study (ibid: 18-24, 28-34).

Berlin missionaries were aware that they were to plant the Christian tradition into new parts of the world. The how of it was worked into their long seminary training. Wangemann built on and continued to develop the program soon after he entered office in 1865:

For men, who are to build up Christian churches in new areas of the world, who often have to lay the first foundations, it is most important that they are not strangers to the experiences of the early centuries, which is why...church history is taught for one hour once a week
(1882:34)...Instruction covers especially the age of the apostolic and church fathers, as well as that of the reformers...especially emphasized are life portraits of important men in the development of the Christian church (1882:35).

Along with the emphasis on both, apostolic fathers and "church reformers," Berlin missionaries were also instructed to be receptive to the spiritual needs of their followers:

...in the presence of otherwise untrained listeners, he (the missionary) has to enter the special school of the Holy Spirit. There he will learn to discern their (the Africans') spiritual needs through prayer and receptive listening and find the means to their hearts (Wangemann 1882:35).

Berlin missionaries taught church history as life portraits, not only to their students at home, but also to African converts, especially so-called national helpers (Wangemann 1882; cf. Elbourne 1991b). Consequently, early African converts learned to think in universalistic terms. In addition, however, they learned two other things from German missionaries: (1) the idea that Christianity could be followed in the distinct ethnic manner of their ancestors (see also Fiedler (1977) 1993); and (2) the idea that their own life portraits were analogous to those of the founders of the early Christian church. Right from the beginning, therefore, African Christians learned to tell stories about themselves as fathers of local congregations and churches (also Peel 1995:585). It gave some African Christians a clear sense of mission, namely, to found a distinct African independent church, when the time was right (Becken 1985:14)

Another dimension of the Berlin mission’s pedagogy was the ability of
missionaries to heed “the other,” to think and live their way into the specific culture of the people (Eigentümlichkeit des Volkes) (Wangemann 1882:28). In practice it meant acquiring an intimate knowledge of the people's language, grammar, and narratives. Berlin missionaries were instructed, not only to (ablauschen), to listen and take down a people's dictionary, that is, to take in the "whole beauty, complexity, and regularity of a language," but also to "hear their way into" the intricacy of that people's stories (Wangemann 1882:29).

Berlin missionaries spent much time sitting around fires listening to Africans tell stories. Thus Beyer writes that almost every evening missionary Reuter sat around the fire with Africans; here he could best study how they thought and spoke (1913:54). It was also part of the Berlin method that their missionaries learn the art of African preaching from gifted black evangelists, and if a missionary did not come across such an evangelist accidentally, as Merensky and Knothe did, he was sent one by another missionary or superintendent (Beyer 1913:54; Hoffmann 1914). Pioneer missionaries, therefore, worked intimately with African Christians.

Like Merensky, so Wangemann too experienced as genuine, and thus recorded the holiness of early African Christians. On his first research tour to the South African mission field, from 1866-1867, he met Jacob Mantladi, Jan Mafadi, Martin Sebusane, and Josef Kathedi, among others (Wangemann 1871:41, 7-104; Merensky 1888 [1899]:74-79; Nachtigal 1861 - 1870). Wangemann and Merensky saw in Mantladi someone akin to a "Roman Catholic saint" (Wangemann 1871:53). As it was, Mafadi died in 1862 and Mantladi in 1870. It would be men encouraged and converted by these two, specifically, Johannes Dinkonjane and the above mentioned Martin Sewuschane,
who would start the first African independent churches.

The Neander method of writing church history as a string of life portraits is particularly obvious in the works of Wangemann. Like Neander, Wangemann made use of his own findings and experiences, as well as such source materials as the diaries and letters of other missionaries. These were easily available to him in the archive of his mission society. From these he published several different kind of books. They included: (1) his journal (1868); (2) the story of African martyrdom and church formation centred on the hostile chiefs of Maléo and Sekukúni (1869:4);²⁴ (3) life portraits of important early Bapedi Christians which were contributions to nineteenth-century culture and church history (1871); (4) historical and ethnological descriptions of the inhabitants of South Africa so as to highlight state and church formation as well as the battles of mission and race (1881); and (5) the educational program of the Berlin Mission seminary (1882).

Of the above mentioned books, Life Portraits from South Africa (Lebensbilder aus Südafrika) (1871) and Maléo and Sekukuni (Maléo und Sekukúni) (1869) are the most important ones for our purposes. In the Foreword of Lebensbilder, Wangemann declares that the book was written for clergy and students of missions, thus making these African portraits part of a general church and culture history of the nineteenth century.²⁵ The shape of the written portraits was also affected by Wangemann's intention, influenced by the pietistic tradition, to write in such a manner as to reveal the hand of God in the events of the times.²⁶

Wangemann is explicit about the sources of his data. For Lebensbilder, he relied on: his own Diary which he kept during his research trip 1866-1867; a record of
dialogues, interviews, and experiences in the field; and the Diary of missionary Nachtigal which includes detailed life portraits of important early African converts.²⁷

Nachtigal and Wangemann attempted to write "photography-near portraits" of individuals (Wangemann 1871:5).²⁸ They did this by recording detailed conversations that captured the expressions and thought pattern of the Bapedi in order to lay bare, like Neander, the “innermost principle” of their life (p.5). According to Wangemann, who was, like Merensky, an outstanding narrator (Richter 1924:185), the Bapedi were bestowed with the gift of accurate retelling of conversations and happenings. Since the contact between pioneer missionaries and early converts was extremely close, the latter told their stories to the missionary who put them to paper the same day (p.5). As a result, argued Wangemann (1871:6), one has on paper and before one's eyes the whole drama of the transformation of the Bapedi soul. This romantic drama consisted of two kinds of struggle. The internal struggle was reflected especially in the dreams of Bapedi Christians and shows their new consciousness (Merensky 1888 [1899]:126-7; Nachtigal 1861-1870; Wangemann 1871: 7ff; cf. Neander 1834: 35, 37). The external struggle had to do primarily with persecution of African Christians by Bapedi chiefs and non-Christians, and with the wars between the Bapedi and Boers (Wangemann 1869; Merensky 1899).

V. Missionary Bumbling and Community Patterns

Histories written by Berlin missionaries are based on distinct patterns of relationship and community which are seen to have their source in the Pauline experience. We need to look at this more closely because we shall see it again in the letter of the secessionists to Director Wangemann.
In Maléo und Sekukúni [1869] Wangemann and, for that matter, Merensky [in 1899] draw an analogy between the experience of Apostle Paul in Greece with the experience of missionaries in Bapediland. Four Bapedi men and as many Berlin missionaries founded the Bapedi mission church in 1861. From 1865 on, following the violent persecution of 1864, the mission church came to be centred on the mission station of Botshabelo.

Interestingly enough, with but minor variation, this pattern is picked up again by Beyer (1913) in his history of Medingen station, and by Hoffmann (1914) in his life history of Nkupane Timotheus Sello. Beyer’s book has a particularly interesting structure because he shows how seemingly totally unrelated events occurring in different parts of the world come together into a Pauline experience. Chapter one starts with the conversion story of the main character of this history, namely, Kashane Mamathopa (Beyer 1913:26-30; Crafford 1991:145-6). When, in 1872, he returned home to Bolubedu from Port Elizabeth and Kingwilliamstown he began to preach and soon converted three others, Johannes Mokarametla (later Nakampe), Paulus Manakcha, and Philippus Modiba (Beyer 1913:31, 32). Each convert in turn converted others and formed small fellowships that recognized Kashane as their spiritual authority. The stories of the main converts contain all the Brethren, pietistic, Wesleyan, or charismatic Christian elements: premonitory dreams, bible roulette, and the “if-then pact” with God, for example, if he (Modiba) were healed, then he would serve God (p.33).

Now comes the second structural element of Beyer’s history. At around the same time in the 1870’s three events occurred that would bring Reuter to Bolubedu to work
with Kashane. First, Beyer describes a dismal mission festival organized by Wangemann in Potsdam which, nevertheless, contained a premonitory event. A Miss von Meding informed Wangemann of her will to make available 7,500 Marks upon her death to build a mission station in South Africa (p.36-37). Second, Beyer describes Superintendent missionary Knothe’s travel in Bolubedo where Knothe came upon some of Kashane’s men who were discussing bible stories. He interpreted this as an omen to build a mission station there and started negotiations with queen Modjadji’s chief councillor, Poke (p.37-38). Third, Beyer describes a premonitory event that took place in the Franco-Prussian war on the battle field of Mars la Tour. There in a battle led by von Hindenburg, the missionary to be Friedrich Reuter came upon a regiment of Chasseurs d’Afrique. Being moved by the pain of the “sons of Africa” (p.41), Reuter made his compact with God: if God would keep him alive, then he would serve as a missionary in Africa (pp.38-41). Having placed the history of Medingen and its main protagonists within the context of world history, Beyer details the history of Medingen in terms of those events that put the reader close to the originating experience.

Analogous structures are found in the missionary Carl Knothe and Timotheus Sello story (Hoffmann 1914). A significant difference is, however, that Sello is not related to chiefs and has no natural (ethnic) following.

VI. Founding of the Bapedi Lutheran Church

1. Intruders, Rivals, and Chiefs: Africans begin to rewrite church history

Various scholars have explained the formation of the Dinkonjane Lutheran Church and/or the Bapedi Lutheran Church as part of an independent church movement called pre-Ethiopianism or Ethiopianism. The latter is said to have swept
through southern Africa in the mid-eighteen eighties (Sauberzweig-Schmidt 1904; Axenfeld 1906; Greschat 1967; Kamphausen 1976: 84-88; Sundkler 1949). In the Pedi case, Kamphausen and Greschat find the motives for secession in a letter dated April 1, 1890, written by the secessionists, as well as in letters written by Johannes Winter and the Commissioner of Native Affairs. Simply put, the motives were (1) “being governed wie ein Stück Vieh, like (a piece of) cattle”30 and (2) “seeing that our mission does not recognize the growth of its children” (Greschat 1967:536).

Sauberzweig-Schmidt (1904:20-26), who describes church independence movements of several missions in southern Africa, argues that the main reasons for Ethiopianism are (1) “self-interests and ambitious plans of secession leaders,” and the (2) “ambivalent social position of helpers” (p. 20). The latter, in turn, have to do with delayed ordinations; low pay; lack of ownership of churches and schools that helpers and their congregations built; confusion by helpers of self-maintenance, which missions wanted, with self-rule, which helpers wanted (p.22). While Sauberzweig-Schmidt argues that helpers’ complaints are legitimate and should be answered, he nevertheless sees the overarching cause for Ethiopianism in racial tension, specifically, African racism against whites (p.23, 27). In this he reflects a common view of that time.

Sauberzweig-Schmidt makes an interesting remark from which we want to take off. Seeing Ethiopianism as a negative development, he argues that secession is far more frequent in English missions than German ones for the simple reason that, unlike German missionaries, most English missionaries do not bother to learn the indigenous languages. Consequently, they cannot do what missionaries who speak the African’s language can do, namely enter the African thought world until they become a “Mosotho
to the Basotho” (van der Merwe 1987:839; Sauberzweig-Schmidt 1904:29). Because there is an irony here, we examine the events centred on the Pedi secession as they are described by Berlin missionaries, the director, and the secessionists in the Berichte. These resources suggest that the specific pattern of Bapedi church independentism is a consequence of several factors: (1) the Berlin mission’s change in educational policy pertaining to “national helpers”; (2) the tension between Winter’s Schleiermachian theology of love and surrender versus the mission’s more Lutheran theology of organizing, studying, and governing; (3) an intensely competitive religious environment.

In the Berliner Missionsberichte (BMB) of 1881, Wangemann reviewed his policy to educate national helpers by comparing Lovedale College in Natal with Botshabelo in Transvaal. In the past, Wangemann argues, a seminary or university was not the best way to educate national helpers because such institutes did not conform to the traditional character (Volkstümlichkeit) of South African tribes (BMB 1881:261). The African way demanded a tight personal link between the person being educated and his teacher who must be father and chief to the student (ibid).

In the mid eighteen seventies, however, Wangemann began to change his view. The reason for the change was the phenomenon of numerous baptized Basotho returnees from the Cape. Their Christian ideas were immature enough, feared Wangemann, to be mixed indiscriminately with non-biblical ideas. The result would be a wild and wonderful Christianity that threatened to become “a plague” rather than “salt” for their fellows (p.261).

To prevent confusion, the Berlin mission determined to post thoroughly educated, biblically grounded national helpers in those specific places where Africans began to
long for “Christ’s salvation” (p.261-2). In the past, these national helpers were personally educated by capable missionaries. In fact, missionaries Knothe and Merensky educated some national helpers so thoroughly that they passed their public examination before the assembled synod. The examination qualified national helpers to assume positions of evangelists, teachers, or national preachers. By 1881 there was enough pressure from national helpers as well as from Knothe and Merensky to warrant starting national helper seminaries in Botshabelo and Mphome.31 The former was directed by Johannes Winter, the latter by Winter’s brother-in-law Carl Knothe.

In 1881 Martinus Sewushane wrote a letter to the Väter (Fathers or Committee, the decision making body of the Berlin mission) that was translated by Trümpelmann and published in the BMB (1882:42-46) with Trümpelmann’s footnotes and commentary. This letter and Sewushane’s report about his (Lobethal) station, also published in BMB (1882:474-5), give important insights into Sewushane’s ambitions and place them in the context of local conflicts and competition from, especially, independent black missionaries associated with the Weslayan or London missions.

In this letter, Sewushane reviews the history of Botshabelo, emphasizing the important work done by Mafadi, Mantladi, and himself, before Merensky settled in. He describes how Merensky educated him and how, since then, his education has stagnated, lacking depth. Then he asks for two things, a church bell and, importantly, a teacher, specifically, Johannes Winter (BMB 1882:42). He asks for the latter because Winter “knows Sesotho well, writes well, and is capable of telling me what something shows (means)” (p.43).

After his brief review of Mafadi, Mantladi, and his work, before Merensky,
Sewushane asks a telling question:

In that time (1862) I asked the teacher and said: what must one do to become a teacher of Menschen (men)? They answered me and said: ...

The apostle did this: they gathered the people (believers), laid their hands on one and prayed for him, so that he became a teacher (p.42).

This theme is picked up again after Sewushane first explains that despite material deprivation, he remains calm drawing power from teaching. He then writes:

Many of my friends say, as long as I live under you (serve the mission): I am a real fool. When I search foolishness, I find it lacking (when I examine what they say, I don’t think that my attitude is foolish). To them, however, I say; you are fools. They say, no, you are a real fool. Despite all your learning and instruction you have nothing from the teachers, German teachers are stingy (p.43).

A puzzled Trümpelmann comments that Sewushane is probably hoping to be ordained, which Trümpelmann thinks unlikely because Sewushane’s abilities are limited (p.46). With the benefit of hindsight, we think Sewushane was aware of his loss of value to newer, younger missionaries. Consequently, he asked for nothing less than to be recognized as a founding figure in his own right and, given the pressures on him from his people and Wesleyan rivals, he is suggesting an independent church (Cf Becken 1985:19).

Local pressures on Sewushane are described by him in terms of analogies and idioms that Trümpelmann preserves but we omit for the sake of brevity. Sewushane was threatened by the rivalry of two independent black missionaries: (1) Makoko, a
former Berliner who was expelled for womanizing and (2) Lotho, a returnee from the Cape who gathered a small fellowship (almost 100) and built a church that would later receive support from Methodists (BMB 1882:45; Jooste 1991:129). As was common, the two independent missionaries cooperated closely with sub-chiefs Marishane and Motshatshi who, in turn, were in conflict with chief Moreoane, Sewushane’s father-in-law and supporter (BMB 1882:45). Also part of the pattern at the time was the support sought by African independent missionaries from white missionaries. Loto looked to Londoners and Wesleyans, Sewushane requested Johannes Winter.

The irony of which we spoke earlier is simply this. Contrary to Sauberzweig-Schmidt (1904), the first Africans to initiate independent churches were precisely those national helpers who had close ties to missionaries that spoke their language and from whom they received personal education. But national helpers pressed for secession only after they also secured the support of a chief. The best of the national helpers, among whom Sewushane must be included (Wangemann 1871) despite Trümpelmann’s doubts, understood the need for further education, but wanted it on their own terms from a dedicated missionary. They also wanted apostolic sanctions which English and American (bishops) were more willing to dispense than Germans.

In the BMB (1883:332-3), Wangemann edited a further report about the “reliable” Sewushane’s station, Lobethal. We learn not only that, despite Trümpelmann, Sewushane’s ordination had been considered for some time. We also learn that the rivalry between chief Marishane with his independent missionary Loto and chief Moreoane with his national helper Sewushane split the latter’s 200 strong Gemeinde (fellowship). Wangemann explains further the Berlin mission’s worry about Wesleyan
expansion. Since 1881, the Methodist superintendent Watkins stationed himself in Pretoria in order to coordinate the lively activities of several independent ordained Africans. Wangemann worried, therefore, that Wesleyans would occupy areas served by Berlin missionaries. In this report too we learn that Wesleyan independentism has gone on for some time, for the Wesleyan Letshebele told one of the Berlin missionaries (Bauling of Leydenburg) that he had been called by Sekukuni’s and Dinkonjane’s people to become their missionary (p.333).

In 1886, after Wangemann’s return from South Africa where, in 1885 he ordained Martinus Sewushane and the personal student and confidant of Knothe, Timotheus Sello (Richter 1924: 267; Hoffmann 1914:69), the Berlin mission was faced with the largest deficit in its history (Petrich 1895:72). To rectify this situation, Wangemann published a long report on the state of the Berlin Mission (BMB 1886:313ff). The goal was to persuade German donors to give more at a time when the political climate had decidedly turned against the Berlin missions’s activities in someone else’s colonies, because Germany had just succeeded to have some of its own (p.329).

The report is a fascinating document. It reviews not only the threat of the Wesleyans for the Berliners in Sekukuniland. It also reviews the history of the Berlin Mission Society from Neander’s call (p.322), to the confessional battles and the Prussian Union (p.323), to the importance of Pietism for the mission. Berliners combined Pietism, emphasized Wangemann now, with “studieren und regieren” (studying and governing, p.324) and with the Lutheran Confession’s emphasis on “Ordnung,” order (ibid). The latter theological emphasis is, in retrospect, a criticism of Winter’s Schleiermachian practice. The document ends with practical suggestions for
the reorganisation of the mission’s fund-raising bodies in Germany. This was done and
the debt was cancelled (1895:76).

2. Johannes Winter and his Schleiermachian “openness” to the Bapedi

According to Greschat (1967:538), Richter (1924), and others, Martinus
Sewushane and Johannes Winter together played the main roles in the secession. By
contrast Wangemann, who was shaken by his daughter and her husband, Johannes
Winter, having “gone native,” blamed the secession and the construction of the
secession letter solely on Johannes Winter. Who then was Johannes Winter? And why
did Wangemann, a very clear and logical thinker, against all evidence, blame Winter
(BMB 1891:318ff)?

Johannes Winter (1847-1921) is the son of the Berlin missionary August Wilhelm
Winter who, with his wife Anna Schüttge, was among the very first missionaries sent to
South Africa. Johannes Winter was born there, played freely with African children, but
from age five grew up in Germany to which his father returned in 1852. Eventually,
Johannes Winter studied theology at the Berlin university and in 1873, aged 26, he was
sent to South Africa by the mission. Following his ordination, he married Anna Maria
Dorothea Elisabeth Dolorosa Wangemann, the daughter of Director Wangemann and
his first wife, a princess of Mecklenburg, who died in childbirth (Winter 1977:1).

When the national helpers seminary was started in Botshabelo, 1878, Johannes
Winter became its first head. After the defeat of chief Sekukuni by the English in 1879,
however, the mission asked Johannes Winter to found a station near Sekukuni’s capital,
Thaba Mosegu. This he did in 1880 while missionary Mars replaced him at the seminary
in Botshabelo. From 1882 onward, the Committee in Berlin had to handle frequent
problems involving Johannes Winter. The solution was usually moving him or imploring him to return to Germany, to no avail.

Johannes Winter was a theologian in the tradition of Schleiermacher. He had the superb gift of assimilating to and portraying the African mind with its strengths and weaknesses, free of denigration. Even when he declares, for example, that natives are foolishly superstitious, he does so without insult, for in the very next sentence he compares Africans to the old Athenians who likewise were foolishly superstitious and yet had “high mental capabilities” (Winter 1914:374). Superstition, writes Winter, “does not always ... indicate mental incapacity.” Rather, “it shows a feeling of dependence on unknown powers” that “Schleiermacher regards ... as the root of all religions” (ibid).

It is clear from Greschat (1967), Kamphausen (1976), and Winter’s own letters and reports that an independent Church was discussed for years by various national helpers, elders, as well as chief Kholokhoe and his councilors (No Name:8). According to Winter, it was done without his and other Berlin missionaries’ knowledge. There were ample opportunities for meetings of national helpers to discuss church politics among themselves. Mission festivals and synod meetings were routine and were attended by both Berlin missionaries and national helpers. Since Berlin missionaries excluded national helpers from business meetings, the latter met alone. At any rate, in the BMB (1886:212) it is reported that superintendent Nauhaus instituted a conference for national helpers of Bapediland which met for the first time August 4, 1886, under the chairmanship of Johannes Winter. It met several times a year thereafter.

For the year 1886, Winter's journal shows vividly his Hingabe to the Pedi and the profound effect on him of one of the heightened moments that epitomizes
Schleiermacher’s view of religion (Schleiermacher 1799:370; No Name:4-10). The occasion was Winter’s contraction of malarial fever which resulted in a heightened sensitivity to nature, people, and fellowship described in moving Romantic prose that captures the Pietistic and Schleiermachian concept of Ergriffenheit\textsuperscript{43} (No Name:6-7). Job Pududu, Jakob Morabane and other men gathered to pray for him. Their concern for him, “who did so little for them,” moved Winter to tears (No Name:7). The moment culminated in Winter’s being carried on a stretcher on the shoulders of eight men to Kholokoe’s home and from there to his own where he was met by many (p.8). There can be no doubt that the wave of emotion in which this moment was awash was Winter’s religion.\textsuperscript{44}

He describes his growing appreciation of chief Kholokoe (p. 9,13) and the easy friendship with Petrus Thutloane (p.9), as well as Salamo Motlane in whose hut he stayed during his illness. The illness also became the occasion for long and intimate discussions with Salamo, chief Kholokoe and, importantly, Winter’s competition the Wesleyans Nathanael and Adam (p.8, 13-15).

The national helper closest to Winter was not, it would seem, Martinus Sewushane, but Job Pududu (p.10; Winter 1977:8). It is the latter whom Winter taught to read and write German and to play chess (1977:8). By contrast with the warmth for Pududu, Winter is rather distant toward Martinus Sewushane. Winter cannot understand why Martinus and his wife keep the inside of their house unattractive when Sewushane is so adept at crafting. He is upset that the church roof in Lobethal is in disrepair without signs of plans to repair it. He also criticizes Martinus for his lack of hospitality toward Kadach and himself (No Name:10).\textsuperscript{45}
A recurring theme in this document is the sometimes bitter competition with Wesleyans in Lobethal and Thaba Mosegu. Apparently, the Dinkoanyaneans too stoked the fire of hate against German missionaries (ibid:15). Nevertheless, Winter is determined to build a church there for which he needs the chief’s consent (ibid:13-15). National helper conferences were organized to find strategies to achieve this goal (p.14).

Given Winter’s close contact with national helpers, church elders, and some of the chief’s councillors, it is not surprising that he knew, since 1887, of their hidden opposition to the mission (Greschat 1967:534). Nevertheless, in 1889, when Sewushane was furious over his removal from Lobethal and threatened to leave the mission with his followers right then and there, Winter persuaded him to accept his lot (BMB 1890:321 quoted in No Name:29). Consequently, missionary Mars, who had left the mission in 1884 and was a physician in Middelburg, was first approached by the secessionists to be their white mediator (Greschat 1967:534). While Mars was not averse to founding an independent church, he asked that they delay the matter for a year to be better prepared (ibid).

The signatories of the secession letter worked closely together. One reads this in their short Berichte to the Committee in Berlin. For example, in his report of December 30, 1889, Johannes Madinoane visits dying congregants with Thomas Selepe (p.vii) or reports hiding a boy, whose chief demands his circumcision, with Petrus Thuloane. Likewise, Thomas Selepe reports (same date) that Kadach (addressed as Mijnheer, not as teacher) sent him with Petrus Thuloane and Johannes Madinoane to enquire about the chief’s mother’s desire that he “throw away” his wife and marry the mother’s
Two other reports are very telling. The first is that of Petrus Thuloane, the other that of Martinus Sewushane.

Petrus Thuloane includes in his report dated December 29, 1889, a conversation with a black Wesleyan whom Thuloane suspects of wanting to create his own community:

A man who was under the whites in (Moscheschland) came back. His name is Philemon Motsepa; the same said to me: “Show me a place among the heathens where I can live and teach.” I: “I should do this”? He: “Yes.” I: “Wait and tell me tomorrow, but think about it first.” Another day he came and talked with me. Thus, I: “To whom will this town (religious community) belong?” He: “To you.” I: “No, you are cheating me, for if I were to find people, could I baptize them”? He: “Yes.” I: “No, you are cheating me, why did you go to Rasadi (?) To Mr. Lowe”? He: “You are right.” I: “Why do you cheat me, would not Mr. Lowe come and baptize them, when you say to me: give me a place, that I may teach; or would Mr. Kadach baptize them”? He: “Yes.” (With reference to the latter). I refused, however, and said: “You are looking for discord, even here, where there is none, you are looking to call it up here, as it is at Marioane and at Masadi and in Bopedi.” He: “No, I don’t love strife.” I: “And yet, it would happen just so, if I placed you here, for I and Mr. Kadach are one. And the people that you would find belong to Mr. Kadach and will be baptized by him; in this way they also belong to me and if it would be otherwise I would not
I refuse, if I could serve another (Mr. Lowe) and want to work only for myself." He: "I heard you. For you have power, let me live with you (nearby), I see well that these your stories are true, I too am fleeing from strife." And so he built near me.

I spoke also with Wildebeest, the chief Musifane (near Phokoane) for the sake of the word of God, he however refused ...(Thuloane 1889).

In this report, Petrus Thuloane tells a returned black missionary who became affiliated with the Wesleyans that he Thuloane would be the future religious leader of this community. Only when the returnee agrees to this, is he accepted.

Telling too is Martinus Sewushane’s report, dated December, 1889. A third into the letter, he addresses the Committee as Väter:

... if you, in order to continue your work, poured out the Holy Spirit on people (ordained them), even if it were 5. For you are the first here in this land. Wesleyans came later, all the same they ordained 6 this year. Why do you shy away from doing this? Do you shy away in fear that they (the ordained) may sin or become conceited? No, where I am concerned, I say: that which drives a person to become conceited and sin is this, when you let them become hard (like a meal that only becomes harder from overcooking) and when the right time for their work has passed, then: ... he feeds when he is still young, thus a man has power when he is still a youth, when he is an old man, he no longer has the power to act (Sewushane 1889:ii).

The letter makes good sense and captures the essence of the secession plan:
Sewushane, the first of the living converts (and ordained) is the head of the independent church-to-be. The time to secede is now and five other national helpers are ready to be ordained immediately.

By now Winter too knows of the plan to found an independent church. December 12, 1889, he wrote Director Wangemann:

There is a movement afoot among several (approximately 30) national helpers in the synod of which not a single missionary has an inkling, for even I was only told about it in confidence a short time ago. I write this ahead of time, in the event that their plans are realized; it is not in my power to discuss the matter further. I am not permitted to do so and it would not serve any purpose (see Greschat 1967:534).

April 1, 1890, on behalf of several national helpers and elders, Job Pududu crafted a letter in Sesotho to the mission which Winter translated and forwarded. Wangemann quotes from this letter the following unambiguous statement: "We want to build the Bapedi Church as an independent one with its own constitution and laws" [Berliner Missionsberichte 1891]. Authors of the letter thanked the mission for its thirty years of work among them. They advised the Committee, however, that their missionaries should now leave. They [the Bapedi] were ready to look after their own affairs. The letter was signed by forty seven men of whom eight were national helpers and most others elders of thirteen congregations.

The seven-page letter dated April 1, 1890, is too long to translate and quote in full. What follows are some of its highlights. Unfortunately, the dramatic imagery of the letter is usually omitted for the sake of brevity.
Using the analogy of a child that grows and matures and becomes independent of its parents, Bapedi elders and evangelists, through Johannes Winter, argued that they were ready to take on full responsibilities for the founding of an independent (sebständige, p.2) and free (freie, p.3) church. They justified this statement further by arguing that the last great missionary sent them was Merensky [p.3]. Since then, and while many elders served faithfully for 6 to 7 years, or 12 years, and in the case of Martinus Sebusane 32 years, they received no recognition for their achievements [p.3]. On the contrary, their growth in knowledge and understanding was denigrated [p.3].

They then reminded Members of the Committee in Berlin that it was Martinus Sebusane who, “although not taught by missionaries in the beginning but by God,” caught the “first game” [p.4]. All congregations, from Botshabelo onward, “were seeds that he sowed” [p.4] along with his friend Merensky. And yet always and again Sebusane was removed from the congregations he founded, so that “the bees [Berlin missionaries] could move in, settle in the beautifully prepared nest...because they...were unable to create nests of their own” [p.4].

Then followed a list of anxieties and complaints:

AThey want to push us aside, while they provide the children of this Volk with beautiful houses and paradisiacal lodgings so that they remain...

They have no confidence in that which is done by us, they expect nothing from it, they remove it out of envy, so that one can not point to something that is done by our efforts. Any understanding between us has ended; even what they tell you about us and our communities is that which they do without our agreement. We are treated like animals that cannot speak.
How can there be agreement when one doesn’t sit together, doesn’t ask one another for advice, doesn’t converse about one another’s lives and activities. These are the reasons why a gulf developed between us, more than anything that existed at the time of our Father Merensky. At that time there was a good sense of community between teachers and parishioners; since he has left a terrible lowering among religious communities has occurred. A teacher dealt so cruelly with a community, that even when a parishioner was near death, he did not show mercy, be it then that the parishioner paid his last three pence to thank for church and place...(p.5)

Then the elders continued: “…And we are tired of the harsh control, the wretched small laws, the foolish payments, that have grown in our midst through them ...⁴⁹ We want to stand on our own feet, we don’t want to be carried on backs until we have grey hair. We want to build the Bapedi church as a united, common, and free church, ruled by its own laws” [p.6]. All missionaries should leave, as the Apostle Paul too left Macedonia [p.2, 6]. Since the teaching of “our dear father Dr. M. Luther” is “our mother” [p.6], “we shall die in the Lutheran faith” [p.6]. Therefore, no missionaries need remain in Bopedi, except Johannes Winter “who has a heart that shows us love” [p.6]. He arrived to save our souls and to be poor for our sake. “Let us have him” and “give him two assistants” that he may “ordain among us those who are ready” to carry on the work [p.6] [Archive of the Berliner Missionswerk].

Sewushane’s and Thuloane’s reports written before the secession letter, take on great importance when we look at them in the light of missionary Kadach’s journal for the last quarter of 1890 (BMB 1891:318ff; quoted in No Name:40). There Wangemann,
who selected the passages from Kadach for the Missionsberichte, reports that a particularly fierce battle flared up near the station Phokoane to which Petrus Thutoane, who was ordained in the independent Lutheran Bapedi Church August 24, 1890, returned to make true his claims of 1889. Apparently, Thuloane had the support of a Boer (from whom the community rented its plots) and a Feldkornet Boshof to be the sole cleric. But chief Phokoane opposed Thuloane and threatened to move away with the major part of the congregation rather than accept Thuloane as teacher. This changed the Boer’s mind who then agreed to let Daniel Phuphuto, a national helper who remained loyal to the Berlin mission, teach there. Phuphuto was put under severe pressure from the Bopedians to join them, as were many others, including especially, Timotheus Sello.

March 26, 1890, Martin Sebusane wrote the following letter to missionary Kadach who resisted the secession:

Now you are no longer insulting people but God. My story you will hear from others, for this story will be talked about in the whole world, in Africa and in Europe. The work that I started in 1856 I have now completed [No Name:36].

In that letter, which roots the Bapedi Lutheran Church in a time before the arrival of Berlin missionaries, Sebusane also made clear that the movement was inspired entirely by Bapedi. What is most important, is the fact that Sebusane saw independence as the end result of his life’s work.

As for Winter, his usefulness to the Bapedi Lutheran Church was relatively short lived. He mediated until the government of the Transvaal Republic officially recognized
the independent Church. But he became too involved in Pedi politics so that Kholokoe’s successor, Sekukhune II, asked the British, during the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), to remove him from the area (van der Merwe 1987:894). Between 1903 and 1905, Winter was an as Agent of the Transvaal Consolidated Land and Exploration Company. Part of his job was to get compensation of one hundred pounds, from the Berlin mission, for having illegally collected rents from natives for gardens cultivated by them on the Company’s farm of Tweeloopfontein. During this time too, he compiled and published at his expense Sermons in Sesotho. In 1905 he built a small seminary for the Bapedi Lutheran Church, but it never took off for lack of funds (van der Merwe 1987:894). Winter died in 1921 on the farm of his eldest son. His legacy seems to be that his story, however inadequately it is known, continues to stir the imagination of those who seek the holy grail of perfect inter-cultural communication.

In the previous section we saw that Berlin missionaries described the founding of churches in terms of distinct patterns. These tended to be centred on two men, a Berlin missionary and his most competent and loyal African helper. The difference in formal status between missionary and helper did not prevent Merensky (1899), Wangemann (1871), Beyer (1913) or Hoffmann (1914) from naming specific Africans as having been the initiators of the ventures. Nevertheless, they left the implied hierarchy in tact, since missionaries in the field placed the same emphasis on studieren und regieren (to study and govern) vis-a-vis helpers that they experienced as students of the seminary in
Berlin and for which the Berlin mission was renowned (Wangemann 1886:324). While Wangemann understood that ordained Africans would have equal status with white missionaries, the latter did not. Jooste (1991) and Crafford (1991:vii) call these so-called national helpers pioneers or church founders. Their justification seems to be political or a matter of common sense, rather than theoretical. It seems to us, however, that a better way to describe the church founding might be in terms of Becken’s (1985:19-28) three-phase model that he uses to explain the formation of African Independent Churches (AICs). Only here, we want to apply it to the formation of African mission churches some of which gave rise to AICs.

Time permits us to look at but three developments of such Gemeinschaften. One was centred on Merensky and Martinus Sewushane in Botshabelo with Sewushane responsible for the satellite station Lobethal. A Second community was centred on Knothe and Timotheus Sello in Mphome with Sello responsible for the satellite station Leschoane. The third community was centered on Reuter and Kashane Mamathepa in Medingen with Kashane responsible for Modibeng. Each of these centres had the potential to develop into an African Independent Church. In fact, only one did. Why did it and not the others?

To answer that question we must look at each venture in terms of Becken’s three-phase model. First, the founding phase. According to Becken (1985:19-20), this phase is shaped by a “wandering prophet” type of leader. During his travels, he preaches, heals, and moves on leaving behind him a chain of tiny Christian groups led by local converts who see the prophet-figure as a spiritual authority. Finally, he settles builds a church centre, usually, also a healing centre and leads an ascetic and
meditative life. Various festivities tie the groups to the centre. Such prophets, argues Becken, once belonged to a mission where they were evangelists, preachers, or pastors. The phase ends with the death of the healing prophet. Leadership replacement takes place among terrible fights, and may result in “Mord und Totschlag,” a row involving death (p.23).

In the Botshabelo case, Mantladi was a prophet type. Before the arrival of Merensky, Mantladi, Mafadi, and Sewushane had started a charismatic movement that left in its wake various small Christian groups. This episode is vividly described by both Merensky (1899) and Wangemann (1871). Both describe Mantladi’s outstanding holiness. As it happens, Mantladi and Mafadi died early and Botshabelo entered the second phase of consolidation.

In the Medingen case, Kashane was the prophet type. He, and not Reuter, had started a faith movement (Beyer 1913:118-123). Reuter developed a new style of giving carefully prepared sermons that were then preached again later by Kashane, while Reuter followed it up with questions to each individual listener about remembered texts and their explanation (p.120). The intent of this new method was to help Reuter understand listeners’ Auffassungsvermögen, their intellectual grasp (p.120). At the same time it probably also created a new self-awareness in Kashane or increased his breadth and depth of knowledge. At any rate, belonging to the royal line, knowing that thought world intimately, allowed Kashane to play with vivid contrasts between it and Christianity and thus show up the former’s short comings with great effect (p.122). The growth of this movement threatened chiefs and councillors who, using another event as an excuse, brutally murdered Kashane and his assistant, among others (p.131, 133,
That ended the founding phase of Medingen and also any chance of its most vital Christian to start a secession. It left Reuter to take the community forward into the consolidation phase.

In the Mpome case, Sello might have developed into a prophet type, but he lacked two qualities that the above two had. Sello was not of royal descent and in Leschoane, where he served, had no natural following. As well, he lacked physical strength, became very ill, and died at the age of forty. Sello’s education was overseen by Knothe himself and closely followed the five-year seminary training offered in Berlin (Hoffmann 1914:45, 69). In 1885, Sello and Sewushane were ordained by Wangemann on his first inspection tour to South Africa (p.69). At any rate, the protest movement, involving more than thirty national helpers who were trained in the seminaries of Botshabelo and Mpome (Greschat 1967:534), turned not only against the new disliked missionaries of Botshabelo and Lobethal, but also against Knothe and Sello. With the deaths of Knothe and Sello, Mpome lost its potential to develop into an African Independent Church.

One could argue that both Botshabelo and Medingen moved forward into the consolidation phase. Since Botshabelo-Lobethal continued to be led by Merensky and Sewushane, the latter a potential prophet type, the community carried forward the potential for secession. Both Merensky earlier and Reuter later were regarded by their African followers as chiefly type leaders.
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1. For example, even Kirsten Rüther (1997) works with German mission material, especially Hermannsburger, from an English perspective, and with considerable contempt for Hermannsburger missionaries. Her treatment of the symbolism of clothing for missionary and African is simplistic and one-sided. Her treatment of the Hermannsburger dilemma vis-a-vis the Boer, British, their own or their children’s assimilation to the Afrikaner in Transvaal, especially, after the South African War (1899-1902), is glossed over. The source of her superficiality has to do with her obvious contempt for the Christianity of Hermannsburger who in her view recruited poor and pathetic German farmers.

2. The Berlin mission regularly published Missionsberichte (mission reports). From 1868 on, these were edited by Director Wangemann himself (Petrich 1895:44). It was part of Berlin pedagogy that Berlin missionaries send objective reports, journals, and letters which were either published whole or synthesized under specific topics by Wangemann. The importance of the Berichte consists in the fact that letters, reports, and journals, written in Sutterlin script, were published in Gothic print for easy reading while yet leaving the reader close to the originating experience.

3. Some of the letters of Martin Sewushane, the ordained minister who became a founder of the Lutheran Bapedi Church, were printed whole (with footnote commentaries by the translator) in the Missionsberichte.
4. Berlin missionaries alternately felt pressured to behave like chiefs (Posselt 1888), were accused by Bapedi chiefs of trying to be chiefs (BMB 1890:230, in No Name:29), or felt so positive about chiefs as to say things like: “were he not a chief, he would have been a Christian long ago” (No Name:13, taken from Winter's journal 1886 published in BMB 1888:358ff). Winter thought that chief Kholokhoe was a man of deep thought, beyond that needed to cope with daily problems. Winter’s fondness for Kholokhoe was genuine.

4. The Bohemian Brethren were a group of Hussites living in Bohemia and Moravia who in 1457 organized the Unitas Fratrum, Unity of Brethren. In 1722 they moved to Saxony where they founded Herrnhut. Here emerged the Moravian Church, that is, the Renewed Unitas Fratrum. The Moravian Church became a worldwide Protestant body known in Germany as the Evangelische Brüdergemeine or Herrnhuters. It is a spiritual-life society within the Lutheran and Calvinist state church. Its emphasis is on a close relationship with Christ; its priority is education and missions. The movement gained international stature under Count N. L. von Zinzendorf who, through Denmark, sent missionaries to the West Indies, Greenland and Africa. Important for this paper is that some of the greatest German Romantic writers and painters were influenced by the Brethren, among them especially, Novalis (real name Friedrich von Hardenberg), Joseph von Eichendorff, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), and Friedrich Caspar David, and earlier, Hamann and Herder. Schleiermacher had great influence on the Berlin mission and on Winter.
6. The Prussian Union was formed by Friedrich Wilhelm III in 1817. The aim was to unite Lutheran and Reformed traditions and believers.

7. Formally, Schleiermacher belonged to the Reformed church, but he worked for its unification with Lutheranism (Schaff 1891:2121-2125).

8. Hengstenberg soon rejected Schleiermacher’s approach.

9. The impact of Schleiermacher on the thoughts and methods of missionaries who became fascinated by African traditional religions is also noted by Jafta (1985).

10. The Committee of the Berlin mission would eventually reject Neanderism, liberal theology, and denominational ambivalence. It became Lutheran, apparently, for reasons having to do with fund raising and identity.

11. While Richter points out that Neander was Wangemann’s favourite teacher, he minimizes Neander’s influence, in part, no doubt, because the Committee of the Berlin mission was inclined toward Lutheranism and regarded Neander’s approach as too soft or liberal. Two gifted students were apparently turned down for their “neanderism” (1924:14, 23).

12. We cannot discuss the complex battles about denominationalism involving the Berlin mission, except to say that it initially embraced all Protestant denominations. In reality it meant, however, that its financial supporters were Calvinists and Lutherans while its
teaching in the Seminary became increasingly Lutheran (Richter 1924:68 ff). This led to a crisis with the end result that the Mission became formally Lutheran. In the 1870s, the denominational crisis also played into the crisis developed between adventurous pioneer missionaries in Transvaal who had made themselves economically independent and the administration in Berlin over the institution of an administrative hierarchy (ibid:187). About the exceedingly low pay of Berlin missionaries see also Sandeman (1975 (1880):163). Wangemann showed himself to be one of those complex individuals, at once romantic, devout, a powerful and lucid writer, an organizational genius and a man with, seemingly, an iron will.

13. Gustav Knak was the uncle of Siegfried Knak, the director of the Berlin mission who would see it through the Second World War. G. Knak was important to the awakening in Pommern, today part of Poland. He later took over the Bohemian-Lutheran Bethlehem church in Berlin from Goßner. G. Knak was closely associated with the Berlin mission through the women’s mission society that raised funds for activities in China. Gützlaff (1803-1851) was educated in Jänicke’s seminar and practised the participant-observation method first developed by the Jesuit P. Matteo Ricci (1552-1610). He became an independent missionary to China and on his visits home started an awakening among Berlin missionaries (see Poewe 1994:7, 9-11). Goßner and Gützlaff are best known for starting faith missions. The Berlin mission prior to 1890 sat in a web of Moravian, Pietistic, and Romantic strands that redeveloped again and again the accommodation method (participant-observation) first developed Ricci.
14. Gustav Knak was taught by Hegel Michelet, Link (natural science), Ritter (geography), also by Schleiermacher, Bleek, Uhlemann, Neander, Marheinecke, Hengstenberg, Strauß, and others (Wangemann 1895:6). But Wangemann did think that Pietistic narrowness and one sidedness restricted “God’s revelations and spiritual activities within the narrow radius of sin and grace” when “God” also assigned the human being the task “to research, know, and use nature” (ibid:366). Knak was also, however a gifted poet.

15. While secular scholars associated the Enlightenment of the nineteenth century with specific philosophers who saw Christianity as but another superstition, Christians saw the Christian tradition as having brought and continuing to bring enlightenment and Bildung. The awakening and Romanticism are important because they broke up, so to speak, an Enlightenment soil that had fossilized into a doctrinaire, some say dry, Rationalism.

16. Later Afrikaans

17. By "church reformers" is meant Protestant reformers.

18. The openness of Berlin missionaries like Merensky to international and intercultural contacts came under increasing attack from national socialists in the 1930s. Civilization acquired negative connotations and came to be associated with levelling and atomizing processes which were seen to be effacing the specific national character of a people. National socialism was explicitly racist. In 1932 mission inspector Braun (1932) put out a
brochure in which he opposed Rosenberg's sense of history as follows:

Our sense of history is very different from the explanation of it as given by Alfred Rosenberg in the official program of the national socialists. There it says (p.9, The nature, principles and goals of the N.S.D.A.P.): "We no longer recognize as history the eternal development of mankind, be it toward humanity, toward the Christianisation of all peoples, toward some general conception of a culture of humankind, nor as a raw class war; rather as a confrontation of spiritual-racial powers with its environment and other races..." (Braun 1932:16)

Since I am dealing with national socialism and mission elsewhere, suffice it to say here that the existence of mission societies was threatened. The response of the Berlin mission society was to become part of the Bekennende Kirche, Confessional Church, in 1933.

19. As Fiedler says, while English missionaries tended to emphasize self-supporting and self-reliant churches (selbständige Kirchen), German missionaries tended to favour churches that were indigenous, culture-specific, or rooted in the soil (bodenständige Kirchen). One sees here in the attitudes of German missionaries the combined influences of Boniface, Luther, and Romanticism. Fiedler cautions, however, that this distinction has its limitations (1993:32).

20. lauschen means to listen devoutly, to eavesdrop; ablauschen means to listen so intently and receptively as to take away with you a very intimate and accurate rendering
of what was said.

21. Already at the time of Merensky’s education, the mission rules emphasized learning the indigenous language, establishing strong ties with the people, aiming to be accepted as one of them, winning their trust, learning intimately and respecting their customs and life ways. Missionaries were also required to keep a careful journal. Merensky used his own journals and other resources when writing his memoir (van der Heyden 1996:14, 17).

22. Berliners spelled it Sebuschan. Also spelled Sebuschane, Sebushane, Sewuschane, Sewuschane, or Sewushane.

23. Also spelled Dinkoanyane, Dinkwanyane.

24. The sense of living a first century Christianity is also there in Merensky’s portrayal of the beginning of the Bapedi mission (1899:72). Merensky, like Wangemann, described how Berlin missionaries were refused permission by the Swazi king to start mission stations in Swaziland, but several Bapedi, who had first heard about Christianity in coastal cities, welcomed them.

25. Re. Life Portraits, Wangemann (1871) suggested that they be published together as a book and as separate tracts. The book, better designed in print and paper would be offered those who are not in the habit of reading tracts, while each individual life portrait would be sold at a cheaper price...to those who are not in the habit of reading large
books. Both types of publication would hopefully be produced at a reasonable cost so that something will remain for mission funds. And then he puzzled: “But is it advisable that the same material in the same form be provided to both the better educated and less educated? - Well, success will show...whether a form and discourse can be found that satisfies both” (p.4). We do not need to refer to Max Weber to remind ourselves that, for many Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, and Hindus the world over, faith and a good business sense are in harmony (Poewe 1994).


27. Albert Nachtigal kept an extensive and detailed Diary. Following the death of his wife March 17, 1869, Nachtigal fell into deep despair and doubt. While he waited for permission to return to Germany, he moved from his mission station, Leydenburg, to Botshabelo. Unable to pursue his usual work he spent days on end interviewing and recording the stories of early African Christian converts, especially of those who experienced the persecution under the Bapedi king, Sekukuni. See Das Tagebuch des Missionars Albert Nachtigal: Khalatlolu - Lydenburg. Band I 1861-1870, Teil II 1866-1869, Seiten 312-710. Transkribiert von Dr. A.O. Hesse, Pretoria: Hesse Collection, University of South Africa 1973. No. 421910. The life portraits are found between pages 517 and 710. Delius writes that the death of Nachtigal's wife occurred in 1871 (1984:194). In fact, it occurred in 1869 (Nachtigal, above Tagebuch, pp.493-494). Delius also does not bring out that Nachtigal was unable to function, went to Germany from
1870 to 1872, tried to run Leydenburg again upon his return in 1872, but had to hand it over to Düring in 1873. In effect, he left the mission in 1873, although this may not have been official until 1875. The important point, overlooked by Delius, is that from 1873 on Nachtigal acted as a private man, not as a missionary.

28. It should be remembered that in those days before photography was common, missionary artists also sketched photography-near portraits. Influenced by Romanticism, Wangemann and Merensky narrated the most romantic episode of the Berlin Mission (Richter 1924:459).

29. Space does not permit discussion of this church. See van der Heyden (19 ).

30. You treat me “... wie ein Stück Vieh” is a common German expression used to protest being treated unfairly, like cattle. It is also used to teach restrained. For example, Posselt’s father taught his students morality using verse or song. One ends like this: “Aber friß und sauf doch nie, Bist ja Mensch und kein Stück Vieh“ (Pfitzner and Wangemann 1888:162). The phrase rhymes and is hard to translate but is something like this: “Ne’er eat greedily nor guzzle, you are human not some cattle.” The reader can imagine what someone with a superficial knowledge of German might do with this language. Importantly, the expression is not an African idiom but was learned by Africans from missionaries and/or their children.

31. Space does not allow description of Wangemann’s positive assessment of Lovedale by comparison with which the Botshabelo effort was small. The Berlin mission had an
infinitely smaller budget.

32. Words in brackets are Trümpelmann’s clarification.

33. Trümpelmann mentions that Sewushane’s letter was so incoherent and poorly argued that he had to meet with Sewushane and one of his Sesotho teachers, Job, to first let the two of them rewrite the letter into clear Sesotho. Then he translated it into German. Sewushane’s obfuscation may have had to do with the fact that he was between a rock and a hard place because he wanted to communicate potential independence to the Committee in Berlin without raising suspicions of his real intention among local Berlin missionaries who would be his translators.

26. Sewushane is ordained by Wangemann himself 1885.

35. A founding figure or prophet figure must also be understood as the first to have built a religious community.

36. Motshatshi is the son of a chief who was deposed by the British. Motshatshi is in conflict with Moreoane who was given the deposed chief’s position by the British. Moreoane, now quite old, is father-in-law of Sewushane, while Loto (also spelled Lotho, Loti, Lothi) is the son of the Induma (chief councillor) of Marishane (Jooste 1991:129).

37. The deficit was 219,000 Marks, where previously deficits were around 26,000 Marks (Petrich 1895:73).

38. These attitudes, studieren, governing, ordering are exemplified by Wilhelm Posselt
39. According to Schleiermacher (1799:362), religion means to be open to life; to give oneself (Hingabe) over (in total dependence) to the universe (or the other) and to let it affect you (p.364). Religion means to search and find Being in all that lives and moves, in all becoming and changing, in all doing and suffering, in life itself through unmediated feeling (p.362). Religion is the sense and taste for the eternal, and your feeling (emotion) is your devoutness (p.360, 362).

40. Going native is a phrase commonly used by anthropologists to describe researchers who have taken the method of participant-observation to the extreme of having become participants at the expense of distanced observers.

41. The archive of the Berliner Missionswerk has an unpublished collation of any Berichte that mentioned Johannes Winter. The document, without author or date, is titled “Historische Angaben über Missionar Johannes Winter.” Wangemann’s attitude is expressed on p.34, 36 of this document which is taken from BMB (1891:318ff).

42. Problems had to do with Winter’s surrender to Pedi life not to the mission’s rules and regulations which he found irritating.

43. The sense of being grasped by the Divine and overwhelmed by a profound love.

44. These moments (although secular) are only too familiar to fieldworking anthropologists (Malinowski 1967; Cesara 1982; Kohl 1987, among others).
45. This distance is also confirmed by interviews that van der Heyden did with Lutheran Bapedi ministers in 1996. He was told that after secession Winter and Sewushane had little to do with one another. Each had a separate church at some distance from the other.

46. Greschat (1967:537) spells his name Madingoane. In the report written in Sutterlin the name is spelled Madinoane. Letters were translated from Sesotho into German by a missionary. The handwriting is not Johannes Winter’s. It might be missionary Kadach who was disliked by national helpers.

47. Greschat (1967:537) spells his name Tholloane.


49. One of the reasons why Wangemann blamed Winter for the secession is because these parts of the letter are written in an idiom or as expressions that are quite specific to the German language and reflect Winter’s inability to assume fiscal responsibility. Winter was in continuous trouble with the Committee because he did not collect money from his community nor instill in members the need to learn financial responsibility. If one keeps in mind the phenomenal effort Wangemann put into collecting money in Germany for work in Africa, Winter is simply irresponsible.

50. Letter from Johannes Winter dated 30 April, 1905 (National Archive of South Africa,
There is also a friendly letter to missionary Schlömann, dated 14 April, 1905, where Winter talks about just meeting with Madingvane and Martinus and the possibility of establishing a basis of negotiations (presumably between the mission and the Bapedi Lutheran Church). In the letter, Winter dreams about cooperation including seminary teaching, conferences, and so on (National Archive South Africa, A1419).