

*Millennial Christianity, British Imperialism,  
and African Nationalism*

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Religion, and specifically Christianity, is often portrayed as a tool of the dominant classes. Yet religion has helped shape the political ideas and the behaviour of most groups and classes in South Africa in ways that are more complex, contradictory, and changing than this portrayal suggests. Christian beliefs about the end of the world, or eschatology, have been particularly influential, though frequently overlooked by scholars who deem them too esoteric, quaint, or fantastic for serious study. Eschatological stances embody crucial perceptions about the world (cosmology) and about history and can thus profoundly influence political action. Protestantism, the predominant branch of Christianity in South Africa, harbours two significantly different eschatologies - postmillennialism and premillennialism, the latter also called "chiliasm" or "adventism."<sup>1</sup> Both views have long existed in Christianity, but during the eighteenth century, in Britain and North America especially, postmillennialism became dominant, peaking in the early nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> After a long period of relative decline, premillennialism began a comeback over the nineteenth century and helped shape fundamentalism in the twentieth.<sup>3</sup> Both traditions have been influential among South African blacks and whites.

Postmillennialists believe that the Second Coming of Christ will occur after the millennium or thousand years of peace foretold in the twentieth chapter of Revelation. Postmillennialism is optimistic about the trend of human history, believing that God will use human instruments to perfect human nature and society. The Kingdom of God (the millennium) will be formed gradually through individual conversions and societal improvement.<sup>4</sup> While Christians' first priority is to evangelize their neighbours, they should also strive, through political action, to eliminate social evils such as slavery, drunkenness, and prostitution. Millennial society will be universal, and to achieve it, Christians must evangelize and improve societies throughout the entire world. De Jong attributes the remarkable surge in Anglo-American mission activity from the 1790s almost entirely to the postmillennial eschatological imperative: most missionaries were not striving simply to transform African societies into replicas of their home societies, which they regarded as far from perfect; they were also striving to achieve in Africa a better, less sinful, society than they had known at home. Kate Crehan, in her interesting Marxist analysis of the ideology underlying the great outburst of mission activity from the 1790s, notes that the onset of this outburst coincided with the French Revolution and the "fear and

panic" experienced by the ruling classes. Most missionaries and their supporters, however, came from the lower middle and upper working classes, not from the "ruling classes." Her analysis also overlooks the

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enormous optimism and expectations of the mission enterprise. Nevertheless it may be said that eschatological curiosity mushrooms during times of significant change and upheaval as people attempt to discern "the signs of the times" in the unfolding of events.<sup>5</sup>

Premillennialism, too, can generate a powerful missionary impulse, but with the expectation that only a minority will accept the offer of salvation and be converted. As the famous American evangelist, D.L. Moody declared, "I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, 'Moody, save all you can.'"<sup>6</sup> Premillennialists start from the conviction that the world is evil and growing increasingly corrupt. The Kingdom of God will be inaugurated only after existing societies and political systems are destroyed in a series of cataclysmic events predicted in the book of Revelation, culminating in the great battle of Armageddon. Then Christ, along with his resurrected followers, will physically return and establish a theocratic state for a thousand years (the millenium). His return can take place at any moment ("like a thief in the night") and only those Christians in a state of grace at that precise moment will be saved from eternal damnation. Christians must accordingly maintain a constant state of readiness and high personal piety, while also warning their neighbours of the horrible fate awaiting the "unsaved." Premillennialists usually argue that though they "are in the world, ... they are not of the world."<sup>7</sup> Striving to keep themselves uncontaminated from the world, they tend to regard political affairs as ephemeral, trivial, and dangerously distracting from the real duties of the Christian. The cataclysm and transformation of the world will come from the outside of history, in Christ's coming. Premillennialists usually admonish one another to "watch and pray" - and wait. While there are exceptions, for the vast majority of premillennialists, politics cannot be given high priority.

#### *Postmillennialism and Christian Views of Imperialism*

A new and dynamic postmillennialism came with missionaries to South Africa at the turn of the nineteenth century, roughly at the same time as the advent of British rule. The missionaries' first priority was the evangelization of African peoples, but the actions and policies of imperial officials often stood in their way. In spite of their frequently expressed reluctance, missionaries were drawn very early into political action, sometimes in opposition to officials of the empire. Although most missionaries were British and patriotic, they were not simply agents of the empire nor unalloyed enthusiasts for its expansion. The relationship between Christianity and imperialism was complex, ambiguous, and changing.

The first missionaries in South Africa did not necessarily assume that the empire was a force for good or that Christianity and empire were mutually supportive. In Britain, the

supporters of Christian missions opposed imperial policy makers on the issue of slavery and the slave trade, which most mission enthusiasts wished to curtail and abolish, and on the policies of the East India Company, which tried to keep missionaries out of India. Many supporters of empire, while claiming to be Christians, saw the propagation of Christianity as inappropriate in imperial contexts. In South Africa missionaries had to confront another issue - white settlers and their harsh treatment of indigenous peoples. The efforts of some missionaries,

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especially the Rev. John Philip of the London Missionary Society, to secure equality for Khoisan and whites before the law antagonized many white colonists and not a few imperial officials (see pp. 38-39).

While considering themselves good British subjects, many missionaries and their supporters asserted that Christians had a prophetic calling to denounce social evils such as slavery and political wickedness, to hold the empire to a high moral purpose, and to regard the governance of indigenous peoples as a God-given trust. On the desirability of extending the imperial frontiers their views frequently fluctuated. Few wanted the withdrawal of imperial control, which frequently seemed the least evil of the available options. Hence they often condemned imperial policies without rejecting the empire itself. During the early decades of the nineteenth century, many missionaries, including the missionary lobby in England known as "Exeter Hall," opposed further extensions of colonial control over African peoples, and their views prevailed in the 1837 report of the Aborigines Committee that recommended no annexations "without the previous sanction of an Act of Parliament."<sup>8</sup> In 1837, bowing to missionary pressure, Lord Glenelg at the colonial office forced the Cape government to withdraw from Queen Adelaide Province, a newly annexed region beyond the colony's eastern border between the Kei and Keiskamma rivers. Wesleyans, however, whose work embraced white as well as black communities, supported the annexation.<sup>9</sup>

In the early decades of the century, missionaries intended to convert entire African societies; under Christian African leaders these agrarian communities would conform to strict evangelical Christian piety and avoid the ills and vices of industrial Britain. Missionaries wanted to isolate Africans from white settlers, perhaps only nominally Christian, who might set a bad example and introduce Africans to new vices such as alcohol and prostitution. Missionaries wanted to convert African leaders and people en masse, and then, as advisors, to direct the transformation of their societies into independent Christian communities. To this end many missionaries opposed annexations that would subject African societies to settler-dominated colonial governments and throw them open to unruly white intruders. However, the extension of white settlement in the Great Trek of the 1830s, and rapidly escalating economic and political pressures from the Cape Colony, made the policy of isolation increasingly less viable.

Though they intermittently yielded to pressures from Christian abolitionists and "Exeter

Hall," British statesmen did not regard "trusteeship" as an over-riding determinant of imperial policy. One cabinet minister remarked in 1828: "Britain could not conquer the world out of 'mere humanity' just because Britons believed that only under their rule were people happy."<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, missionaries and the humanitarian lobby appealed to the imperial government to protect African peoples, not only from the Cape Colony, but from the two Voortrekker republics and from Natal, annexed by Britain in 1843. The most dramatic examples were the help given by French missionaries to Moshoeshoe in achieving a British protectorate for Basutoland (1868) and the long campaign of the LMS missionary John Mackenzie to have a British protectorate declared over the Tswana (accomplished in 1885) (see chap. 6, *passim*). In both cases missionaries intended to protect African peoples from incursions from the two Boer republics established after the

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Great Trek. Later, when European powers began their "scramble for Africa" in the 1870s, British missionaries increasingly threw their support behind the British government, which seemed preferable both to foreign governments like Portugal or Germany and to private colonizers like Cecil Rhodes's British South Africa Company.

Missionaries' attitudes to imperialism were widely influenced by their convictions about the linkages between commerce and Christianity, an aspect of their theory of God's role in history. Postmillennial supporters of missions generally accepted the Newtonian Enlightenment view that the universe was like a Great Clock operating in accordance with fixed laws established by God, its designer and creator. These physical laws operated to achieve the transcendent moral purposes of God, the redemption and salvation of humanity. God employed "even the selfish and acquisitive motivations of men to promote the general good - which, to an evangelical, meant supremely the spread of the gospel." Thus, explains Brian Stanley, the "nineteenth-century evangelicals responded to the age of utilitarianism with a moral theology which enshrined 'usefulness' in the cause of the gospel as chief among the Christian virtues." Providence arranged things so that those nations who benefited others were, in return, rewarded; and foreign mission activity was the most important benefit Britain conferred on other nations. In this scheme commerce was "the means whereby providence welded together duty and interest, the channel through which the reflex benefit of Britain's missionary role in the world returned to her own advantage."<sup>11</sup>

Postmillennialists believed that Christianity opened "not only the prospect of eternal life but also the road to unlimited social and economic development,"<sup>12</sup> which they usually called "civilization." Development could best be promoted through market economies, private property, free trade, the use of ploughs and irrigation to maximize production, and increased levels of consumption.<sup>13</sup> The three Cs (Christianity, civilization and commerce) were closely interlinked and reinforced each other. When missionaries exhorted Africans to wear European clothes and use European goods and utensils, they fostered commerce. To generate the income not only to support this new consumption but also to make the missions viable, they advocated increased production and economic development.

Increased trade and economic activity, in turn, would help the spread of the gospel. As David Livingstone, the most famous advocate of Christianity and commerce, put it:

When a tribe begins to trade with another it feels a sense of mutual dependence; and this is a most important aid in diffusing the blessings of Christianity, because one tribe never goes to another without telling the news, and the Gospel comes in to be part of their news, and the knowledge of Christianity is thus spread by means of commerce.<sup>14</sup>

The trinity of Christianity, commerce, and civilization is often interpreted as evidence that missions were driven by the needs and interests of European capitalists. But while chambers of commerce strongly applauded Livingstone's speeches in 1858, it was the religious public not the captains of industry who subscribed most of the money for his scheme of evangelizing Africa. Missionaries themselves grew to question the mutual benefit of commerce and Christianization. By the late 1860s, "Christian confidence in the redemptive function of commerce was

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waning" and even began to be repudiated.<sup>15</sup> As John Smith Moffat (an LMS missionary turned colonial administrator) argued in 1903, "I do not believe in missionaries or societies putting themselves under obligation to the rich men in South Africa. The time is coming when there will be a life-and-death struggle on the native question. The capitalists are worse than the Boers, and we who stand by the native will have to fight to the death over the question."<sup>16</sup>

Certain nineteenth-century missionaries were attracted to imperialism, which they saw as a necessary means of reversing the disappointing results of their efforts to evangelize Africa. Even where they had been accepted and welcomed, missionaries had won fewer and less perfect conversions than they had expected. In most African societies, a reaction against Christianity had developed, and missionaries, rightly or wrongly, blamed this on the chiefs. Many missionaries concluded that before the gospel could take deep root, African political authorities must be destroyed, if necessary by colonial conquest and annexation. Thus, the Wesleyan missionary, J. C. Warner, writing in the wake of the Seventh and Eighth Frontier Wars in the 1850s, asserted:

And above all, as they have so resolutely and so perseveringly refused to give to the Gospel even an attentive hearing; it seems to me that the way on which they themselves are so obstinately bent is the one which God will make use of to bring about this desirable object; and that the sword must first - not *exterminate* [sic] them, but - break them up as tribes, and destroy their political existence; after which, when thus set free from the shackles by which they are bound, civilisation and christianity will no doubt make rapid progress among them.<sup>17</sup>

Warner's stance was not necessarily or primarily a result of British patriotism, for German, American, and Norwegian missionaries held the same views about British imperialism and the Zulu monarchy.<sup>18</sup> However, there was an implicit racism in his belief that Africans would benefit more from imperial rule than from the rule of their own chiefs.<sup>19</sup>

After 1870, imperial sentiment in Britain and in British colonies became more fervent,

taking on the colours of a civil religion.<sup>20</sup> J. R. Seeley, the influential historian and author of *The Expansion of England*,<sup>21</sup> argued that a national church should be closely associated with the State. "Religion is the great State building principle," he wrote. "As the Church without the State becomes a mere philosophical, or quasi-philosophical sect, so the state without the Church (i.e. without a living conscious nationality) is a mere administrative machine."<sup>22</sup> "The province of religion ... is much more national and political, much less personal, than is commonly supposed."<sup>23</sup> For Seeley and increasing numbers of imperialists, the history of the empire was evidence that God was using Britain in shaping world affairs. The haphazard but continuous expansion of the empire in spite of the reluctance of British governments was "an unmistakable indication of divine overruling."<sup>24</sup> The empire was, Lord Rosebery declared in 1900, "human and yet not wholly human, for the most heedless and the most cynical must see the finger of the divine."<sup>25</sup> Justifying the South African War in 1900, Bishop Westcott stated flatly, "We hold our Empire in the name of Christ."<sup>26</sup>

While most imperialists had a sense of mission and destiny, the motivating

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power of many was not Christian at its core. Rider Haggard, the imperialist novelist who wrote widely about South Africa, referred more frequently to fate than to God, and Cecil Rhodes, the quintessential Victorian imperialist and son of an Anglican priest, abandoned Christianity altogether. For many late-Victorians, imperialism was a religious substitute for a Christianity in which they no longer believed. Imperialism gained strength from its capacity to mean different things to different people. Thus, the imperialists' contention that the empire was a providential agency to bring "law, justice and order" to large areas of the globe, could be given a Christian meaning or not. Moreover, since imperial authorities usually protected missionaries, Christians could see the empire as reinforcing the Christian mission. The flourishing of missions in the late-Victorian era could be cited as evidence of the empire's potential for good in the world. Thus, on one level, Christianity, especially in its missionary outreach, gave a patina of "moral purpose" to the ideology of empire. Accordingly, by the end of the century, Christians were much more inclined to see empire and Christianity as complementary entities than they had been at the beginning.

Another reason for more muted criticism of imperialism may have been the arrival in South Africa of increasing numbers of premillennialist missionaries in the last two decades of the century.<sup>27</sup> The Student Volunteer Movement, aggressive in its approach to evangelization, held "councils of war" and called for Christian "conquest" of the unevangelized parts of the world. Its leaders hailed the expansion of British and American imperialism as a providential development for "the evangelization of the world in this generation."<sup>28</sup> Disinclined to devote their energies to political and economic affairs, premillennialists were only rarely directly involved in imperial activities, but their noninvolvement was also noncritical and inadvertently served imperial purposes.

Ironically, just as missionaries had become most enthusiastic about imperialism at the end of the century, the power of imperialism was about to wane around the world. In

South Africa, the union of the four colonies in 1910 would drastically weaken British power and bring to the fore a new political movement, African nationalism.

### *Millennialism and African Nationalism*

The emergence of African political activity in South Africa, often labelled African nationalism, has long received attention from historians, who usually accord a crucial role to Christianity, though they put exclusive emphasis, perhaps wrongly, on separatist Ethiopian churches (see pp. 212-16). For a deeper understanding of the connections between Christianity and African nationalism one needs to examine Africans' own eschatological outlooks.

Among the Xhosa, two responses to white intrusion and conquest were personified in the prophets Nxele and Ntsikana (pp. 71-73) in the second decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>29</sup> Nxele, attempting to tap into the power of the whites, incorporated elements of Christianity, while remaining firmly rooted in African religion and cosmology. His attack on Grahamstown in 1819 came to symbolize the possibility of African military resistance. Ntsikana, on the other hand, adopted Christianity, though in a distinctively African idiom, and became the first "to be a

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Christian while remaining an African." His emphatic rejection of military resistance came to symbolize the non-violent response. In the short run, the overwhelming majority of Xhosa adopted Nxele's option. Ntsikana's following remained very small, and, after his death in 1821, the two leaders of his following, Soga and his son Dukwana, abandoned Ntsikana's non-violent policy and struggled against colonial conquest; both died fighting in the last of the Frontier Wars in 1877-78.<sup>30</sup>

In the longer run Ntsikana's policy proved the more effective. The futility of the military option was borne in upon the Xhosa by successive defeats in 1819, 1835, 1846-48 and 1851-53. The cattle-killing of 1856-57, when the Xhosa sacrificed their cattle and grain to bring a resurrection of both cattle and people and a restoration of Xhosa independence, was a desperate extension of the military option. Attempting to tap into supernatural forces, the Xhosa turned to ideas, such as resurrection and the need for purification, that Nxele had introduced almost forty years earlier.<sup>31</sup> An ensuing famine compounded the effects of the military defeats and convinced some Xhosa that the material and spiritual resources of Xhosa society were inadequate to stave off conquest and its devastating effects. For decades after Nxele's death, many Xhosa, refusing to believe that he was dead, anticipated that he would return and lead them against the whites. As a result, "'Kukuza kukaNxele' (the return of Nxele) was the byword for a vain hope."<sup>32</sup>

Although force was invoked by the Xhosa one last time in 1877-78, the onset of mass conversion to Christianity in the 1860s<sup>33</sup> may have shown that many Xhosa were shifting from Nxele's perspective to that of Ntsikana. They were converting to a postmillennial Christianity. Almost immediately, African Christians, under missionary influence, began a

temperance movement; they replaced missionaries as leaders of the Independent Order of True Templars (I.O.T.T.) in the 1880s; by the 1890s they had complete control of the organization. Largely at the behest of African clergy and laity, total abstinence (including abstinence from African beer - *utywala*) was now for all practical purposes a requirement for African membership in the churches, though abstinence was rarely demanded of whites. By the 1870s, Africans in the Cape began a political campaign to reduce the number of canteen licences issued or to prohibit liquor sales to Africans; they sent petitions to parliament, addressed parliamentary committees, and appeared before hearings on canteen licences. In the temperance movement they learned how to manage voluntary organizations and how to conduct a political campaign under the Western parliamentary system. Temperance played an analogous role in the history of the women's suffrage movement in Britain, the white Dominions, and the United States.<sup>34</sup>

In the 1880s, the African Christian elite who were emerging from the mission schools, particularly Lovedale, moved into parliamentary politics of the Cape Colony, the only white-ruled colony in southern Africa where some Africans had the vote. Reflecting Ntsikana's admonition to remain united,<sup>35</sup> one of their earliest attempts at political organization was called *Imbumba Yama Afrika*. As S. N. Mvambo wrote in 1883, "we must be united on political matters. In fighting for national rights, we must fight together."<sup>36</sup> The African Christians sought to enrol Africans who could meet the property or income qualifications on the voters' rolls,

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and began to debate and discuss political issues, especially in the newspaper *Imvo Zabantsundu*. In spite of the inequality and injustice they faced, this generation of African leaders was optimistic that economic and political opportunities would open up for Africans in the Cape Colony. Their version of the millennium was a non-racist society, in which individual talents and qualifications, particularly Christianity and "civilization," would determine one's status, not skin colour.

The African elite believed, as did whigs in the British political tradition, that progress towards democracy and greater equality was inevitable. Founding their optimism on Britain's historic record on issues like Khoisan equality, the abolition of slavery, and the retrocession of Queen Adelaide Province, they arrived at an exaggerated reliance on British rhetoric about "trusteeship," confident that the British government was the chief bulwark against the inequitable impositions of the white settlers. In petitioning for the abrogation of the Registration Act of 1887, which restricted the African vote in the Cape Colony, a group of Christian Africans stated, "We therefore pray your Most Gracious Majesty that the 'brave and generous English Nation and the British Legislature will not abandon us to the tender mercy of those who are stronger than we are.'<sup>37</sup> Imperialists such as Rhodes, hoping to reconcile colonial whites including Afrikaners to the empire and to enrol them as partners in the expansion of the empire north to Cairo, wanted to end meddling from London ("eliminate the imperial factor"), especially in the treatment of Africans by colonial whites.



Faced with such naked intentions, African leaders accordingly favoured more British involvement in South Africa, rather than less. Despite an almost unbroken series of disappointments and "sell-outs" by Britain from the 1880s (including the Registration Act, but notably Britain's failure to impose a franchise for Africans in the Boer republics they conquered in 1902), Africans, in desperation, continued appeals to the British government as late as the 1913 Land Act.

Nevertheless, from the 1890s to 1914, opportunities for Africans withered, even in the "liberal" Cape. Not only were Africans disillusioned by British imperialism, but the political dominance of white settlers became almost absolute in the Union of South Africa created in 1910. As racial prejudice and inequality grew, the optimistic, progressive cosmology that was rooted in postmillennialism increasingly seemed to conflict with Africans' experience of reality. In the churches too, many Africans were disillusioned by racial discrimination. Some responded by seceding to form independent churches, although these did not all abandon postmillennialism. P.J. Mzimba, who seceded from the Free Church of Scotland and founded the Presbyterian Church of Africa (PCA) in 1898, retained the theological positions and the rules of order of the Free Church of Scotland. He continued his political activities, such as rallying African voters during elections, begun in the 1870s.<sup>38</sup> So too, some leaders of the African Methodist Episcopal Church participated in the founding of the African National Congress in 1912.<sup>39</sup>

Yet, in this period, premillennialism arrived in South Africa, brought in part by new missionaries sent by the older societies. Andrew Murray's preaching of revivalism among whites had little direct impact on Africans, but he helped found the South Africa General Mission in 1889 supported principally by British and American premillennialists. Most important, David Bryant, from the Christian

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Catholic Church in Zion, Illinois, had begun baptizing Africans in Johannesburg no later than 1904,<sup>40</sup> reinforcing the flowering of a host of "Zionist" independent churches (see pp. 216-17, 229-30).

A new mixture of fundamentalism, Pentecostalism, and premillennialism offered alternative views of the world and of history. For many Africans, a more pessimistic premillennial outlook seemed to embody their experience in church and society, where justice did not prevail, indeed where injustices multiplied. Those who gave up on improving "this world" and its institutions, including the established missions and churches, tended to withdraw into independent churches. There were, of course, many direct and concrete reasons for withdrawal, such as racial discrimination by missionaries, disputes over money, career disappointments, and so on, but a deepening pessimism underlay many decisions to secede.

Premillennialism usually involves some degree of political quietism, and, with a few exceptions among the earlier Ethiopian leaders, the majority of independent church leaders displayed a disinclination, even aversion, to active political participation. Bengt Sundkler

found that most separatist leaders agreed with sentiments such as: "I tell my people, don't take any interest in this colour bar. Forget about it, forget about politics." Sundkler rarely found "radicals or even the politically conscious" as members in the independent churches. "Broadly speaking, the politically awake and active, if subscribing still to 'Christianity' at all, are found in other Churches, and not among 'the Native Separatists.' The Separatists go out of their way to state that they take no part in politics."<sup>41</sup> In accordance with a premillennial view, most leaders of independent churches have focused on improving the spiritual and physical health of their followers, and on offering them hope in the life after death, rather than on attempting change in the political order.<sup>42</sup>

But what of the conflicts with political authorities frequently cited as evidence that religious separatism can be revolutionary? In some cases the conflicts in question might not have been initiated or intended by the separatists themselves. Governments often interpret acts of withdrawal, non-involvement, or non-conformity as politically motivated insubordination or even rebellion, as in several conflicts between chiefs and colonial officials in Bechuanaland early in the twentieth century.<sup>43</sup> A few separatists did take part in the Bambatha Rebellion in Natal (1906-08), as did a few Christians from the regular churches, but neither group instigated, and none was a major factor in, the disturbances. White assertions to the contrary must be seen as paranoid and hostile, in the absence of supporting evidence.<sup>44</sup>

Two premillennial movements are widely regarded as political: the events leading to the massacre of Enoch Mgijima's Israelite followers at Bulhoek, near Queenstown, in 1921, and Wellington Buthelezi's Garveyite movement in the Transkei in the 1920s. Claiming that Africans were descendants of the lost tribes of Israel, Mgijima, who had been disowned by both the Wesleyans and Moravians for his radical eschatological views and linked briefly with an African American sect in 1912, emphasized the Old Testament in his eclectic theology; he preached a violent second coming and an imminent millennium. To await this event, God, he said, had ordered the "Israelites" to occupy some municipal land at Bulhoek, and they did so. Ordered by the authorities to move, Mgijima and the Israelites did not

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budge. When a large contingent of armed police arrived to enforce the removal order, the Israelites attacked with home-made weapons; thereupon the police killed more than 160. Here the initiative for aggression had come primarily from the authorities, against the Israelites who sought simply to await their release from the travails of this world. The Israelites did not occupy land as part of a revolutionary assault on white political power, and their resistance, consistent with premillennialism, depended for triumph purely on the expectation of external supernatural intervention.<sup>45</sup>

Buthelezi's Garveyism in the 1920s was in the same mould. He believed that African-Americans would intervene in South Africa to free Africans from the white government. Although he urged his followers to refuse to pay a new poll tax, thus challenging the government, he also bitterly criticized the ANC and the Industrial and Commercial

Workers Union (ICU), the leading union among Africans. He preached "a radical separatism" and non-involvement of any kind.<sup>46</sup> His movement, like Mgijima's, lies closer to the cattle-killing than to the main stream of African nationalism.

Other Africans, however, persisting in the Ntsikana tradition and postmillennial expectations, continued to believe in the possibility of progress. No longer assured that the non-racist society they visualized could be achieved easily, most continued to work for change in the regular churches and plunged more deeply into political activity. African political organizations and activities proliferated after the turn of the century,<sup>47</sup> most notably the African National Congress (ANC), founded (with a different name) in 1912 with the active participation of clergy and Christian laymen: the Rev. John Dube was elected its first president, the Rev. E. J. Mqoboli its first senior chaplain, and the Rev. Walter Rubusana an honorary president. Marxism and Africanism would later emerge as very significant ideologies in African nationalism, but the strongest and most consistent influence in the early twentieth century was the vision and hope that were rooted in postmillennial Christianity. It fostered the vision of gradually perfecting society and, at least until the state of emergency after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, the rejection of violence. Moreover, as among Western Christians whose postmillennialism began to evolve into the Social Gospel (see chap. 23, *passim*) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, much of the impulse toward moderate socialism in African nationalist circles can be attributed to this stream of Christianity.

## NOTES

1. These are, of course, the more extreme and sharply defined positions. Many have tended to regard Biblical eschatological passages as too obscure and speculative to be understood and have preferred to leave the future to the wisdom of God.
2. See J. A. de Jong, *As the Waters Cover the Sea: Millennial Expectations in the Rise of Anglo-American Missions 1640-1810* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1970); also William G. McLoughlin, Jr., *Modern Revivalism* (New York: Ronald Press, 1959), 100-7.
3. See Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1970).
4. Samuel Hopkins, the president of Yale University, estimated that it would probably take 150-200 years: *A Treatise on the Millennium* (New York: Arno, 1972; reprint of 1793 edition), 83-98.
5. Kate Crehan, "Missionaries and ideology in early nineteenth century South Africa," papers of the Conference on "Whites in Africa, Past, Present and Future," Oxford, 1978.
6. McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism*, 257.
7. John 17: 11, 16, but there are many similar references.
8. British Parliamentary Papers, 7 (1837): 78-9.
9. Brian Stanley, "Nineteenth century liberation theology: Nonconformist missionaries and imperialism," *The Baptist Quarterly* 32 (1987): 9-12.
10. G.C Bolton, *Britain's Legacy Overseas* (Oxford: University Press, 1973), 18-19.

11. Brian Stanley, "'Commerce and Christianity': Providence theory, the missionary movement, and the imperialism of free trade, 1842-1860," *The Historical Journal* 26 (1983): 72-5; also, Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag* (Leicester, Eng.: Apollos, 1990), 70-4.
12. Stanley, "Commerce and Christianity," 71. For an example of the postmillennial vision see Hopkins, *A Treatise*.
13. Crehan, "Missionaries and ideology," has an extensive analysis of such ideas, in a Marxist framework.
14. Cited in Stanley, "Commerce and Christianity," 75.
15. Stanley, "Commerce and Christianity," 83-94.
16. Robert U. Moffat, *John Smith Moffat, Missionary: A Memoir* (New York: Dutton, 1921), 46.
17. John Maclean, *A Compendium of Kafir Laws and Customs* (1858; repro London: Cass, 1968), 112.
18. Norman Etherington, "South African missionary ideologies 1880-1920: Retrospect and prospect," ed. Torbin Christensen and William R. Hutchinson, *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era: 1880-1920*. (Arhus, Denmark: Aros Publishers, 1982), 194-5. All except Bishop Colenso did an about-face on the question of annexation.
19. Greg Cuthbertson, "War, imperialism and the British nonconformist conscience," *Theologia Evangelica*, 17 (June 1984): 71.
20. See Wallace G. Mills, "Victorian imperialism as religion, civil or otherwise," *The Man on the Spot: Essays on British Empire History*, ed. Roger D. Long (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995), 21-43. On the concept of a "civil religion" see Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus*, 96 (Winter 1967): 1-21; also, *American Civil Religion*, ed. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); Robert N. Bellah and Phillip E. Hammond, *Varieties of Civil Religion* (Harper and Row, 1980); and Dunbar Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom* (California: University of California Press, 1975) for his notion of the Afrikaner civil religion.
21. See R. T. Shannon; "John Robert Seeley and the idea of a national church," *Ideas and Institutions of Victorian Britain*, ed. Robert Robson (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1967).
22. CA. Bodelsen, *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1968), 162-3, note 2.
23. Bodelsen, 153, note 1 (italicized in original).
24. Stanley, "Commerce and Christianity," 73.
25. Cited in Wendy R. Katz, *Rider Haggard and the Fiction of Empire* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 27.
26. Shannon, "John Robert Seeley," 240.
27. Some premillennialists argued that Christ would not return until all peoples in the world had heard the gospel. Thus, carrying the gospel to all the world would speed up the Second Coming. While some of the premillennialists went to the mission fields under the auspices of long-established societies, many new societies emerged. There were non-denominational missions, which included the South African General Mission and the Student Volunteer Movement. As new fundamentalist denominations were formed (especially in North America), they too began to send missionaries.

28. Clifton J. Phillips, "Changing attitudes in the student volunteer movement of Great Britain and North America, 1886-1928," *Missionary Ideologies*, ed. Christensen and Hutchinson, 131-45.
29. Jeffrey Peires, *The House of Phalo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 67-74; also, "Nxele, Ntsikana and the origins of Xhosa religious reaction," *Journal of African History*, 20 (1979): 51-61.
30. Janet Hodgson, "Soga and Dukwana: The Christian struggle for liberation in mid-19th century South Africa," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 16 (1986): 187-208.
31. See J. B. Peires, *The Dead Will Arise* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1989). Although some elements were borrowed or influenced from Christianity, it was a Xhosa movement.
32. *House of Phalo*, 74.
33. See Wallace G. Mills, "The Taylor Revival of 1866 and the roots of African nationalism in the Cape Colony," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 8 (1976): 105-22.
34. Wallace G. Mills, "The roots of African nationalism in the Cape Colony: Temperance, 1866-1898," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 13 (1980): 197-213. See also Stanley Trapido, "'The friends of the natives': Merchants, peasants and the political and ideological structure of liberalism in the Cape, 1854-1910," *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa*, ed. Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore (Oxford: University Press, 1980), 266.
35. Hodgson, "Soga and Dukwana," 189. In his last instructions to his followers as he lay dying, Ntsikana "ordered them to remain strongly united, *njenge mbumba yamanyama*, referring to the ball of scrapings from a tanned hide which forms an inseparable mass when dry."
36. Leo Kuper, *An African Bourgeoisie* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965), 193.
37. *From Protest to Challenge*, ed. Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Caner, 4 vols. (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1972-77), vol. 1:15.
38. Christopher C. Saunders, "The New African Elite in the Eastern Cape and Some Late Nineteenth Century Origins of African Nationalism," *The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, 1 (London, 1969-1970): 55; Stanley Trapido, "African divisional politics in the Cape Colony, 1884 to 1910," *Journal of African History*, 9 (1968): 88-91.
39. J. Mutero Chirenje, *Ethiopianism and Afro-Americans in Southern Africa. 1883-1916* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), p. 162. Out of over 230 Africans, about 6 to 10 AME and other independent church adherents are identified in biographies in Karis and Caner, *From Protest to Challenge*, vol. 4.
40. See Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, trans. R. A. Wilson (London: SCM Press, 1972), 111-16. Although his immediate impact was in the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, Andrew Murray's (1828-1917) influence through his books extended to British and North American fundamentalists. On Bryant, see *ibid.*, p. 120.
41. *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 304-5.
42. See Wallace G. Mills, "The Fork in the Road: Religious Separatism Versus African Nationalism in the Cape Colony, 1890-1910," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 9 (1978): 51-61. I

was perhaps too categorical and Christopher Saunders raised some objections in "African Nationalism and Religious Independency in Cape Colony: A Comment," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 9 (1978): 205-10. See also my "Rejoinder," *ibid.*, pp. 189-92. There were certainly exceptions, but the general thrust of my argument stands.

43. Chirenje, *Ethiopianism*, 94-7, 144-6; also, Chirenje, *A History of Northern Botswana 1850-1910*, (London: Associated University Presses, 1977), 201-28.

44. Shula Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 326-36.

45. Roben Edgar, "The Prophet Motive: Enoch Mgijima, the Israelites, and the Background to the Bulhoek Massacre," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, XV, 3 (1982) 401-22; also, Roben Edgar, *Because They Chose the Plan of God: The Story of the Bulhoek Massacre* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1988).

46. William Beinart, "Amafelandawonye (the die-hards): Popular Protest and Women's Movements in Herschel District in the 1920s," in William Beinart and Colin Bundy, eds., *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa* (London: James Currey and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 250-5. Other groups in the Transkei during the same period were urging that animals introduced by whites, especially pigs, should be slaughtered as a form of purification in preparing for the coming of the African-Americans.

47. See Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*; Peter Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa* (London: C. Hurst, 1970); André Odendaal, *Black Protest Politics in South Africa to 1912* (Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble, 1984); André Odendaal, *Vukani Bantu! The Beginnings of Black Protest Politics in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, and Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes and Noble, 1984).