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THE TAYLOR REVIVAL OF 1866 AND THE ROOTS OF AFRICAN NATIONALISM IN  
THE CAPE COLONY

BY

WALLACE G. MILLS

(St. Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia)

Except for rather superficial references in the more parochial histories of Methodism in South Africa, the Taylor revival of 1866 has been ignored by historians of South Africa. Yet the revival marked an important reorientation of thinking for many Xhosa. Defeat and disaster had shown that the material and ideological resources of traditional society had been inadequate to stem the tide of white intrusion and conquest. The Taylor revival was the beginning of a search for new direction and a new ideology that would enable Africans to find an acceptable and honourable place for themselves in the new large-scale society being created in the Cape Colony<sup>1</sup>.

William ('California') Taylor was a revivalist *extraordinaire*. His career, considering the dangers and difficulties of travel, is almost incredible. He began preaching in his native Virginia in 1842 but went to California in 1849 where he made a name as an outstanding revivalist. Returning to the east in 1856, he began evangelizing in the eastern and the mid-western states during the next five years. He spent a year in Canada, 1861-1862, before setting off for Australia via Britain (where he stayed seven months) and Palestine. From 1863 through 1865, he evangelized in Australia and then went to Ceylon and India (1870-1875). After returning to Britain and then the United States, he set off in 1877 to found missions in various parts of Latin America, an enterprise upon which he was engaged (with many trips back to the United States) until 1884; then he was elected Missionary Bishop of Africa by the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States. He was thenceforward engaged in expanding missions in Liberia and Angola. He wrote copiously (mostly during his many long voyages),

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and until he began to receive a salary after his appointment as bishop, he claimed that most of his income was derived from his books.<sup>2</sup>

Taylor's revivalism was characterized by a highly emotional, ecstatic conversion experience. The individual was first smitten with an intense distress ('conviction'). Then, there followed a period (sometimes short, sometimes protracted for several days) during which the individual, usually with the assistance of ministers or lay members of the church,

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to acknowledge the assistance of my colleague, Dr. Burkhard Kiesekamp, whose penetrating criticisms and helpful suggestions helped me to clarify and strengthen the argument in this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Most of this biographical outline is derived from his autobiography *Story of my life* (New York: Hunt & Eaton 1895). Most of the autobiography is composed of excerpts and abridgments of his earlier books. The South African book, *Christian adventures in South Africa*, New York: Nelson & Phillips 1876, is reproduced with only limited abridgments and changes in *Story of my life*, pp. 327-500.

attempted to 'enter into liberty', 'to find peace.' When successful, they then expressed great relief, joy and assurance that they were 'saved.' Such revivalism had been characteristic of early Methodism in Britain; however, the British Wesleyan Methodists had tended to become more middle class and 'respectable' in the nineteenth century. Thus, few of the Wesleyan missionaries had ever witnessed some of the scenes which emerged in the Taylor revival.

The missionary, Robert Lamplough, described a meeting at Annshaw Mission:

The prayer-meeting then began; but it was utterly impossible to be heard either in praying or singing. The excitement and cries seemed so great, that I proposed to Mr. Taylor that the meeting should be dismissed.<sup>3</sup>

Taylor described a five-hour service at Healdtown Mission near Fort Beaufort.

At least three hundred seekers were down on their knees within a few minutes. They were all praying audibly, the floor was wet with tears, yet none seemed to be screaming louder than his neighbours. Brother Sargent [Rev. William Sargent, missionary in charge of Healdtown] seemed, for a few moments, fearful, thinking it might lead to confusion.

Several clergymen and laymen from Grahamstown were also present. "They seemed a little confused at the first shock, for my meetings at Graham's Town, as in every other place among the whites, were conducted in quietness." However, they were soon reassured. Not only

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Africans were affected because at that same meeting "there were fourteen whites down on their knees, as seekers."<sup>4</sup>

While services among whites may not have been as noisy as those among Africans, they were, nonetheless, frequently very emotional. Rev. J. Fish described a typical scene from King William's Town.

After a very powerful sermon, twenty-eight adults came forward. . . It would be vain to describe our feelings, as now and then the low sobbing cry for mercy was blended with words of praise, uttered by those who had found Christ.<sup>5</sup>

The second significant feature of Taylor's revivalism was its postmillennial orientation; that is, the second coming or second advent of Christ would follow rather than precede the millennium. As William G. McLoughlin, Jr. has pointed out, this kind of revivalism embodied the optimistic belief that "through the spread of Christianity the world itself was gradually working toward a state of perfection" and its social outlook was "the Christian counterpart of Jacksonian democracy." As a result, many of the converts of postmillennialists (like Charles Finney) "engaged in the manifold reform movements of the day with the dedicated, and often self-righteous, zeal of persons assured that they were serving the Lord."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser. XIII, 25 October 1866, p. 168. Taylor argued against a dismissal and Lamplough declared, "The result showed that he was right."

<sup>4</sup> Taylor, *Christian adventures*, pp. 156-7. This unusual degree of integration was repeated many times in Taylor's services in the frontier and Transkeian areas.

<sup>5</sup> *Wes. Miss. Notices* 26 Dec. 1866, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> *Modern revivalism*, New York: Ronald Press 1959, pp. 100-107.

Unlike the pessimistic premillenarians,<sup>7</sup> postmillenarians believe that the world can be saved; Taylor's commitment to such a belief is shown by his response to the concomitant quandary.

If the dispensation of the Spirit is to extend to "that great and notable day of the Lord, when He shall judge the quick and the dead," and if the everabiding Spirit is as available now, and as willing to fulfil His mighty mission now, . . . why is the world not saved? I wept over the defective faith, and ineffective methods, of the Church, and thought how the Holy Spirit is grieved in not having suitable agencies for the successful prosecution, and consummation of His work. . . .<sup>8</sup>)

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Later, he concluded a proposal to evangelize Africa with African evangelists and preachers rather than white missionaries with this ringing declaration:

Then the darkness would soon be past. The dismal cry, "Watchman, what of the night?" would be heard no more. Then we should see the mellow light of millennial glory reposing on the tops of the mountains<sup>9</sup>).

In contrast to a history of the revival among Africans, the revival among whites seems to have been stimulated only by Taylor's arrival. As a result of the revival, several hundred whites were converted and produced a permanent increase in Methodist membership; several men were induced to enter the ministry. However, the impetus and momentum of revival was not maintained after Taylor's departure.<sup>10</sup>

Among Africans, the revival predated Taylor's appearance on the scene by a few weeks and, with conversions numbering in the thousands, continued to gather momentum long after Taylor's departure. The revival was notable in two ways: prior to this, African conversions had been disappointingly slow and limited in number; and, further, the revival and much of the continuing evangelistic thrust were largely the work of African clergy.

With the notable exception of the Rev. Tiyo Soga who had been educated in Scotland and ordained in 1856, there had been no ordinations of Africans to the ministry in South Africa, although Africans had been utilized to a considerable extent as interpreters, evangelists, catechists, etc. (i.e., up to the level of licensed laymen). While the majority of missionaries paid lip service to the idea of an indigenous clergy, most resisted the implementation on the grounds that Africans were not yet ready or sufficiently 'advanced'. In the Wesleyan Methodist Church, there were a few - notably Robert Lamplough and William Impey (there was also considerable pressure from officials of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in Britain) - who felt that a start should be attempted. Accordingly in 1865, four Africans (Charles Pamla, William Shaw Kama, James Lwana, and

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<sup>7</sup> The growth of premillenarianism (upon which fundamentalism and revivalism in the twentieth century is based) is traced in Ernest R. Sandeen, *The roots of fundamentalism, British and American millenarianism 1800-1930*. Chicago & London: Univ. of Chicago Press 1970. One of its basic tenets is "the belief that the gospel was not intended nor was it going to accomplish the salvation of the world, but that, instead, the world was growing increasingly corrupt and rushing toward imminent judgment." P. 39.

<sup>8</sup> *Christian adventures*, p. 161.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 519. This proposal was very widely disseminated; see footnote 26 below.

<sup>10</sup> See W.C. Holden's lament, "The world gradually came in, their faith became weak, and their love grew cold. They did not ordinarily forsake the house of God, but 'the glory was departed;'" *British rule in South Africa* (Pretoria: State Library Reprint, 1969), pp. 24-5.

John Lwana) were recommended and were 'received on trial' by the 1866 Annual Conference (this was the British Conference - the autonomous South

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African Conference was not established until 1883).<sup>11</sup> The role of these and other Africans in the revival which began shortly after ensured the success of this experiment.<sup>12</sup>

While Taylor had begun preaching in Cape Town on April 1st, in Port Elizabeth on April 22nd, and in Grahamstown on May 13th, it was not until June 6th in King William's Town that Charles Pamla first met Taylor and observed his evangelistic methods. Although Taylor had had a couple of services which included Africans and had tried preaching through interpreters, the results were so poor that Taylor had decided to direct almost all his efforts towards the white population. On the other hand, in a letter dated June 1, 1877, Pamla described the beginnings of his own evangelistic endeavours during the previous month and in which about fifty conversions had been made.<sup>13</sup> As Taylor pointed out, Pamla's training "was going an quite independent of me";<sup>14</sup> the revival had in fact begun spontaneously.

Pamla and other Africans did observe several of Taylor's meetings in King William's Town, but the event which really produced the religious explosion was a day of preaching at Annshaw Mission on June 14th. At four o'clock with Pamla interpreting, the first service was held but dismissed right after the sermon. At 7.30 p.m., the second service began. These are excerpts from Lamplough's account:

Of this sermon I can only say that it was as powerful as the first;... and Charles Pamla was carried beyond himself;... Towards the close of this sermon, Mr. Taylor sang,... and to the surprise of all, not excepting Mr. Taylor, Charles interpreted the piece, and *sang* it, line after line, in a most marvellous manner. I never heard anything like it;

The description of the prayer-meeting which followed has been given above (see p. 2).

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By twelve o'clock, when the meeting closed, about *seventy* souls professed to have entered into liberty. But most wonderful was to see how Charles Palma seemed to understand the work, and what was necessary to be done. He and others soon brought order out of what appeared to be confusion and noise.

Another meeting began at sunrise and continued until 3 o'clock in the afternoon when Taylor left to go to Alice. Altogether, Lamplough claimed that one hundred fifteen conversions had taken place during the twenty-four hours of the visit.<sup>15</sup>

In the weeks that followed, meetings continued to be held at Annshaw twice a day;

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<sup>11</sup> Wesleyan Conference of Methodists (Britain). *Minutes...at their ... Annual Conference* (London, published annually). Their names did not appear in the 1866 *Minutes*, but they were listed in the 1867 *Minutes* as having 'travelled' for one year. They were following the normal procedure. A man was 'received on trial', spent at least four years 'travelling' (i.e., on probation) with annual examinations, and, if found satisfactory, was 'admitted to full connexion' and ordained.

<sup>12</sup> These four were all 'received into full connexion' in 1870, and almost every year new men were being taken on trial.

<sup>13</sup> This letter to William Shaw was published in *Wes. Miss. Notices*, Sept. 1866, and reprinted in Taylor, *Christian adventures*, pp. 96-8. The facts were corroborated by Lamplough, *Wes. Miss. Notices*, 25 Oct. , p. 168.

<sup>14</sup> *Christian adventures*, p. 95.

<sup>15</sup> *Wes. Miss. Notices* 25 Oct. 1866, pp. 168-9. Taylor's account is in *Christian adventures*, pp. 118-26.

Pamla and others also began to go out to villages throughout the Circuit and surrounding area. Conversions numbered in the hundreds. Lamplough drew attention to the significant feature.

The most prominent feature, however, in this work... is the way in which Charles Pamla and Boyce Mama, and other natives, have been used as instruments in this work. Indeed, the work has been in their hands, especially of Charles and Boyce, whilst I have not been used at all, so far as I can see.<sup>16</sup>

The Annshaw meeting was a turning point for Taylor as well. The day at Annshaw had been a reluctant concession to Lamplough's importuning while on route to Fort Beaufort and other scheduled services for whites. Encouraged by the earlier Annshaw success, Taylor took a day off from the Fort Beaufort services to go to Healdtown Mission. Using the technique worked out with Pamla (i.e., Taylor preached the sermon to the interpreter privately beforehand), there was another highly successful service as described above. As he completed his scheduled itinerary to the white congregations, he also held occasional services for Africans and even Dutch (i.e., Afrikaans), speaking Coloureds.

Instead of travelling to Natal by ship as earlier planned, Taylor decided to travel through the Transkei, visiting the strategically-planned line of Wesleyan mission stations. He asked that Charles Pamla accompany him. This journey and evangelizing occupied Taylor and Pamla (with entourage) from July 14th to September 7th when Taylor arrived in Pietermaritzburg. Although the numbers of conversions were not as spectacular as in the Cape Colony itself (probably because

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conquest, demoralization and acculturation were not as advanced), there were significant results. Even more significantly, Pamla on his own seemed to make a bigger impression than Taylor, especially on the Mpondo. In fact, Rev. Thomas Jenkins (the well-known missionary who played such an important role in affairs in Pondoland through his friendship and association with Faku, the Mpondo Paramount) begged that Pamla be sent back through Pondoland because "strange to say, some of the heathen chiefs have expressed a *strong desire* for Charles to visit them."<sup>17</sup> In Natal, Taylor left Pamla to do almost all the preaching to the Africans while he preached to whites. Of the seven hundred Africans converted, Taylor said almost all should be credited to "my Zulu" (i.e., Pamla).<sup>18</sup>

The initial missionary assessment of Pamla's performance at the Annshaw meeting in June was that it was some sort of miracle that Pamla, an African, had preached so effectively. Taylor gave more credit to Pamla's abilities, "The fact was, I had a very apt scholar for my interpreter".<sup>19</sup> Time and again, missionaries who understood Xhosa were amazed at Pamla's facility not only in translating the words, but in translating the ideas into idioms that were more appropriate to the language and experience of Africans. Taylor emphasized Pamla's eagerness and ability to learn. When confronted by English words he did not know, Pamla preferred to have the words explained rather than to have familiar

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<sup>16</sup> *Wes. Miss. Notices* 25 Oct. 1866, pp. 169-71. Boyce Mama was engaged as an evangelist; he was received on trial as a probationer minister in 1867 and received into full connexion (ordained) in 1872.

<sup>17</sup> Italics in original; Taylor, *Christian adventures*, p. 464.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 470-75. Pamla's family was Mfengu, and his grandfather, whose name was Zulu, had been a petty chief among the northern Nguni in Natal before the family had been forced to flee southward as a result of the Tshakan wars.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 122-3.

words substituted. Taylor gave a good example of the process of what happened when he wanted to use ivy in an illustrative simile.

When I first introduced my ivy illustration to Charles, he said, "The Kaffirs don't know what you mean by ivy." "Very well," said I, "we'll not use it." "No," said he, "it is too good an illustration to lose; since you have explained it to me I understand it well, and if you will give it as the ivy, I will give it exactly by the milkwood, which every Kaffir knows."<sup>20</sup>

In summarizing his opinion of Pamla, Taylor declared:

He has a philosophic cast of mind, can grasp the most abstruse principles readily, forgets nothing worth remembering, and after interpreting my sermons twice per day for nearly two months, it became a work of superero-

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gation for me to preach through him, for he could do it as well, or better, without me.<sup>21</sup>

As previously indicated, Pamla was by no means the only African who was taking a leading role in this revival. Taylor and/or Pamla visited any place only for a few days at most, yet the revival carried on. There are many reports such as Fish's from King William's Town in the *Wesleyan Missionary Notices* that the "*native work... has been, and is, even more encouraging than that among the Europeans.*" Much of this he admitted was "the instrumentality of my native Preachers and Leaders."<sup>22</sup>

Describing the situation in 1873, W. C. Holden drew a sharp contrast between the after effects of the revival among whites where the impetus had long since waned and among Africans where the spirit and practice of "old-fashioned Methodism" had remained in operation. He described a recent meeting organized and led by African clergy (he was the only white among the five hundred people present). His description illustrates the continuity.

I had been in England during revivals, and had seen the power of God in a wondrous manner; but anything like this I had not before seen. There were some ten or twelve heathens in their red blankets and karosses, with all their heathen trappings and ornaments, prostrate on the ground, in the deepest anguish of soul crying for mercy, whilst singing and praying and exhortation were going on by the workers around.<sup>23</sup>

The revival was an on-going phenomenon.<sup>24</sup>

The revival was significant from a number of points of view. Pamla and the others had demonstrated unequivocally the superiority of African clergy in the evangelization of Africans. Prior to this event, conversions had been few and many of those who had come to the mission stations and professed Christianity (often they were the outcasts, the dispossessed, those accused of witchcraft, etc.) were often not very highly regarded by the

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 233-5.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 451.

<sup>22</sup> 25 December 1866, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> Holden, *British rule*, pp. 22-5.

<sup>24</sup> Nor was this kind of revivalism restricted to the Methodists. From time to time, the Presbyterians and occasionally the Congregationalists reported similar outbreaks.

missionaries.<sup>25</sup> Now, instead of

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the ones and twos, conversions were being numbered in the hundreds. This overwhelming success plus Taylor's enthusiasm for using indigenous clergy<sup>26</sup> overwhelmed the prejudice and opposition to the ordination of Africans. The opposition and prejudice did not disappear (it was shared even by a number of whites who were engaged entirely in mission work among Africans,<sup>27</sup> but the number of African clergy grew rapidly and other mission societies were soon emulating the Wesleyans<sup>28</sup>).

The tremendous momentum of religious conversions among Africans cannot be explained by the arrival of William Taylor in South Africa. As indicated, the movement had begun before he arrived in the area and continued long after he left. Even while he was there, the activities of African preachers accounted for the majority of conversions. Taylor's visit was important. Pamla and the other African clergy obviously learned a very great deal about techniques and methods from one of the most successful revivalists of the day. Perhaps just as important for the success of the movement was Taylor's ability to forestall any repression of this highly emotional, ecstatic revivalism. Many missionaries (as indicated above) were initially taken aback and apprehensive. Had Taylor not induced similar reactions among whites and been there to allay the fears and, in a sense, to legitimize the outbursts, white missionaries might well have tried to tone down or to suppress the movement.

Nor is the use of African agents the main explanation. Unordained African agents (evangelists, catechists, readers, local preachers, etc.)

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had been employed for a long time; while Pamla and three others had been selected for training for eventual ordination, they were not really significantly different.

The main explanation is to be found in the situation and difficulties of the mass of Africans. As will be discussed below, on the crude level of power, white intrusion and conquest had revealed the inadequacies and impotence of traditional society's resources. Secondly, new structures, relationships and modes of life were being imposed; traditional society could not provide the intellectual or emotional means to understand or cope with the large-scale society imposed by whites. It was, therefore, necessary to begin to reach out beyond traditional society. In this way, the mass conversions of the Taylor revival were a

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<sup>25</sup> See Donovan Williams, *The missionaries on the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony, 1799-1853*. Ph.D. dissertation, Univ. of Witwatersrand, 1959. Land, refuge, and hand-outs were often more important than the attractions of Christianity itself. Refugees, such as the Mfengu, had been more susceptible. While the wars of conquest (traditionally called the 'Kaffir Wars') had increased the number of Xhosa refugees and the number of converts, the situation in the middle 1860s had not much changed from that of the date at which Williams ended his study, 1853.

<sup>26</sup> His views were disseminated widely when a long letter, dated Oct. 18, 1866, was published in the *Grahamstown Journal*, 23 Nov. 1866, and reprinted in *Wes Miss Notices*, 25 Feb. 1867, pp. 40-3. The letter was also reprinted in Taylor's *Christian adventures*, pp. 506-19. In addition to his advocacy of African clergy as a better, more economical mode of evangelization, he urged that no more mission stations be created as they confined evangelization and trammelled the missionary with too many secular responsibilities and burdens.

<sup>27</sup> There is ample evidence of this in Peter Hargreaves, *Diaries* (deposited in Methodist Book Room, Cape Town). Tensions and hostility came out almost annually at the District Synod of Clarkebury (most of the Transkei) of which Hargreaves was Chairman for many years at the end of the nineteenth century. See especially 10-19 January 1888.

<sup>28</sup> See my *The role of African clergy in the reorientation of Xhosa society to the plural society in the Cape Colony, 1850-1915*. Ph.D. dissertation, U.C.L.A., 1975, pp. 24-48.

turning away from primary forms of resistance and the beginning of the search for alternatives which subsequently led to secondary forms of resistance. The revival was, therefore, a reaction to past failures and a search for new options in the future.

Beginning in the late eighteenth century but becoming increasingly intense in the nineteenth century, the southern Nguni peoples<sup>29</sup> were confronted by white intrusion, expansion and conquest. While there were some minor attempts at accommodation (particularly the reception of a few missionaries), the main response was one of military resistance. In addition to frequent skirmishing and raiding, there were major wars in 1811-12, 1819, 1835, 1846-47, and 1851-53, in all of which the Africans had been defeated. As a result, Africans had suffered enormous losses of land, cattle and people with concomitant disastrous economic and political effects.

Frustration and desperation set the stage for the next response - the attempt to find a religio-magical solution - the 'cattle-killing' in

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1856.<sup>30</sup> This is not to say that religio-magical elements had not been invoked previously; they had. The activities of Makanda in 1819 and of Mlanjeni at mid-century are well-known, but as is pointed out by Monica Wilson, these men were operating within the traditional pattern of the war-doctor (*itola*). The 'cattle-killing' was something very different. One can agree with Wilson's contention that the 'cattle-killing' was not unique in the sense that never had anything similar occurred; as she shows, there are numerous similar examples in Europe as well as Africa.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, within Xhosa society, the 'cattle-killing' was an extraordinary event. It is evidence of a desperate recognition among the Xhosa that if they were to retain or regain their independence, they needed to 'plug into' supernatural powers and forces which they had never needed before. This is very much akin to modern western societies' search for the ultimate weapon. In our science-oriented societies, we seek security and salvation in technology; in traditional societies in Africa, security, health and well-being were dependent upon supernatural powers and forces. The 'cattle-killing' was an attempt to extend and transcend the limitations of traditional religion, magic and the ancestor cult. The catastrophe which resulted merely multiplied the effects of the military defeats. Thousands died, tens of thousands more were impoverished and/or forced to migrate and take up employment with white farmers. Demoralization was wide-spread and there seems fairly strong evidence of a widespread increase in alcoholism dating from the

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<sup>29</sup> In the late eighteenth century, the Bantu-speaking peoples who lived between the Indian Ocean coast and the escarpment of the Drakensberg Mountains and between the present day boundaries of Natal south to the eastern Cape as far as the Fish River had a high degree of cultural and linguistic homogeneity (their dialects were mutually intelligible). Politically, they were fragmented and all had fissiparous tendencies. The Xhosa cluster of chieftaincies was the largest body of the peoples in the area; though it had only limited political significance, the chiefs acknowledged a genealogical ranking and nominal paramountcy of the main royal line. The Xhosa dialect was the one which missionaries reduced to writing; as a result, Xhosa has become the dominant dialect, and today all southern Nguni are generally classified as Xhosa people. The northern Nguni (in present day Natal) were very similar. For a good short description, see "The Nguni People" in M. Wilson and L.M. Thompson, eds., *The Oxford History of South Africa*, I, Oxford, 1969, 75-130.

<sup>30</sup> A young girl, Nongqause, saw a vision. Her uncle, Mhlakaza, interpreted and supplemented this with visitations and visions of his own. These were regarded as direct instructions from the ancestors. To obtain deliverance, the Xhosa were to kill all their cattle and destroy all their grain; then on a given day, dead heroes would arise, the old would be restored to youth, numberless fat cattle would appear, the grain pits would be filled, and the white men would be driven into the sea. See Monica Wilson's assessment in *Oxford History*, I, 256-60.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*



1860s and 1870s.<sup>32</sup>

In addition, Africans were finding that their small-scale (essentially one 'world') traditional societies were being disrupted and overwhelmed

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by the many 'worlds' of large-scale society. Loss of land and cattle forced many to go to work for whites. Missionaries and traders were encouraging trade and use of European articles which could be purchased only by selling or trading marketable products or by selling their labour. In either case, Africans were being drawn out from a subsistence economy into an European-based market economy. Successive annexations (and informal extensions of influence), together with Sir George Grey's 'assimilation' policies, were incorporating more Africans into the large-scale society of not only the Cape Colony but also of the British Empire. Grey's policies were attempting, on a gradual basis, to substitute white magistrates for chiefs in legal and administrative matters and to produce assimilation by introducing western legal concepts, education and medicine.

Annexation to the Cape Colony also brought the right (if one possessed the income and property qualifications) to acquire the vote and to participate in the politics of this large-scale society, Nevertheless, because of impoverishment, the disadvantages of lack of knowledge and experience, and outright discrimination, Africans were relegated to the lowest and most subordinate status in Cape society. In these circumstances traditional religion and culture could do little, if anything, to help them. Thus, Africans desperately needed some means of coming to terms with and of learning to cope with the requirements of large-scale society.

To people who customarily interpret the vicissitudes of life in supernatural terms, it was only natural that their first interest and avenue should be a religious one. To some extent then, the Taylor revival can be seen as a counter-part to the 'cattle-killing' which had demonstrated the inadequacy of traditional religion. Christianity seemed to promise so much, not only in supernatural, spiritual terms (i.e., an other-worldly payoff) but also in material, this-worldly advantages. Christian missions provided western education. In the context of the official policy of non-racialism and the rhetoric of Cape 'liberalism', it appeared that qualifications (i.e., Christianity and 'civilization') not skin colour determined one's status and opportunities. Thus, Christianity and the mission-controlled education seemed to be the gateway through which Africans could gain access to all the advantages and benefits of large-scale society in the Cape Colony.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Many witnesses (including 'reds' or pagan as well as missionaries and temperance-minded African Christians) asserted that there was a great increase not only in the consumption of the white man's distilled liquors but also in the home-made *utywala*. See *The Report and Proceedings, with Appendices of the Government Commission on Native Laws and Customs* (G. 4'83) (Struik Reprint, 1968) and *Report of the Liquor Laws Commission, 1889-1890* (G. I-'90) (Cape Town, 1890). The evidence and question is discussed in my *The role of African clergy*, pp. 149-51.

<sup>33</sup> The change of scale from small-scale, isolated, technologically unsophisticated society to large-scale, technologically sophisticated society is a very mixed bag of advantages and disadvantages, of benefits and costs. In addition to the advantages and disadvantages of a material nature are those of an emotional and psychological nature. As Monica Wilson has pointed out, the latter are perhaps summarized by the dilemmas of choice. Increase in scale expands the range of choice for the individual (freedom) but also imposes the necessity, even agony, of making the choices – *Religion and the transformation of society* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 1925.

In Africa, the disadvantages in a change of scale have been multiplied by the fact that change of scale was introduced and imposed by conquest and subordination. While the nationalist and independence movements have been very much concerned to throw off the disadvantages of the latter (colonialism), they have also been largely committed to acquiring the advantages and benefits of large-scale society in spite of the disadvantages.

Christianity also seemed to promise a much more equitable society. There were the Biblical assertions about the equality of all believers. Also, postmillennial revivalism expected rapid progress and an early achievement of the millennium. The millenarian orientations of missionaries and their converts have not been investigated. However, in the 1870s and 1880s, mission-educated Africans (laymen and clergy) tended to have an unbounded belief in the inevitability of progress. They believed that the spread of Christianity, education and civilization would gradually lead to a society where blacks would be recognized and treated equally with whites. Progress would enable blacks to 'come up to' the level of whites and at the same time, would reduce the ignorance and prejudice of whites. *Imvo* and *Christian Express* both provide innumerable examples of such attitudes.<sup>34</sup> Such optimistic expectations are compatible only with a postmillenarian viewpoint.

Regardless of how unrealistic and naive such expectations and promises appear in the light of what has happened since, there can be no doubt that large numbers of Africans accepted them at face value. To people demoralized by defeat and disaster and overwhelmed by a large-scale society which they did not understand, Christianity held out the hope of salvation. I do not wish to restrict the meaning of the term 'salvation' to the narrow definition of redemption from some eternal punishment in an after-life. Here I am thinking more of 'salvation' as the regaining of a sense of dignity and selfworth as well as the attainment of some sort of 'eternal life'.<sup>35</sup>

This search for salvation (in the broad sense) is the significance of the Taylor revival from the point-of-view of what had happened to the Xhosa in the preceding sixty years or so. It should be noted that this conversion to Christianity did not necessarily mean a total rejection of traditional religion. Rather it was a reaching out beyond traditional religion, an attempt to gain something in addition. This reluctance to abandon traditional religion entirely is easily demonstrated. The missionaries attempted to force their new converts to abandon a number of traditional customs (such as polygyny, *ukwaluka* - circumcision, *intonjane* - girl's initiation rites, *lobola* - bride price, drinking of *utywala* - 'kaffir beer') because they were so tainted with 'heathenism' that they could not be tolerated. The success ratio was limited. By the turn of the century, the missionaries had been forced to tolerate both *ukwaluka* and *lobola* under controlled conditions. *Intonjane* was abolished but most of the ritual essentials seem to have been incorporated into the modified Christian wedding customs.<sup>36</sup>

Even more important, B. A. Pauw has found recently that the vast majority of African Christians still believe in the efficacy of the influence of the ancestors and that the majority

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<sup>34</sup> *Imvo* (edited by J.T. Jabavu, who was an extremely active and influential layman in the Wesleyan Methodist Church) shows this especially strongly. However, almost all the early graduates of Lovedale show a similar unbounded faith in 'progress'. Their concept of progress and the ideal society almost certainly was closer to that of the English Whig reformers than to the more egalitarian reformers of Jacksonian democracy.

<sup>35</sup> However, in discussing a widespread conversion to Christianity, it would be inconsistent and distorting to exclude such connotations. After all, it is the expectation of 'eternal life' that has frequently rationalized wretchedness in the present life. I see no reason why it would not function in the same way in South Africa.

<sup>36</sup> This is discussed very extensively in my dissertation, *The role of African clergy*, pp. 49-189.

claim to have had some sort of visitation or contact with their ancestors.<sup>37</sup> Pauw found that many Christians accommodated the apparently conflicting claims of Christianity and the ancestor cult by compartmentalizing; the ancestors are of significance only within the context of the small-scale world of the family while Christianity dominates in the other aspects of life in multi-racial, large-scale society in South Africa.<sup>38</sup> Thus, it would seem that Christianity was, to a considerable extent, accepted in addition to rather than in place of traditional religion. In this way, the links with traditional society and the ideals of primary resistance were never completely severed.

The Taylor revival was also significant in terms of what happened subsequently. As indicated, large numbers of Africans accepted the

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promises embodied in the rhetoric of both missionaries and Cape 'liberalism.' There followed a period of familiarization and participation in some of the associations and activities of large-scale society into which they plunged with great ebullience and expectation. First and foremost were the 'churches and mission schools attached to them. Then they joined or formed other associations (the temperance organization, the Independent Order of True Templars; the Native Educational Association; the Fingo Association, etc..<sup>39</sup> By the 1880s Africans were increasingly acquiring the vote and participating in politics. During this early familiarization period (1870s and much of the 1880s), Africans were willing to accept subordination, partly because it was believed to be temporary while they attained the requisite qualifications (education and 'civilization') and partly because they were not yet sure of themselves in the new milieu. Imbued as they were with the doctrine of 'progress', it seemed that it was only a matter of time and effort before the possibilities and opportunities of large-scale society would be opened to them, before their apprenticeship would be completed.

However, disillusionment and disappointment began to appear. Subordination and discrimination continued in the churches. Occupational and other opportunities did not open up on the scale that many had expected. By the 1890s, Africans were not only failing to gain access to greater opportunities but were in fact suffering regression in a number of areas. Access to the franchise was curtailed in 1887 and 1892. Job discrimination in the civil service began to appear more blatantly. Harsher, more discriminatory legislation began to be passed, such as the Glen Grey Act with its forced labour provisions. Then from 1890-1910, Africans in general experienced both real and relative declines in their standard of living.<sup>40</sup>

As a result, by the 1890s, Africans were beginning to chafe under continued subordination and the imposition of constraints on their full participation in and enjoyment of the potentialities of large-scale society. Therefore, they began to assert control over associations they

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<sup>37</sup> *Bantu Christians and their churches in the Eastern Cape and Transkei*. Rhodes Univ. Inst. of Social and Economic Research, 1969, typescript. Pauw argues that this is probably a recrudescence, but I think it was probably just as or almost as strong among converts in the nineteenth century. See *The role of African clergy*, pp. 181-9.

<sup>38</sup> Pauw, *Bantu Christians*, pp. 195 (a)-219.

<sup>39</sup> Most of these organizations have not been investigated. A description of the organization and history to 1896 of the Independent Order of True Templars (I.O.T.T.) can be found in *The role of African clergy*, pp. 160-69.

<sup>40</sup> A real decline because first rinderpest (a cattle sickness) wiped out a large proportion of African cattle wealth in 1896; then after 1902, first the post-war depression and then the worst drought in almost 100 years brought further economic hardship and loss. A relative decline because the development of gold mining brought a rapid increase in white standards of living while it did little for African living standards.

had joined (such as the L.O.T.T.) or they seceded and formed their own associations (the separatist churches).<sup>41</sup> Finally, they began to form new associations over which they would have control and through which they hoped to pry open access to the potentialities and full participation in large-scale society. These included the South African Native Congress, the Cape Native Convention and the Native Vigilance Association, all primarily political organizations. All these assertive activities, which are usually considered forms of secondary resistance, were controlled and directed almost exclusively by African clergymen and mission educated Africans.

In this way, the Taylor revival set in motion the training of a leadership cadre and began initiating Africans into the free associations of large-scale western societies which provide the vehicles for secondary resistance. In some senses then, the Taylor revival marked the transition from primary resistance to secondary resistance even though the overt manifestations of the latter did not emerge for another generation or so. I have retained the use of the primary-secondary resistance distinction as a way of denoting the reorientation of thinking and outlook which occurred between the 'cattle-killing' and the Taylor revival. However, it must also be recognized that at an emotional and psychological level, the two events appear to be based upon similar needs. To the extent that all reactions (from military resistance to modern mass nationalism) are based upon attempts to resist or to escape from an inferiority imposed by white domination, there is a degree of continuity which makes the distinction a somewhat artificial dividing line on a continuum.<sup>42</sup> The idea of continuity is reinforced by the retention of important elements of traditional religion as pointed out above.

As has been indicated, the so-called Taylor revival was the spectacular beginning of the long-term process of mass conversion to Christianity. To be understood properly, this conversion to Christianity must be seen in a somewhat broader context than that of the Cape Colony to

which we have restricted this analysis hitherto. Conversion was not simply a bowing of the knee to the conqueror, an act of submission; nor was it a 'con-game' in which whites bedazzled gullible 'natives' with a few religious baubles while they filched the land (the land certainly was filched, but by the sword not by the Bible). In conversion, Africans were attempting to take advantage of very important psychological, sociological and ideological functions of Christian revivalism in coping with change and uncertainty.

Massive social and economic change is fraught with anxieties and uncertainties whether it be industrialization in Britain, the opening of new frontiers in North America, or white intrusion and conquest in Africa. Such situations take a very heavy human toll as is evidenced by the problem of alcoholism in each of the cases cited. However, each of these cases also saw the emergence of an emotional, ecstatic revivalism. Undoubtedly the

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<sup>41</sup> This needs to be investigated but, with the partial exception of Rev. P. Mzimba, few separatist church leaders have been active politically. Almost uniformly, the literature on the separatist churches indicates a pessimism about this world, an other-worldly preoccupation, and all the other characteristics of premillenarianism. Thus, the separatist movement represents a marked departure from the earlier revivalist tradition and one which contributed little to the evolution of secondary resistance. I hope to pursue this in a subsequent paper.

<sup>42</sup> My contention goes even further than T.O. Ranger, "Connections between "primary resistance" movements and modern nationalism in East and Central Africa," *J. of American Hist.*, 9 (3), 1968, 437-53, and 9 (4) 1968, 631-41.

emotionalism served a very important safety-valve function, but for people overwhelmed by uncertainty, the emotion seems to give a tangible connection with an ultimate reality and certainty. They know that they are 'saved' because they have felt it and experienced it. It provides a rock (a favourite Christian image) to which they can cling in a world of uncertainty and flux. Mass conversions in the Cape Colony were largely post-conquest phenomena and were attempts to adapt to and to find an adequate place in large-scale western society. These psychological and sociological functions have been widely recognized in the literature on the separatist and independent churches. The analysis applies just as strongly to this earlier period of revivalism.

However, it is the contention of this paper that the roots of African political and nationalist movements in the twentieth century are to be found in the revivalism which emerged in 1866. Most writers have tended to see this period of revivalism and what I have called the familiarization period as a kind of 'Uncle Tom' hiatus between primary and secondary resistance. To do so, however, is to ignore the ideological dynamism of postmillennial revivalism. There was the vision of the perfect society, the millennium, in which blacks too would find an acceptable and happy place. The ideology provided the strategy (education and 'civilization') by means of which blacks could achieve that place. Moreover, the ideology was activist; the commitment to work for the millennial society involved a commitment to change and reform. Obviously, the early generation was exceptionally sanguine about the ease and speed with which the millennium would be achieved. The emergence of the political and nationalist movements did not re-

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present a redirection or the intrusion of some new ideological thrust. Rather it was the logical extension of existing ideological commitments once it was recognized that the achievement of the millennium was not to be as easy, or as fast as first believed. The prominent role of clergymen and devoted laity in founding and leading the political and nationalist movements is clear evidence of the connection.