

ST. ANSGAR'S INSTITUTION IN ROODEPOORT, 1927-1958: A STUDY IN ADAPTATION

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St. Ansgar's Institution in Roodepoort, 1927-1958: 'n studie in aanpassing

Die geskiedenis van St. Ansgar's Institution in Roodepoort is 'n integrale deel van die Church of Sweden Mission se pogings aan die Witwatersrand, wat in 1902 begin het. Die algemene onderneming in stedelike sending wat aanvanklik bedoel is vir Zulu Lutherane wat lede van Lutherse gemeentes van sendingstasies in Natal was, het spoedig onder meer behels sowel aandklasse in geletterdheid en ander vakke vir trekarbeiders, as dagonderrig vir 'n breër groep deelnemers by buitestasies versprei oor die grootste gedeelte van die Witwatersrand.

Teen 1913 het die Church of Sweden Mission na Roodepoort uitgebrei, waar dit 'n ongeordende evangelis onderhou het en 'n klein dagskool bestuur het. Vroeg in die 1920's het die leierskap van hierdie organisasie die nodigheid vir 'n residensiële instelling bespreek waar swart jeugdige van die omgewing geakkommodeer en onderrig kon word. So 'n skool is in 1927 hoofsaaklik vanweë die pogings van Knut en Alfa Swensson geopen. Die leergang het beroeps- en liberale onderrig in 'n Christelike omgewing gebied. Dissiplinêre, finansiële, en ander probleme het St. Ansgar's Institution vir dekades geteister. Dit het die Sweedse Lutherse sendelinge wat dit geadministreer het, gedwing om by die veranderde tye aan te pas terwyl hulle dit gemoderniseer en vergroot het. Uiteindelik was die Bantoe Onderwyswet van 1953 en teenstand teen die onderhoud van 'n hostel vir swart leerlinge in 'n Europese gebied te groot struikelblokke, en in 1958 het die Church of Sweden hierdie baanbrekersinstelling teësinning aan die Christian Council of South Africa oorhandig.

The history of St. Ansgar's Institution in Roodepoort is an integral part of the Church of Sweden Mission's endeavours on the Witwatersrand, which began in 1902. That general undertaking in urban missionary work, initially intended primarily for Zulu Lutherans who had been members of Lutheran congregations at mission stations in Natal, soon encompassed *inter alia* both evening courses in literacy and other subjects for migratory labourers and daytime instruction for a broader group of participants at out-stations scattered across much of the Witwatersrand.

By 1913 the Church of Sweden Mission had expanded to Roodepoort, where it maintained an unordained evangelist and operated a small day school. During the early 1920s the leadership of this organisation discussed the need for a residential institution at which black youths in the region could be accommodated and educated. Owing largely to the efforts of Knut and Alfa Swensson, such a school was opened in 1927. Its curriculum offered vocational and liberal instruction in a Christian environment. Disciplinary, financial, and other problems plagued St. Ansgar's Institution for decades, compelling the Swedish Lutheran missionaries who administered it to adapt to the winds of change while modernising and enlarging it. Eventually, however, the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and opposition to the maintenance of a hostel for black pupils in a European area were obstacles too high to clear, and in 1958 the Church of Sweden Mission reluctantly surrendered this ground-breaking institution to the Christian Council of South Africa.

1. Introduction

Educational history is hardly a virgin field of research in South Africa, but like so many other topics it has developed on an asymmetrical front. One of the many resulting inconsistencies in the professional literature is that while historians and other scholars have shed a considerable amount of light on the crucial roles which missionary societies played in creating and maintaining schools for rural Africans for more than a century, they have yet to illuminate most of the history of missionaries' endeavours to provide education for the rapidly growing number of black children in urban areas after ca 1920. This relative neglect can be attributed partly to the disproportionate attention which historians of missions in the region have given to the nineteenth century and their concomitant failure to give the more recent urban missionary scene its due. To cite but one example of this inconsistency, several books of greatly varying quality describe Swedish Lutheran missions in South Africa, especially Natal, prior to the mid-1920s. Virtually nothing of scholarly merit, however, has been published on the subject since 1924. Consequently, the history of the Church of Sweden Mission's work on the Witwatersrand, which began in 1902 and eventually became the most important part of its South African field, is a blank page, though one which I intend to fill in my forthcoming history of Scandinavian urban missions in South Africa. But even the country's secular urban history is as yet a relatively poorly developed field which did not begin to surge notably until the 1980s.

In the present article it is my intention to make a modest contribution to both the educational and the missions history of urban South Africa by tracing the annals of the most notable Swedish Lutheran educational undertaking in an urban area, namely St. Ansgar's Institution in Roodepoort. This school is known to some Swedes as the place where Archbishop Desmond Tutu received part of his primary education in the 1940s, a fact of which that talented rhetorician did not fail to remind his audience when he preached in the cathedral in Uppsala, Sweden, on 18 June 1989. It also served as a principal venue in the gripping novel of 1955 *Storstadsneger* (the English translation of which bears the more specific title *Big City Zulu*) by Gunnar Helander (b. 1915), a Swedish missionary and literary artist who resided in South Africa for nearly two decades beginning in 1938 and has repeatedly been called "the Alan Paton of Sweden".

The extensive archives of the Church of Sweden Mission (CSM) in Uppsala contain a wealth of unpublished and virtually untapped material pertaining to the history of this educational venture. Yet the story of St. Ansgar's Institution is not merely a curiosity of interest only to biographers of Tutu or students of modern Scandinavian fiction. Nor does its significance lie merely in the fact that this academy was one of the first boarding schools for black pupils on the Witwatersrand, though that fact in itself would justify attention. Its historical relevance arguably inheres chiefly in the fact that it illustrates vividly such matters as missionaries' efforts to rescue economically severely disadvantaged youth from black townships, the relative success of such an undertaking, disciplinary problems in an multiethnic institutional setting, early industrial education, and, ultimately, the devastating impact of the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the Bantu Education Act of 1953.

2. Church of Sweden Missionary endeavours on the Witwatersrand

The history of St. Ansgar's cannot be well understood apart from the context of the CSM's endeavours in Johannesburg and Roodepoort which gave rise to it. In the mid-1890s the CSM, which had operated rural stations in Natal for nearly two decades, most notably Oscarsberg near Rorke's Drift, the scene of an infamous battle during the Anglo-Zulu War, decided to emulate various other churches and missionary societies which had undertaken work amongst migratory black labourers on the Witwatersrand. The need for doing so seemed particularly pressing because many members of the congregations which it sponsored in Natal had joined the flow of unskilled labour to the mines and ancillary industries. The presence of these men in an alien environment which the missionaries correctly

perceived as being replete with moral degradation provided the primary justification and impetus for establishing a station in Johannesburg. Owing to administrative difficulties and the Second Anglo-Boer War, however, the CSM was not able to do so until 1902. At that time Johan Erik Norenienus (1867-1934), who had previously served the CSM briefly at Oscarsberg and in Dundee, purchased on its behalf a site in the Doornfontein section of Johannesburg, which remained the focal point of its urban work on the Witwatersrand. Aided by a growing staff of Zulu evangelists and lay volunteers, and eventually ordained Zulu pastors, Norenienus supervised the development of a missionary programme which included not only ministry to uprooted members of Swedish and other Lutheran congregations in Natal but also general evangelism in compounds and other settings, evening courses in literacy, Christianity, and other subjects, and, on a small scale, day schools for both children and adults. These activities took place in Doornfontein, at other sites in Johannesburg, and in various mining towns on the East Rand, such as Germiston, Benoni, and Boksburg. Most of the CSM's activities were aimed at young male adults from 1902 until the early 1920s, and even after that time such people remained the principal target group.

On the eve of the First World War, Norenienus perceived a need to expand his urban sub-field to the West Rand for the same reason which had dictated its augmentation east of Johannesburg. Roodepoort struck him as a likely place to concentrate initial efforts in a westerly direction because it had already attracted an appreciable number of Lutheran Zulus who had attended his services in Doornfontein. Moreover, Roodepoort seemed to be a strategic staging area from which an evangelistic crusade could be launched to "even more important Krugersdorp and Randfontein". Norenienus consequently stationed a Zulu evangelist named Pennuel Mhlongo there in August 1913.¹ Mhlongo left Roodepoort before the end of the year, however, and was succeeded by Fanius Cele. This out-station initially occupied an erstwhile shop which the CSM transformed into a combined chapel, evening school, and evangelist's residence. By the end of 1913 there were approximately ten catechumens in Roodepoort, although the distances between the mines and the towns scattered about the West Rand posed prohibitive difficulties in organising an expanding programme there.² Norenienus' vision of expanding from Roodepoort into Randfontein came to naught when the managers of a mining company in the latter town refused to give the CSM evangelist permission to proclaim the Gospel on their premises. The CSM maintained its presence in Roodepoort, however, and even opened a small day school there.³

3. The birth of the boarding school

The CSM established only a very limited amount of daytime instruction at its schools on the Witwatersrand prior to 1920. The migrant population which it served prior to that time consisted overwhelmingly of adult males who were employed during the day, an inescapable fact which compelled the CSM and, for that matter, many other missionary societies, to offer instruction almost exclusively at its evening schools. As the demographic profile of the area changed, however, and considerably more black families either developed there or moved in from rural districts, Norenienus and his colleagues began to receive requests from Zulu parents in their congregations to undertake educational work for their children. In 1920 Gunnar Brundin, the director of the CSM, inspected its South African field and, after conferring with black leaders on the Witwatersrand, perceived a compelling need for establishing an institution which would serve as both a school and a refuge for at least a small fraction of the homeless black children in Johannesburg. He wrote passionately about this matter in *Missionstidning*,

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1. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A 1 a : 5, *Missionsrådets Protokolls Bok* [1912-1920], 11-12 February 1913.
 2. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A II : 22, *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1914*, J.E. Norenienus, "Årsberättelse för Missionsarbete å Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstation i Johannesburg 1913".
 3. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A II : 70, *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1938*, J.E. Hallendorff, "Årsberättelse till visitationen i Johannesburg omfattande åren 1902-1937", p. 9.

the CSM's organ in Sweden. This project, however, never developed as such in the city. Indeed, in general the CSM's embryonic programme of daytime education had fallen on hard times. In 1923 its schools at Nancefield and Roodepoort had to close, the former because there was no suitable teacher and the latter for want of enough pupils in the neighbourhood. Reinhold Kempe (1869-1941), then serving as superintendent *pro tempore* during Norenienus' furlough in Sweden, lamented that "the children of the numerous migratory Lutheran Christians now often grow up without any schooling at all and are lost. They are baptised into Lutheran congregations but are not nurtured in them. The evangelists complain that there are no schools to which they can send even their own children".⁴

In the meantime, however, Brundin's impassioned plea had made an impact in Sweden. Knut Swensson (1896-1985) later described it as "the drop which caused the beaker to overflow" and prompted him to volunteer for service in the CSM. He and his wife Alfa (1895-1970) moved to Johannesburg in January 1925 to investigate possibilities for rectifying this situation which Brundin had described. Like him, Swensson believed the chief purpose of such an undertaking was to rescue socially disadvantaged and thus morally vulnerable African youths from the lives they were being forced to lead in the locations near Johannesburg; formal education was always essential but secondary. "The formation of character is the most important goal".⁵ It took the Swenssons a year and a half to find an appropriate site at an affordable cost. Only after an anonymous donor in Sweden had contributed 10 000 Swedish crowns (ca £550) was it possible to buy one in Roodepoort. This generous influx of cash made it possible to establish the institution as a boarding school; the CSM intended not merely to impart knowledge but also to remove urchins from their wretched life in black locations and influence their personalities and behaviour by raising them in a decidedly Christian environment. From the outset there was talk of admitting not only boys but also girls, the latter after an eventual residence had been built for them. Nothing specific about developing co-educational facilities was finalised before the school opened, however, and more than a decade later the CSM was still deliberating the matter.⁶ Enough of the building had been completed by May 1927 to accommodate thirty boys.⁷ When opened with Swensson as its headmaster and only teacher, however, "the Roodepoort school", as it was called for several years, initially attracted only four, and they had come by mistake, believing that it was an industrial arts institute. Enrolment then increased markedly. The second term began with ten pupils and ended with twenty-two. In general it continued to rise, although many of the boys stayed for only a short time before either running away or being expelled for misconduct.⁸ In 1928 there were thirty-five pupils, all of them boys.⁹ By 1931 enrolment had inched up to forty-nine.¹⁰

It is revealing that not all the CSM missionaries agreed with the geographical placement of the school. The lack of unanimity on this issue casts light on abiding racism in the CSM during the 1920s. When the missionaries gathered at Durban for one of their periodic field conferences in June 1928, Norenienus requested his colleagues to approve appropriations totalling £373 for completing construction of the institution. One of them, the conservative Josef Sandström, who had recently returned from a furlough in Sweden and found the social cleavages in South Africa shocking, thought it had been folly to place it in an urban area. "With a view to the future", he argued, "it would have been better to

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4. A.R. Kempe, "Svenska Kyrkans Mission i Sydafrika 1923", p. 20.
 5. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, E I c : 17, *Missionsdirektorns korrespondens Sydafrika 1934-1936*, Knut Swensson (Roodepoort) - Sigfrid Alm, 28 November 1935.
 6. *Missionsrådets Protokolls Bok* (1920-1926), 19 June 1926.
 7. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A II : 51, *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1928*, J.E. Norenienus, "Svenska Kyrkans missionsstation i Johannesburg år 1928".
 8. *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1938*, Knut Swensson, "Roodepoort Internatskola. Historik", pp. 1-2.
 9. Norenienus, "Johannesburgs missionsstation 1928".
 10. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A II : 58, *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1932*, J.E. Norenienus, "Johannesburgs missionsstation år 1931".

situate it on one of our farms in Natal, such as at Oscarsberg, and operate it in conjunction with our projected agricultural school". In other words, he believed that the CSM should not just passively accept what would later be known as "influx control", but actively participate in it. In retrospect, Sandström's ostensibly progressive notion of black education seems ironic and out of touch with historical reality. In any case, whatever his intentions may have been, Sandström betrayed his racist and paternalistic attitude by declaring that "our goal should be to remove as many of the natives as possible from the large cities and train them for practical work in the country".¹¹

From the outset the pupils represented a variety of denominations, and those who identified themselves as Lutherans and for whom the school was primarily intended never constituted a majority. In 1932, for example, only fourteen of the forty-six pupils were Lutherans (30,4 per cent). A plurality of sixteen were Methodists, six were Anglicans, four were Zulu Congregationalists, and two each were either Presbyterians or affiliated with stations of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions or the Paris Evangelical Mission. Three years later enrolment had climbed to seventy-nine, but only twenty-three of these boys, or 29,1 per cent, were then Lutherans. This trend never seems to have been reversed. If we look ahead to 1937, we find that only twelve or fourteen of the 105 pupils, or approximately 12 per cent, claimed Lutheran affiliation, although the decline in that percentage was partly due to the fact that by then the school had begun to admit a small number of day pupils from the neighbourhood.¹² At no time does Swensson appear to have discouraged non-Lutherans from attending St. Ansgar's, and he even believed that having an interdenominational community there could have beneficial effects in lessening tensions between Christian groups.¹³ He nevertheless found it "deeply regrettable that the children from our own congregations avail themselves of our school to such a limited degree". Swensson believed one reason for this was the great "lethargy" he perceived amongst the Zulu Lutherans. This also manifested itself in the reluctance of many parents to pay the required fees to send their children to the institution. Another factor, in Swensson's view, was the distrust which had developed amongst the blacks for white arrangements. "Whenever there is a possibility of suspecting an offer, it is suspected", he generalised.¹⁴ There are no recorded instances of internal dissension or other difficulties which can be attributed to the interdenominational character of the student body.

4. Early disciplinary and other problems

Other difficulties caused Swensson recurrent headaches, however, some of them involving deviations from morally acceptable behaviour. The boys themselves frequently committed offences which necessitated disciplinary action. Some were caught using narcotic drugs and expelled in 1935. Consumption of alcohol by boys as young as twelve years was also a chronic problem.¹⁵ Curfews meant little to some of the boarders, who occasionally sneaked out of their quarters to join friends for nights of mischief, only to be punished when they returned the following day. Reinhold Kempe, who served as the superintendent of the field during the 1930s, reported that the behaviour of the boys had tested the limits of the Swenssons' toleration.¹⁶ Swensson himself saw little respect for elders amongst many of the pupils, who tended to do whatever they pleased. Some of them, he wrote, simply could

11. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A I a : 7, *Missionsrådets Protokolls Bok* (1927-1934), 26 June 1928.

12. *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1938*, A.R. Kempe, "Protokoll hållet vid visitationen i St. Ansgars Institution fredag den 26 November 1937".

13. Swensson to Alm, 28 November 1935.

14. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A II : 60, *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1933*, Knut Swensson, "Årsredogörelse för 1933"; A II : 66, *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1936*, Knut Swensson, "Roodepoort Skolan. Årsredogörelsen för 1935".

15. Swensson, "Roodepoort Skolan. Årsredogörelsen för 1935".

16. Kempe, "Protokoll hållet vid visitationen i St. Ansgars Institution fredagen den 26 November 1937".

not learn to accept discipline. Swensson believed that the behaviour of most of the boys was tolerably good, considering their backgrounds in a socially disrupted environment. Nevertheless, "the spirit of heathenism, the murky aspects of civilisation, urban life which is unnatural to the natives, being uprooted from their tribes, the laxity of discipline, and the great and deeply seated mistrust of the whites have caused us endless difficulties and bitter miscalculations".¹⁷ Internal vandalism remained a problem decade after decade. Hundreds of glass window panes fell victim to the petty violence of the boys. Ester Danell, the wife of one of the Swedish teachers, Magnus Danell, remarked in 1944 that as many as a dozen had to be replaced every week, and that wartime shortages of building materials had made it difficult for the management of the school to install new panes as fast as the boys destroyed old ones. She generalised that it was more common for the pupils to lie than to tell the truth, but she tempered her severe assessment of them by pointing out that there were also talented and well-behaved youths at the school and that the long-standing problem of theft of bread from the refectory had been solved when one of the best of them had assumed responsibility for food preparation.¹⁸

On at least one occasion there was open rebellion at St. Ansgar's. When the Swenssons were on furlough in 1937, their ineffective German replacement punished some of the older residents for unspecified violations of the institution's rules of conduct. They responded by taking the matter to their fellow pupils, who staged a general strike. All those who resided on the premises "went their way with a great deal of commotion", in the words of the superintendent of the field who reported the incident. The day pupils, however, continued to attend their classes, and instruction continued as usual. Eventually most of the strikers returned to the school, none of their demands for greater freedom or impunity for the original offenders having been met.¹⁹

Physical health problems compounded the tribulation of coping with the behavioural difficulties of the boys. At the beginning of each term, when they returned to the residence from their home locations, they often brought back bacterial and other maladies which they had contracted in those unhygienic areas. At those times Swensson's wife, Alfa, who was a formally educated nurse, found her professional skills to be in great demand.²⁰

The young residents were not Swensson's only vexing problem as he sought to establish stability and order at the school. Maintaining a stable and morally satisfactory faculty also proved perennially perplexing. After teaching eight small classes during the first year of the institution's existence, he found it necessary to add a teacher in 1928. The first one whom he hired, Douglas Nsele, was an alumnus of the Lutheran training college at Umpumulo in Natal. Because of his unspecified "perverse tendencies", however, Nsele was fired after only a brief period in Roodepoort. His successor, Walter Zikali, also failed to fill Swensson's ethical desiderata, because his "greatest interest was dancing and night life". He, too, was dismissed. Other teachers also went through a revolving door. A Zulu named P. Sikakana lasted only a short time before falling victim to venereal disease in 1933. He was hospitalised and cured of his malady, but Swensson did not allow him to return to the staff. Swensson then had to discharge a Xhosa named Matebese because of immoderate drinking.²¹

The behaviour of some of the police in the vicinity also proved problematic. In 1930 Swensson reported that two of the pupils had recently been arrested for allegedly violating pass laws. In one instance an official had written the wrong date on the boy's pass, an error which caused a misunderstanding when a policeman inspected the document. In the other case, a pupil had not quite

17. Swensson, "Roodepoort Internatskola. Historik", p. 2.

18. Ester Danell, "Bland skolpojkar på St Ansgars", *Missionstidning*, LXIX, no. 23 (1 December 1944), p. 377.

19. A.R. Kempe, "Svenska kyrkans zulussion år 1937", *Svenska Kyrkans Mission år 1937* (Uppsala: Appelbergs Boktryckeri, 1938), pp. 25-26.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

reached the school a half hour after the evening curfew when a constable apprehended him.²² Other abuses of authority could be more serious. In 1935 a black teacher at the school reported that a white policeman had kicked him and some of the pupils when, on a stroll through Roodepoort, they had been audacious enough to stop momentarily and look at a shop window. When the irate Swensson made an written enquiry about the incident, the police told him that the Africans in question had been obstructing traffic. This explanation seemed unconvincing to the headmaster, whose understanding of the case was that there were not any whites on the street at the time.²³

A curriculum tailored for subservience?

Swensson continued to shoulder most of the administrative duties, but he also served as a regular teacher at the school for many years, chiefly in the higher standards. Ironically, he had earlier criticised what he believed was an exaggerated emphasis on English in the CSM's evening schools, arguing that it was less important than the amount of time spent on it warranted,²⁴ but during the 1930s the government ordered that Afrikaans have a greater place in the curriculum of his own school. For a while Swensson thus had to teach this subject himself, although his heavy work schedule eventually compelled him to turn it over to others.²⁵

In general St. Ansgar's Institution, as the school came to be known during the 1930s, adhered to an officially prescribed syllabus, and at that time it offered instruction up to Standard VI. In 1929 the eminent South African educationist Charles Templeman Loram (1879-1940), whom Swensson called "one of the most influential men in South Africa in all matters concerning the natives" and who would in 1930 become Natal's superintendent of education, inspected the new school and was reportedly impressed with its programme. He encouraged Swensson to try to develop the curriculum beyond the primary school level.²⁶ Swensson's unmitigated praise of this prominent official may shed additional light on his own attitudes towards African education. Loram, who had spent his childhood chiefly in Pietermaritzburg but taken a Master of Arts at the University of Cambridge and a Doctor of Philosophy at Columbia University, had been influenced by his perceptions of Afro-American life and education and believed that blacks in South Africa would continue to be semi-segregated from white society for the foreseeable future. Indeed, he had been one of the architects of the oft-amended Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, which sought to curb black urbanisation and sharpened the racial segregation of South African cities. In his most important book, *The Education of the South African Native*, published in 1917, Loram had argued that the "proper education" of blacks by whites was a key to the solution of interracial strife in that country. This segregationist advocated the continuation of separate schools for blacks with much of the curriculum focused *inter alia* on agriculture and other subjects specially geared to prepare them for their subservient place in a racially pluralistic but white-dominated society. Nevertheless, he believed that European influence on Africans could not be reversed and foresaw the eventual disappearance of tribalism and many other pillars of African culture.²⁷

22. Knut Swensson, "Stora möjligheter och stora behov", *Missionstidning*, LV, no. 9 (1 May 1930), p. 166.

23. Falck, "Frimodighet höves oss", p. 178.

24. Swensson, "Årsredogörelse 1925".

25. Swensson, "Roodepoort Skolan. Årsredogörelsen för 1935".

26. Swensson, "Stora möjligheter och stora behov", pp. 166-167.

27. Albert Luthuli, who also encountered Loram during the 1920s, criticised him as "a vigorous product of the craze for 'practical' education" whose "driving intention seems to have been, in all good faith, to equip African children for the lives white South Africa decreed they would have to live", namely as "hewers of wood and drawers of water". See *Let my people go* (London, 1962), p. 35.

The government began to grant financial aid to the school in 1935, although initially this only defrayed the salaries of two African teachers.²⁸ Part of the curriculum was vocational, with industrial arts being a popular subject in the higher standards. For a time shoemaking was also taught. Swensson thought it entirely reasonable for the government to require such practical instruction in addition to more conventional subjects, although he did not state whether he believed that this should apply only to the African schools.²⁹ St. Ansgar's never served as a full secondary school, and the examination results which its pupils achieved were rarely impressive. After Kempe inspected the institution in 1937, he reported that the performance of those who had attempted the Standard VI examination that year was "depressing". Only five had passed. How many had failed he did not say.³⁰

Extracurricular activities complemented the basic educational programme. The school served as the centre of CSM youth work on the West Rand, and Swensson established a Pathfinder Scout group for interested boys there. Eventually he served as the District Pathfinder Scout commissioner for the entire western part of the gold mining area. His wife became the Wayfarer District Superintendent, overseeing corresponding activities for African girls. There were chapel services at the school, and all residents were required to participate in them. For half an hour before each Sunday service, they attended Sunday school.³¹ In the meantime the CSM's general missionary work in Roodepoort had declined, and in 1936 the evangelist who had served there was removed. In February of that year a new chapel was dedicated at St. Ansgar's. It served not only the school but also as the centre of the CSM's limited programme in Roodepoort.³²

6. Expansion during the 1930s

During the 1930s the CSM expanded and improved the physical facilities of the school, partly because the number of pupils residing there generally rose. It gained additional dormitory space, a kitchen and dining hall, a well which solved a perennial problem of having to fetch water from a considerable distance, and indoor toilets. The CSM's goals for the institution's future development became the topic of discussion during the latter half of the decade. The Swedish Lutheran missionaries in South Africa discussed the general matter at their meeting in February 1938 and laid out three general scenarios. The one which they recognised as the "most cautious" involved little more than continuing the *status quo*, operating St. Ansgar's as a boarding school for boys up to Standard IV. One variation of this plan included adding a department for nonresidential day pupils to the extent that the physical facilities and teaching staff could accommodate them. This conservative proposal seemed to be of questionable value, however, because the number of primary schools in the district was rising notably and thus there was supposedly correspondingly less need for a specifically Swedish Lutheran one. The fact that the number of African children in and near Roodepoort had also risen dramatically does not appear to have entered the discussion. The second proposal was to retain St. Ansgar's as a primary school but add "higher primary" standards to its curriculum in the short term and consider developing a secondary school on the premises at some undetermined time. The missionaries recognised that such an evolution of St. Ansgar's would necessitate the expansion of the physical plant and possibly the acquisition of more property on which to build. Whether the CSM could afford this seemed questionable. The third and clearly most radical scenario was to change the institution gradually into a higher primary and secondary school for both boarding and day pupils while eliminating the lower standards. The missionaries agreed that this phased but wholesale restructuring of the programme was probably the most feasible means of

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

30. Kempe, "Protokoll hållet vid visitationen i St. Ansgars Institution fredagen den 26 November 1937"

31. Swensson, "Roodepoort Internatskola. Historik", pp. 7-8.

32. Hallendorff, "Årsberättelse till visitationen i Johannesburg omfattande åren 1902-1937".

guaranteeing the future of St. Ansgar's as a relevant institution which the Transvaal educational authorities would favour. They also concurred that by admitting older pupils their "principal goal" of maintaining a school as "an institution of Christian nurture" would not be jeopardised.³³

The CSM Steering Committee, which oversaw all Swedish Lutheran foreign missionary operations from its headquarters in Uppsala, Sweden, discussed these three alternatives in April 1938 and in general agreed with the second. As a matter of underlying principle, the committee emphasised that the primary purpose of St. Ansgar's would continue to be to serve the CSM; only secondarily would the institution accede to the requests of the South African government. The lower standards would thus remain, although higher ones would be added. The committee agreed that girls could be admitted to St. Ansgar's at some point, though only after a residence for them were built. With a view to general expansion, it appropriated £1 300 for the purchase of an adjoining plot.³⁴

With the die apparently cast, Swensson, in his capacity as headmaster, in June 1939 propounded his personal views of the matter at length in a letter circulated to his missionary colleagues. He explained that for many years he had opposed and effectively prevented the transformation of St. Ansgar's into a co-educational institution, because having a sexually integrated campus seemed to militate against its purpose of serving as an escape from the demoralising influences of life in the African townships near Johannesburg. Swensson had changed his position on that issue, however, chiefly because the physical enhancement of the campus and the possibility of erecting a carefully supervised dormitory for the girls would make it difficult for the pupils to engage in fornication. Secondly, discussions with other school administrators had convinced him of the increasing demand for schools for black children above the primary level. He therefore proposed that the CSM construct a new building with three classrooms which would accommodate an educational programme up to and including Standard VII in the first instance with the possibility of expansion if and when the need for higher standards arose. Swensson estimated the cost of this structure as well as additional living accommodations for pupils and staff members at £1 990. Should further construction be necessary for even higher standards, another £1 000 would be required.³⁵

When the CSM personnel in South Africa met later that month, they discussed how to proceed with the development of the school. In general the positions which Swensson had represented were adopted; whether he was the originator of them or had merely assented to others' opinions is unknown. Without presenting exhaustive plans for the school's development, the missionaries agreed that the curriculum at St. Ansgar's should be enhanced to include Standards I through VII and that it would soon be possible to admit girls, provided that a residence were built to accommodate them. A general development of the enlarged campus was also foreseen so that it would also have two additional classrooms, two more houses for teachers, two more dormitories for the boys, and a dormitory with kitchen for the girls as well as a matron's room. They were convinced that St. Ansgar's had an abiding role to play in the Christian education of African children on the West Rand and that "the need for such an institution has increased through the years".³⁶

The outbreak of the Second World War a few months later impeded the further unfolding and implementation of these plans to some extent, although during the hostilities the Swedish missionaries in South Africa were much less isolated from their superiors in Scandinavia than were their co-operating Norwegian counterparts. The CSM Steering Committee took seriously its South African missionaries' recommendations for the expansion of St. Ansgar's and requested more detailed proposals. In 1943

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33. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A I a : 8, *Missionsrådets Protokolls Bok (1934-1941)*, 3 February 1938.
34. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A I : 10, *Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1936-1939*, 7 April 1938.
35. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A I c : 7, Knut Swensson (St. Ansgar's Institution), circular letter dated June 1939.
36. *Ibid.*, 26 June 1939.

Magnus Danell (b. 1910), who then both taught at and served as the headmaster of the school, responded in unambiguous terms that in order to remain viable and fill legal requirements the institution would have to be expanded and augment its faculty. Regardless of what else were done, the faculty of five teachers would have to be increased so that each one would be able to devote his full attention to a single class. The government then paid the salaries of only four teachers, though, and Danell emphasised that no additional subsidies could be expected in the short term, at least not for education in the lower standards. Additional funds, in other words, would have to come from Sweden. Furthermore, the three classrooms then in existence hardly began to fill the need for teaching space; four more were required immediately. Danell also requested two additional accommodations for teaching personnel, one of them for a white missionary. With regard to the more distant future, he proposed developing St. Ansgar's into a more comprehensive school up to Standard VIII and adding four teachers, whose salaries, he hoped, the government would eventually cover if they taught in the higher standards, where much of its interest appeared to lie.³⁷ The further development of the institution, however, had to wait until after the end of the war, when it flourished in its own right after the CSM Steering Committee nearly ended its sponsorship.

7. Financial constraints and other problems after the Second World War

Immediately after the Second World War it was clear to the Swedish Lutheran missionaries on the Witwatersrand that St. Ansgar's was in a very weak financial position and could expect little recuperative assistance from Sweden. As part of its effort to deal with this crisis, one in a long series, the administration of the school had to raise its annual fee from £6 to £8 *per annum* in 1946. St. Ansgar's then enrolled 168 pupils, 118 of whom resided on the premises. Forty Zulus comprised the largest tribal group, with the thirty-five Tswana being the second largest. Denominationally no faction stood out. Pupils affiliated with English Methodist churches were a plurality of twenty-seven. There were also twenty young Anglicans and twenty-four members of African independent churches but only thirteen Lutherans. Already at that time, however, the future of the institution seemed to be in jeopardy, because rumours were circulating that Roodepoort location would be expanded to the periphery of the property on which the school stood. This encroachment of a black township, wrote headmaster Danell, was his biggest headache.³⁸ Not all was well at St. Ansgar's itself, however. A year later Danell's successor, Torsten B. Franzén (1912-1957), had to report the expulsion of many boys in 1946 for theft and other offences. The ethnically and denominationally pluralistic character of the student body remained, though, with one youth even coming from the "Donkey Church".³⁹ Franzén was convinced that despite the school's many difficulties, it still performed a legitimate and necessary educational service. He bolstered his argument for its continuation by pointing out that only one-quarter of the boys who attended on a day basis while living in a black township passed their examinations, while one-half of those in residence did so.⁴⁰

In late 1946 and early 1947 Arvid Bäfverfeldt, the director of the CSM, inspected its South African field and, as part of this, spent a day at St. Ansgar's. He recognised that the school was serving a praiseworthy purpose but otherwise was not favourably impressed. In his lengthy report,

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37. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A I c : 8, *Bilagor 1942-1944*, Magnus Danell (Roodepoort) - SKM Steering Committee, 17 September 1943.
 38. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A II : 85, *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1946*, Magnus Danell, "Årsre dogörelse för St. Ansgars skola 1945".
 39. This may be the Donkey Church in Sophiatown to which Trevor Huddleston refers in *Naught for Your Comfort* (London, 1956), p. 127.
 40. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A II : 87, *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1947*, Torsten B. Franzén, "Årsredogörelse för St. Ansgars skola 1946".

Bärfverfeldt noted that the physical facilities were in need of costly repairs and that the campus sorely needed a new two-storeyed building. He estimated that these renovations would cost several thousand pounds. The encroachment of the black township also concerned him, as its proximity had begun to cause disciplinary problems. With slight exaggeration, Bärfverfeldt noted that "extremely few" of the pupils were Zulus. He therefore reluctantly suggested that the CSM contemplate selling St. Ansgar's and consolidate its efforts on projects which would contribute directly to the development of the Zulu Lutheran church.⁴¹

Financially, St. Ansgar's continued to sail in constricted straits. Meeting in January 1947, therefore, the CSM missionaries in South Africa commissioned Franzén to explore the possibility of receiving a significantly larger grant from the South African government. After investigating this alternative, Franzén, who had earlier been amenable to such a move, declared his opposition to it. Accepting augmented financial support from the state, he explained, would mean surrendering much administrative control. He particularly feared that the government would admit almost exclusively juvenile delinquents: "In brief, St. Ansgar's would be transformed from a mission school to a state institution". Franzén had previously advocated cutting enrolment as one means of reducing the budgetary crisis, but by 1947 he thought that would be counterproductive. The need for a boarding school, it seemed, became progressively greater as the Witwatersrand attracted larger and larger streams of migratory African families. If the curriculum were abridged to encompass a programme only up to Standard III, Franzén argued, the boys who completed it and then continued their educations in day schools would soon fall victim to the negative social influences surrounding them. In light of these considerations, he urged the CSM to find funds in Sweden to cover the school's budget. He emphatically opposed the suggestion that the school be closed because, among other reasons, the government had threatened to raze the black location from which many of its pupils came.⁴² Late in 1947 Franzén proposed that the school try to muddle through its crisis by *inter alia* raising fees from £8 to £10 *per annum* for each pupil. Franzén emphasised that this was still relatively reasonable, as most other schools charged £12 to £16, and some demanded as much as £24.⁴³

As if its financial tribulations were not already serious enough, St. Ansgar's was burgled in August 1947. Thieves stole the safe containing £266.10.0 which belonged to the school and £7 in personal funds which pupils had deposited in it. Franzén thought it symptomatic of the school's plight that "the police interrogated some of the boys and teachers but otherwise seemed to be extremely uninterested, and that is customary for the police out here". Swensson, who by then held an administrative post in the CSM in Dundee, loaned St. Ansgar's enough money to remain solvent and meet its operating expenses in the short term. Private donors in Sweden also made contributions. The disheartening episode, however, underscored the fragile position of the school at that stage.⁴⁴

During 1947 the CSM Steering Committee considered at length Bärfverfeldt's proposal that it dispose of St. Ansgar's. In May it decided to terminate the school's operations at the end of the year, because the cost of needed repairs seemed inordinately high and because the headmaster was to be transferred to another post within the CSM.⁴⁵ The fate of the institution thereby seemed sealed. Five months later, however, the committee modified its decision and elected to operate St. Ansgar's at least

41. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A II : 86, *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1947*, Arvid Bärfverfeldt, "Visitationen på zulufältet 1946-47", pp. 28, 30.

42. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A I c : 9, *Bilagor 1946-48*, Torsten B. Franzén (Roodepoort) - SKM Steering Committee, 8 February 1947.

43. *Bilagor 1946-48*, Torsten B. Franzén (Roodepoort) - SKM Steering Committee, 31 October 1947.

44. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A I c : 10, *Bilagor 1948-49*, Torsten B. Franzén (Roodepoort) - SKM Steering Committee, 12 August 1948.

45. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A I : 11, *Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1941-47*, 29-30 May 1947.

through 1948.⁴⁶ In June 1948, a few days after the election which catapulted the National Party into power, it voted to continue the school indefinitely, citing the role it played in nurturing Zulu youth and the talents of its headmaster as its motivating reasons for doing so.⁴⁷

This move, which ensured St. Ansgar's place as one focal point of the CSM's urban work, which by then had become the most important facet of its South African field, was costly and required a good measure of ingenuity to carry through. In addition to raising its fees, Franzén sought to cope with the economic crisis in various ways. Whenever possible, he escorted Swedish businessmen who visited Johannesburg on tours of the school. Some reciprocated for his hospitality by making donations to it, such as carpentry equipment. His own congregation in Älvdalen, Sweden, sent a large number of tools and other equipment. These contributions allowed him to pursue a personal interest by opening a school workshop in 1948 where he and boys whom he instructed in carpentry manufactured items for the school.⁴⁸ The following year Franzén instituted a course in carpentry and reported high interest amongst the eight pupils who participated in it, seven of whom were from St. Ansgar's. This in itself ameliorated the financial crisis, because Franzén solicited contract work for the carpentry shop which brought in £319.15.7 during its first year. One of their jobs was to build a roof for a hospital for the blind near the school. Franzén hoped to expand that sector of the programme to twelve pupils and hire a regular teacher for it in 1950. Disciplinary problems had receded somewhat; he had found it necessary to expel only two pupils in 1949.⁴⁹

The electrification of the premises also began that year. This in itself was intended to contribute to discipline at the school. Referring to what was then a well-known institution for juvenile delinquents, Franzén declared that "the significance of getting electric lights at the school can be fully understood only by one who has tried day and night to control eighty-five black schoolboys, most of whom, if they were in Sweden, would be at Bona".⁵⁰

8. Expansion during the early 1950s

Owing to these and other measures, including increased financial support from Sweden, the CSM was able to develop St. Ansgar's considerably during the early 1950s. By 1952 its enrolment had risen to 302 pupils, as compared to 212 the previous year. Many of them shoehorned themselves at different times of the day into three classrooms, each of which measured about five by eight metres. This growth, together with a firm belief in the necessity of educational ministry for the growing masses of African youth on the West Rand, prompted the CSM to construct a new building for the school. The somewhat removed site on the CSM's Wilgespruit Farm seemed nearly ideal, in close proximity to a school for the blind, a school which the Dutch Reformed Church sponsored for deaf and dumb African children, a music institute, and a school for child welfare. By using exclusively African labour, it held the cost of constructing this facility down to an estimated 5 per cent of what it would have paid for a corresponding structure in Sweden. Moreover, the money seemed to be a commendable investment in

46. *Ibid.*, 23 October 1947.

47. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A I : 12, *Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1948-50*, 4 June 1948.

48. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A II : 91, *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1949*, Torsten B. Franzén, "Årsredogörelse för St. Ansgars skola 1948".

49. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A II : 93, *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1950*, Torsten B. Franzén, "Årsredogörelse för St. Ansgars skola 1949".

50. Franzén, "Årsredogörelse för St. Ansgars skola 1948".

the future of black Africa. The pupils at St. Ansgar's were then reportedly achieving better examination results than did their counterparts in most other black schools in the district.⁵¹

Various intramural problems continued to plague St. Ansgar's, however. One was interethnic strife. As its superintendent Helge Fosseus (b. 1912), lamented in 1952: "Three real fights between boys belonging to different tribes, resulting in knife wounds, are too much for one term!" The behaviour of some of his teachers was also morally deficient. Earlier in 1952 Fosseus had been compelled to dismiss his industrial arts master for adultery. The succeeding instructor proved pedagogically inferior.⁵²

To Fosseus, though, the troubled school nevertheless seemed more important than ever before as the National Party continued to fulfil its promises to rend South African society even further asunder. He argued cogently in 1953 that the future of the country's black population depended in large measure on the education that was available to it. It alarmed Fosseus that the government was planning to transfer black education from the provincial education departments to the Department of Native Affairs, which he correctly perceived as part of a grand strategy to keep the indigenes in a subservient status and effectively train them vocationally for unskilled and semi-skilled positions in the economy instead of focusing on liberal education. Proposals to delete English and Afrikaans from the curricula for blacks, he further believed, would exclude most of them from higher education and isolate them even more from white society. To Fosseus it therefore seemed all the more crucial that the CSM continue to do the little it could to counter these trends. For at least two reasons it alarmed him that relatively few of the pupils completed Standard VI and that the average length of time they spent at St. Ansgar's was only two or two and one-half years. (In 1952 there were nearly eighty first-year children at the school but only eleven in Standard VI, although this discrepancy also reflects the recent expansion of the institution and the consequent admission of many new pupils that year.) First, those who dropped out, in many cases because their impoverished parents could not afford to pay even the modest fees which the CSM charged, had very little upward professional mobility and were virtually predestined to careers as messengers and cleaners. Secondly, reflecting a common prejudice, Fosseus noted with alarm that many who left St. Ansgar's eventually entered Roman Catholic schools.⁵³

Under Fosseus' leadership St. Ansgar's continued to grow briefly in terms of both numbers and educational programmes. Enrolment soon approached 400. Fosseus envisaged expanding the curriculum to allow the school to award the Junior Certificate. He also strove to reinforce the spiritual milieu at the institution. In 1952 Fosseus established a Christian society in the student body and reported great interest in this organisation, which the pupils themselves administered. "The spirit at the school is clearly Christian, and the boys show that they want to be Christians", he reported with obvious gratification. "This is especially noticeable in the way they greet newcomers".⁵⁴

The carpentry school continued to grow during Fosseus' tenure. A masonry line was also added. After inspecting St. Ansgar's in 1950 and 1951, veteran CSM missionary Rickard Rickland (1887-1966), who had been in South Africa since 1912, suggested that the expanding enterprise be divided in two, namely "St. Ansgar's Boarding School" and "St. Ansgar's Carpentry School".⁵⁵ This was essentially what happened in the short term. The original institution, in its new premises, continued

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51. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A II : 100, *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelses Protokoll 1953*, Helge Fosseus, "Årsberättelse. St. Ansgar's Institution 1952"; Helge Fosseus, "En skola förnyas", *Svenska Kyrkans Missionstidning*, LXXVIII, nos. 15-16 (1-15 August 1953), pp. 213-214.
 52. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, E I c : 23, *Missionsdirektorns korrespondens Sydafrika 1952*, Helge Fosseus (Roodepoort) - A. Bäfverfeldt, 1 December 1952.
 53. Fosseus, "Årsberättelse. St. Ansgar's Institution 1952".
 54. *Ibid.*
 55. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A II c : 11, *Bilagor 1950-51*, V.R. Rickland (Johannesburg) - Mission Council, 27 January 1951.

to impart primary education according to the curriculum which the government prescribed. The carpentry school became quasi-autonomous. Early in 1953 it was registered retroactively with the Transvaal Education Department as of 1 April 1952 as "St. Ansgar's Industrial School", a bit of legal subterfuge which ensured governmental support to defray the salary of an industrial arts teacher.⁵⁶

9. The impact of the Bantu Education Act

At that point, though, the Bantu Education Act, which many Swedish Lutheran missionaries, like countless counterparts from other countries and denominations, perceived as one of the most malicious villains in the history of South African race relations, began to slink across the stage, withdrawing state financial support from mission schools. The CSM consequently incurred losses with regard to both part of its educational ministry as such and the money it had invested in the new building. In April 1955 the government took control of the primary school. It paid the CSM only £250 *per annum* for use of the facilities. The CSM continued to administer the residence for boarding pupils. The government was not interested in the carpentry school, however, and terminated its operations almost immediately.⁵⁷ Some of the pupils who had been enrolled in it transferred to the vocational school which the CSM sponsored in Dundee. In December 1955 the commissioner for urban areas in the Native Affairs Department, a Mr Hattingh, visited St. Ansgar's and spoke candidly with Fosseus about the institution's future. This bureaucrat informed him that European residential areas would continue to grow on two sides of the property and that the entire area was expected to be incorporated into the city of Roodepoort within a few years. Under the provisions of the Group Areas Act the entire area would then be declared white. That probable scenario would exclude any educational endeavours for Africans in the immediate vicinity. He suggested that the CSM consider selling the property.⁵⁸

To Fosseus, it was obvious that the future of St. Ansgar's was limited. He recommended, however, that the CSM continue to own the property indefinitely, because he expected real estate values in the area to rise markedly. The steering committee in Sweden accepted this recommendation.⁵⁹ In the meantime, Fosseus thought the facilities could be used for *inter alia* continuing education programmes for African Lutheran pastors and evangelists, including those affiliated with the Berlin and Hermansburg missions. His second proposal was novel and came originally from *Riksföreningen för Kristen Konst* (*i.e.* The National Association for Christian Art) in Sweden. While on furlough in Sweden in 1955, he had spoken with Pastor Sigfrid von Scheele, its secretary, who had informed him of its interest in becoming involved in a foreign mission field, possibly by helping to support an art school for young Christians. This harmonised with Fosseus' vision of an art department, an idea conceived in conversations with a government school inspector, J.W. Grossert, who had a keen interest in African arts and crafts.⁶⁰ Fosseus broached the proposal to colleagues in Natal in November 1955, and a month later he applied to the Department of Native Affairs for permission to establish such a school at St. Ansgar's. Authorisation was granted the following June. In justifying this move to his superiors in Sweden, Fosseus explained that "the Gospel has been presented to the African in a very abstract and European form. We have reason to believe that much of Christianity has thereby been lost to him". On

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56. Fosseus, "Årsberättelse. St. Ansgar's Institution 1952"; Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A I : 14, *Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1953-57*, 10 April 1953.
57. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A I : 14, *Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1953-57*, 13 October 1955.
58. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A I c : 14, *Bilagor 1955-56*, Helge Fosseus (unspecified provenance) - Mission Council, undated.
59. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A I : 14, *Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1953-57*, 7 June 1956.
60. Frederick Hale Private Archives, uncatalogued correspondence, Helge Fosseus (Onsala) - Frederick Hale, 6 December 1990.

a more practical note, he pointed out that "our churches need artistic decoration in order to give the services an elevation and material for the imagination. Art is necessary for advancing the vision of the new Christian Africa". Fosseus emphasised that in accordance with its purpose the school was to be an essentially African institution with only minimal European influence.⁶¹ By then the National Association for Christian Art had begun to collect funds for this endeavour, and in Johannesburg a group of European and African Christian artists had gathered to discuss details for launching it. Owing to strict application of the Group Areas Act, however, the project never got off the ground.

Related to these suggestions, Fosseus thought it might be feasible to move St. Ansgar's away from the Roodepoort vicinity and thus allow it to continue what he regarded as its sorely needed work. Physical removal would not, of course, have returned it to the control of the CSM, but Fosseus thought this might nevertheless be a tolerable solution. When he asked Hattingh about this, he was told that the CSM ought to consider purchasing a small farm very near a black area which already had a state-administered school and on this new property build a residence for pupils. Fosseus believed this might be a viable alternative. "Inherent in this proposal is the question of how a modern mission station in an area like Johannesburg should be organised in order to meet the demands of today's situation".⁶²

Shortly thereafter, however, all plans for the future of St. Ansgar's became irrelevant. It was soberly announced at a meeting of the CSM personnel in South Africa in April 1958 that the government had decided to close the residence at the school as of 31 December 1958. As one of the missionaries recorded anonymously on that occasion, "the decision of the authorities has made it impossible to conduct the projected courses at St. Ansgar's".⁶³ J.E. Hallendorff (1899-1983), who had succeeded Fosseus at the helm of the school, appealed this decision to the Department of Native Affairs but was informed in July 1958 that St. Ansgar's would be allowed to operate only on a day scholar basis. As if the Swedish Lutheran missionaries did not already know, the director of Bantu education explained that "government policy requires that the Bantu pupils [sic] *hostel facilities* should be provided only in Bantu territory, and not in European areas, nor [sic] even in native locations in municipal areas. The idea is that hostels should serve to attract native pupils from the towns to the reserves, and not from the reserves to the towns".⁶⁴ Seeing no point in retaining control of the property, the CSM therefore transferred it to the Christian Council of South Africa, subsequently called the South African Council of Churches, in the hope that the buildings and grounds could still be used for missionary purposes.⁶⁵ Thus ended more than three decades of a generally successful and imaginative educational venture at a time when it was arguably needed more than ever before.

10. Epilogue

In its relatively short life, and nearly equally in its death, St. Ansgar's Institution illustrated the vitality and adaptability of a venture in educational ministry whose administrators and supporters believed firmly in the necessity of their task. It was largely through their determination, fuelled by depressing daily encounters with African youths who lacked corresponding opportunities, that this school swam as long as it did against a swift current of tribulations. For more than a third of a century St. Ansgar's thereby survived a whirlpool of financial crises, the moral turpitude of some of its teachers, internal strife,

61. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A II : 106, *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1956*, Helge Fosseus (Roodepoort) - Arvid Bäfverfeldt, 26 October 1956.

62. Fosseus - Mission Council, undated.

63. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A II : 109, *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelsens Protokoll 1958*, minutes of Mission Council meeting, Dundee, 16-17 April 1958.

64. Church of Sweden Mission Archives, E I g : 6, Director of Bantu Education (Pretoria) - J.E. Hallendorff, 18 July 1958.

65. Fosseus - Hale, 6 December 1990.

violence and other immorality on the part of many pupils, police brutality and indifference, and criminal aggression from outside its walls. Even after the promulgation of the Bantu Education Act in 1953, the CSM strove to maintain the institution as well as it could in order to allow it to fulfil its task of removing young Africans from a devastating social milieu and not only formally educating but also seeking to nurture them morally in a Christian environment. No lesser foe than the raw power of a government equally committed to the prompt implementation of its apartheid policies succeeded in obliterating this vision.