

VIRGIL ROBINSON

The Solusi STORY

TIMES OF PEACE, TIMES OF PERIL



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Dedicated

to
all the youth
who have studied
at Solusi College
and gone forth
to serve
GOD
and their
fellow men

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Prologue

FATHER TSHABANGU is dead!

The news passed rapidly from one end of the Solusi College campus to the other that Friday night in May, 1978.

Pioneer of the pioneers, Tshabangu had watched the growth and development of this the largest Seventh-day Adventist overseas educational institution. For almost a century he had been employed at Solusi in one department or another.

How old was Tshabangu at the time of his death? Those who knew him best estimated that he was between 100 and 106 years of age.

He had seen much during that long period of time: the fierce and bloody Matabele uprising in 1896, and its famine that followed; the heartbreaking days when half of Solusi's missionary staff succumbed to malaria; the arrivals of more than two hundred missionaries, and their departures as their terms of service expired; the growth of the school from twenty students to more than six hundred.

In the nineteen seventies increasing violence filled Father Tshabangu's land. As the trouble drew nearer to Solusi he became concerned for the future of the school. He knew that many schools were being closed, their students sent home, and the teachers sometimes slaughtered.

One day S. L. Masuku, one of the African teachers, went to the old man's house on an errand. He was not at home, but a granddaughter pointed toward a path leading to a nearby grove of trees. Walking along the path, Masuku heard the old man's voice raised in prayer. He heard Tsha-

bangu praying for the school, the principal, and other members of the staff. Then he prayed for the students. When the old man had finished, Masuku made his presence known, and the two knelt and prayed together.

At the time of Father Tshabangu's funeral busloads of people came from Bulawayo and other parts of Rhodesia. Pastor A. W. Austen traveled from Salisbury to represent the Trans-Africa Division.

The passing of Tshabangu was almost like a foreshadowing of the Solusi tragedy that shortly thereafter overtook his beloved school, as though he were a strand woven throughout the length of it, whose sundering presaged the passing of all.

The Solusi STORY

CHAPTER ONE

Trailblazers

"HERE THEY come!"

A ripple of excitement ran through the waiting students and teachers of Claremont Union College, in Claremont, South Africa. Down the avenue came a handsome carriage pulled by six mules. Seated on the box, holding the reins, sat the owner, Pieter Wessels. Pulling up in front of the college, Mr. Wessels leaped to the ground, followed by Fred Sparrow. The carriage door opened and four young men stepped out.

The excitement was natural. The group just arriving had been chosen to go far to the north to locate a site for the first Seventh-day Adventist mission among the Africans in Matabeleland. On this bright morning of May 7, 1894, they had come to bid farewell to their friends and fellow students. Explorers, teachers, and students shook hands all around. The passengers climbed back into the carriage, and Pieter and Fred returned to their position on the box.

Elder A. T. Robinson, conference president, was there with his wife and two boys. "Sure you have that letter in a safe place, Pieter?" he asked Mr. Wessels. "You know how much depends on it."

"Don't worry, pastor," Wessels replied. "It's safe all right."

Mr. Wessels clucked to the mules, and the carriage rolled out of the college grounds onto the street. They were off.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church had sent its first missionaries to South Africa in 1887 in response to a call from a group of Sabbathkeepers there. During the next six

years the Europeans of that country had been introduced to the beliefs of the church. But there was a feeling that something should be done for the blacks of Africa also.

When the General Conference president, O. A. Olsen, visited South Africa in 1893, he suggested that work should be started for other races. Many believers held similar views. They realized that such a move would call for sacrifice, for the total Adventist membership in Southern Africa at the time did not exceed five hundred.

During the General Conference session held in Battle Creek the same year, steps were taken that would result in opening the first work for the blacks by our church. Among the delegates were two from South Africa, Pieter and Philip Wessels. When it was suggested that the time had come to open up work among the Africans, they rose and pledged \$15,000 to launch the project.

The money was kept in reserve awaiting the day when an African mission would be established.

The January 9, 1894, *Review* carried an invitation for volunteers to go to Africa to work on a self-supporting basis. The response was remarkable. When the Foreign Mission Board met on January 28 and 29, the chairman informed his committee that favorable replies had been received from six brethren—Hall, Harvey, Hayes, Colman, Goepp, and Sower. But it was evident not all could go. Some had families to support. Others were unable to raise the necessary cash to pay their expenses. The committee voted that Harvey and Goepp should go to South Africa. Mrs. Harvey would join her husband when a house had been built. Goepp was unmarried. A number of young men from South Africa answered the call to open up work in the north. Several decided to join the expedition being promoted by Pieter Wessels. When Harvey and Goepp reached South Africa, they were delighted to discover that the Wesselses' advanced guard had not yet left for the north.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Mission Board was collecting



Elder A. T. Robinson, his wife, Loretta, and their daughter, Gladys. Elder Robinson, grandfather of the author, received the land grant for Solusi a few years before this photograph was taken.

information about Matabeleland, a country soon to bear the name of its founder, Rhodes. The board was pleased to learn that the British South African Charter Company was offering land at a nominal figure for African missions. The question was asked, If other missions are pressing into Rhodesia, why not the Seventh-day Adventist?

A. T. Robinson was instructed to visit Cecil John Rhodes, at the time prime minister of Cape Colony and chairman of the Charter Company, and ask for a grant of land. Rhodes

agreed to grant an interview to Elder Robinson and Pieter Wessels. At ten o'clock one morning they called on the prime minister in his lovely home on the slopes of Table Mountain.

As Elder Robinson began his speech on the type of mission the Seventh-day Adventists planned to open, he noticed that Rhodes was busy writing. When he paused to get the prime minister's undivided attention, Rhodes looked up and remarked blandly, "And?" Three times Robinson stopped, and three times Rhodes invited him to go on. When the interview was finished, Rhodes handed Robinson a letter to Dr. L. S. Jameson, his representative in Rhodesia. This was the precious letter Wessels was carrying to Bulawayo. Was Rhodes going to sell them some land? That was the question, but the answer lay in the sealed envelope.

During the following weeks Wessels organized his group, which would go north to find land for the mission. There were four South Africans (Wessels, Landsman, Fred Sparrow, and I. B. Burton) and three Americans (Alma Druilard, Goepf, and J. H. Harvey). Wessels was particularly pleased to have Sparrow with the party for he could speak the Matabele language.

The party rode in the carriage as far as Paarl, about thirty-five miles northeast of Cape Town, where they picked up a large, sturdy wagon especially built for the expedition. It was taken to the railway yards and loaded onto a flatcar. The carriage was left at the Wesselses' farm, a short distance from Paarl. The following morning the train left for Vryburg, seven hundred miles to the north.

When they arrived at Vryburg, and before setting out for Bulawayo, they supplied themselves with trade goods for use on their journey, and to sell in Rhodesia.

With the wagon fully loaded, the workers set off on the seven-hundred-mile safari. There was no road; just wheel tracks meandering through the wilderness. Somewhere, far beyond the visible horizon, lay, they hoped, the land on which they were going to place the mission.

CHAPTER TWO

Mission Farm

AS THE wagon wheels churned up red dust along the wilderness track the travelers gazed at a country rapidly drying up. No rain could be expected before October or November.

Though the season was late fall, it was too hot to travel during the heat of the day. So, as a rule, the group followed the common practice of inspanning* about four o'clock in the morning, driving until breakfast, resting until four or five in the evening, then continuing their journey until dark.

Though tedious, the journey was not without its humorous moments. One day, as I. B. (Barry) Burton was riding along on top of the load, he fell asleep. The wagon passed beneath the low branches of a particularly vicious thorn tree called *waachen-beitjie*, or "wait a bit." Some of the thorns, which are like fishhooks, brushed over the sleeping form and took firm hold of the stout khaki clothing.

The wagon passed on, but Burton remained suspended between earth and sky. Suddenly awakening, he stared down at the road beneath him, then shouted for help. When his companions, who came running, saw his predicament, they laughed heartily. But to Barry it was no joke. The cart was driven back to rescue the unfortunate "Absalom." It took some time to unhook the thorns from his clothing without injury to his shirt or scratches to his rescuers.

On and on the group traveled, ever northward. Although the days were warm, the nights were chilly, as winter was

* South African term for harnessing animals to a vehicle.

approaching. Sometimes they had difficulty finding enough water for the oxen and mules. Once a week they watched the Mafeking-to-Bulawayo express coach clatter past in a cloud of dust, pulled by a strong team of horses. They sometimes outspanned by an African village, where they held meetings with the local Bechuanas.

Barry Burton kept a diary in which he described the country through which they traveled. He recorded that to help pass the hours away, they would sing, making the wild wilderness air ring with Advent hymns. One song of which they never tired was "God be with you till we meet again." Burton wrote that they sang it as often as three times a day. It is easy to understand why they loved this song that brought wistful memories of home and loved ones to mind.

Passing through Bechuanaland, the party entered Rhodesia. Six weeks after leaving Vryburg they camped one night six miles from Bulawayo.

The following morning Burton and Druillard walked into town. There were as yet no permanent buildings. Both houses and shops were made of calico on wooden frames. Walking up one of the dusty roads, Druillard was surprised to see an American flag waving in the breeze. Pushing aside the calico door, he stepped inside the shop.

"Why are you flying the American flag way over here?" Druillard asked.

"Why, don't you know?" the man responded. "Today is the Fourth of July, and I happen to be an American."

"So am I," replied Druillard. "If you say it's July Four, it must be so."

The pilgrims had forgotten the date.

Eager to learn the contents of Mr. Rhodes's letter, the men arranged for an interview with Dr. Jameson the following day. Pieter Wessels took the initiative because Dr. Jameson had been his private physician when he and his family lived near Kimberley. After a few minutes of general conversation, Wessels took the precious letter from his pocket

and handed it to the doctor. The administrator opened and read it, then, laying it down, asked, "Very well, gentlemen, how much land do you want?"

Pieter looked at his companions, hesitating a few moments before answering.

"Well, the facts are, Doctor, we need six thousand morgen [about twelve thousand acres]. Just how much we get must depend largely upon the terms."

"Terms!" exclaimed Jameson. "Terms! Heavens and earth, man, Rhodes commands me to *give* you all the land you can make use of. What better terms do you want?"

The surprised men hastened to assure Jameson that such terms were entirely satisfactory. The prospect of owning so much land stunned them.

The doctor explained that the only cost involved would be an annual rental charge of twelve pounds. He pointed to a map on the wall.

"You may go north, south, east, or west. Wherever you find a six-thousand-morgen piece that satisfies you, and that has not been claimed by someone else, it is yours." Realizing that the Adventists were unfamiliar with the country, Dr. Jameson lent them one of his guides.

Before setting off on their trip of exploration, the men talked with some of the settlers in Bulawayo, who urged them to locate near the town. This would enable them to purchase supplies and sell their produce on the open market. They were also advised that they would probably enjoy greater success if they established their mission among the peace-loving Makalanga tribe rather than among the warlike Matabele who had recently been defeated in battle by the British.

In their wagon, the missionaries circled Bulawayo, and finally followed the settlers' advice and settled among the Makalanga people, about thirty-two miles west of the town. Rejoicing, they carefully pegged out six thousand morgen of land. Unfortunately, they did not investigate the water sup-

ply. Lying, as this land did, not far from the Kalahari Desert, the mission was to suffer intermittent periods of dreadful drought.

Fred Sparrow immediately moved onto the mission property to hold it for the party that he knew would be coming from the United States. The other pioneers quickly pegged out three-thousand-morgen farms for themselves in a cluster around the mission site.

Once the mission site had been chosen, Wessels lost no time in communicating the good news to Elder Robinson and his fellow workers at the Cape. Over the newly erected telegraph line stretching through the wilderness flashed the good news, "All well. Location secured!" Details of the transaction followed in a letter.

No time was lost in organizing. Wessels called his fellow workers together and they laid their plans. Fred Sparrow, with his knowledge of the language, was appointed teacher of the Africans. Landsman was appointed treasurer, and Burton chorister.

Following this meeting, Druillard and Wessels went to Bulawayo, where they registered their farms, then returned to Mafeking and Cape Town.

S. N. Haskell was visiting South Africa at this time. He wrote to the brethren in America not to be surprised at the size of the new mission farm, for it was customary in South Africa for farms to be large. Nor, he wrote, should they think that farmland in Rhodesia could be compared in productivity with the soil of Iowa or Indiana.

Haskell pointed out that the Wessels family together now probably controlled one hundred thousand acres in Rhodesia. The other South African workers had also gone to open up mission farms. "Yes, every one of them is in for a self-supporting mission," he assured the Mission Board. Some planned to build stores, others would farm. One even wanted to open up a gold mine, but all would be working for the Lord.

The Africans began coming with many questions, especially about the white man's God.

"Where does He live?" they asked, then listened carefully. Receiving the answers, they withdrew to confer among themselves. Then they returned with their response.

"We have considered the matter," they said, "and have made up our minds that if this great Boss who has sent you will be good to us and protect us against the British, we will be glad to have you come and live among us."

The next day they came again. "Whenever anything good comes to us, we make a present, and so we have brought you this animal." They presented Sparrow with a healthy-looking goat.

It was fortunate that the South African missionaries could occupy the land while waiting for the group from the United States to arrive, for the Charter Company ruled regarding farms in Rhodesia that "within six months after the land is pegged out, it must be permanently occupied." The land was secure for the mission.

Gift or Purchase?

NEWS THAT through its chairman, Cecil Rhodes, the South African Charter Company had made a gift of more than twelve thousand acres of land in Matabeleland to the Adventist Church was received with mixed feelings at headquarters in Battle Creek. Some of the leaders hailed it as a magnificent donation, thinking, no doubt, of the rich soil of Michigan, Iowa, or Indiana. A farm of thousands of acres of such land would provide an income for the denomination in Africa for years to come.

Other members were not so sure that the church should accept such a gift. Would not its acceptance violate the principle of separation of church and state?

On November 13, 1894, the Foreign Mission Board, under the chairmanship of O. A. Olsen, discussed the propriety of accepting the grant. Since opinions differed sharply, no action was taken.

During the following weeks a general feeling crystallized. On December 2 the board met again, determined to reach a conclusion. They passed a resolution that "we shall buy the land we want and not receive it as a gift." This decision doubtless reflected the convictions of A. T. Jones, militant editor of the *American Sentinel*, organ of the Religious Liberty Department. From the beginning, Jones had strongly opposed accepting the land as a gift.

Correspondence between the board and church authorities in South Africa continued. To the workers in Africa, the position taken by the board was unreasonable. They pointed out that they were not accepting the land from any govern-

ment, but from the British Charter Company. To this Jones replied that he was in a position to "prove conclusively that the English company was nothing less than the British Colonial Government."

For weeks the discussion continued. The board refused to change its position, and Elder Robinson was instructed to write to Rhodes and Jameson, expressing appreciation for their offer, but stating that it would be more satisfactory if the land could be paid for.

Word of this action caused dismay among South African Adventists. Wessels stated that rather than pay for the land, he would move onto the farm himself, make something of it, then sell it and put the money into the church.

Fortunately, Elder S. N. Haskell was in South Africa at this time. In letters to the Foreign Mission Board he tried to explain the position as the South Africans saw it. He pointed out very plainly that if any compensation was to be paid, it should be to the Africans who had been dispossessed rather than to a commercial company. This did not change the opinion of the board.

It was only natural that in a controversy so vital Ellen White's counsel should be sought. So F. M. Wilcox, secretary of the board, wrote to W. C. White, at that time with his mother in Australia, asking whether the acceptance of the land would be a violation of denominational principles.

At about the same time, Elder Haskell also wrote to him, asking him to ascertain whether his mother had any inspired counsel for them. In concluding his letter he wrote, "The main question is, Are we right in it, or not? If we know what the right is, we shall fight it out on that line and that line alone."

Before a reply could reach South Africa or Battle Creek, the board met twice more. Its members did not waver. At the close of the second meeting they drew up a very strongly worded resolution affirming that the land must be paid for. They intended to make themselves thoroughly understood!

This action, which was intended to be final, passed the board at their meeting held on March 17, 1895. It was, however, never sent to South Africa for implementation. On January 30, Ellen G. White had written to Elder Haskell. A copy of her letter was sent to Elder Olsen. Her testimony was plain.

"Dear Brother: You inquire with regard to the propriety of receiving gifts from gentiles or the heathen. The question is not strange, but I would ask you who is it that owns our world? . . . The Lord would move upon worldly men, even idolators, to give of their abundance for the support of the work, if we would approach them wisely and give them an opportunity of doing those things which it is their privilege to do. What they would give, we should be privileged to receive."

After this message was read to the board members, they hastily rescinded all previous resolutions. The land was accepted as a donation, and a letter of appreciation was forwarded to the British South Africa Charter Company and its chairman, the Honorable Cecil John Rhodes.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Long Journey

THE PIONEER South African missionary group that remained in Rhodesia following the departure of Pieter Wessels and Alma Druillard lost no time in establishing their farms and starting mission work. Two mud-and-pole huts were built for the group expected from the United States in mid-1895. Land was cleared, wells dug, and crops planted. Regular meetings were held every Sabbath. The number of nationals attending the meetings increased.

The first arrivals—Harvey, Goepp, Landsman, Burton, and Sparrow—had each pegged out a three-thousand-morgen farm, approximately half the size of the one Rhodes had given for the mission. Wessels persuaded two of his friends to live on and cultivate his farm.

Each worker gave his farm a name. "Riverbank" belonged to Fred Sparrow. Wessels' two farms were named "Peace" and "Good Hope." Goepp operated "Mamre," while E. J. Harvey named his farm "Mizpah."

Burton had a real burden for the Bushmen, that primitive people who roamed the Kalahari Desert, west of the mission farm. One day he packed his bag and set out to visit them, spending several days in their company. When he had to leave, they eloquently appealed for help. As nearly as he could remember, this is what they said: "Dear Father, we have been hunted by the white man and the black for many years. Our people are being thinned out. Soon there will be nothing left of us. We have had to run for many years, even in the land which is ours. In many parts that belonged to us we are hunted like game. Why? Our flesh they cannot eat,

our skins are of no account, houses we have none, and we are tired, oh, so tired! We have no dogs; we must be our own dogs to run down the game. We run down game to give us food, but what are we being run down for? We are tired. Won't you come and live with us and be our protector? Won't you come and teach us how to work the land? Give us seed. We will work, we will be your children, and you will be our father. All that you tell us we will do."

Burton pondered those words during his long journey back to the Mission Farm. But he became very ill and was sick for many days, barely making it back to his hut. He was never able to return to the Bushmen.

Early in 1895 the Foreign Mission Board began recruiting American workers to unite with the group from South Africa who were already in Rhodesia. It would be their task to carry the gospel to the people of Matabeleland.

To lead the American group and supervise mission work, the board appointed Elder and Mrs. G. B. Tripp. At the time, Tripp was president of the West Virginia Conference. They called W. H. Anderson and his wife to assist Tripp. Anderson was to graduate that year, but F. M. Wilcox explained the situation to him.

"You see, Harry, the last six hundred miles of your journey must be made by ox wagon. The rains stop in March or April. If you go later in the year, the streams will be dried up, making the trip impossible."

Anderson decided to accept the call. He was graduated in absentia.

The next member of the group was selected by Dr. J. H. Kellogg. He was Dr. A. S. Carmichael, an unmarried physician from California. Carmichael, the oldest member of the group, celebrated his fifty-ninth birthday before leaving for Africa. Tripp was 42, in the prime of life. The Andersons were in their mid-20's.

These five missionaries, with the Tripp's 9-year-old son, Byron, met with the Foreign Mission Board in New York

City for a briefing. The meeting was held on March 5. The question of how the mission was to be supported received considerable attention. Elder Tripp was to be given \$5,000 to get the work started, but it was impressed upon him that the mission was to become self-supporting as soon as possible. Later the board changed its mind and decided it was to be self-supporting "from the very beginning."

The board did accept responsibility for paying the workers a small monthly wage, but it was the expectation that the mission itself would be supported by profits made by trading with the Africans. That first \$5,000 was to be used for the purchase of farm implements, wagons, oxen, and trade goods.

Since the little group would arrive in Rhodesia in mid-winter, it was recognized that it would probably be difficult for them to secure sufficient food. So the board voted to request the Battle Creek Sanitarium to supply a half-ton of health foods for them to take along.

To ensure the smooth running of the mission, the board appointed an advisory committee of five, with Tripp as chairman. Carmichael and Anderson were included with two others to be chosen by Elders Haskell, Tripp, and Robinson upon the arrival of the party in South Africa.

Three weeks later the board drew up twenty-seven rules to govern the operation of the mission. One was that no more land should be taken than would be essential for practical mission purposes. Tribesmen living on the mission farm were not to be dispossessed. Also, no paid worker was to engage in private trade.

It was decided that, with the exception of Dr. Carmichael, who was selling his California practice, the mission party should leave New York for England on April 10 where they would find another ship to take them to Cape Town. On sailing day they were joined by Mrs. Harvey, who was going to reunite with her husband, already in Rhodesia.

Their ship, the *New York*, reached Southampton, Eng-

land, April 18. The travelers paid a brief visit to London, the capital of the British Empire, before returning to board the *Roslin Castle* for their voyage to Cape Town. Arriving on May 4, they were warmly welcomed by the South Africans, and assigned as guests to various homes until time for their departure for the north.

By now the railway had been extended from Vryburg another 150 miles, to Mafeking. Still there was a journey of six hundred miles to be made by ox cart and wagons. The missionaries' heavy luggage was loaded onto a goods train bound for Mafeking, in the hope that it would reach there by the time they arrived.

For two weeks they enjoyed exploring the beautiful Cape Peninsula. Then, upon the arrival of Dr. Carmichael, they were ready to start for the interior. On May 22 their great adventure began.

The Americans found that South African trains were organized differently than those in the States. Each coach was divided into a number of small compartments. The amount of luggage they could check in the baggage car was strictly limited, but there was no limit to the amount they could cram into their compartment. After the six adults and the Tripp boy were in the compartment, plus 23 items of luggage, all were extremely crowded.

Three and one-half days from Cape Town the train pulled into Mafeking. The weary travelers were delighted to find Mr. and Mrs. Fred Sparrow and Mr. Harvey waiting to accompany them on the long journey to the mission farm. They realized the newcomers would find ox-wagon and mule-cart travel vastly different from anything they had experienced before.

A quick check revealed that their heavy baggage, sent from Cape Town two weeks previously, had arrived. Not so pleasant was their discovery that a transport rider, somehow mistaking their goods for someone else's, had picked it up, loaded it on his wagon, and was already on his way north

with it. Tripp and Anderson borrowed saddle horses, followed after the rider, and overtook him a few miles north of Mafeking. They succeeded in proving to the surprised man that he had taken the wrong goods, and persuaded him to return to Mafeking, where the missionaries took possession of their property.

The traveling outfit made ready for the newcomers consisted of two wagons and a cart. Both had been well filled with trade goods for use on the mission farm. To his dismay, Tripp discovered that the wagons, cart, and oxen to pull them had cost the entire \$5,000 appropriation for the first year of the mission enterprise. It was evident that after reaching their destination, they would have to begin trading immediately. Some of the oxen could probably be sold.

The first wagon contained three and one-half tons of goods, and the second, three tons. The cart in which the Tripps would ride was loaded with twelve hundred pounds of flour. Those sacks of flour hardly provided a soft mattress for the Tripps during their long journey.

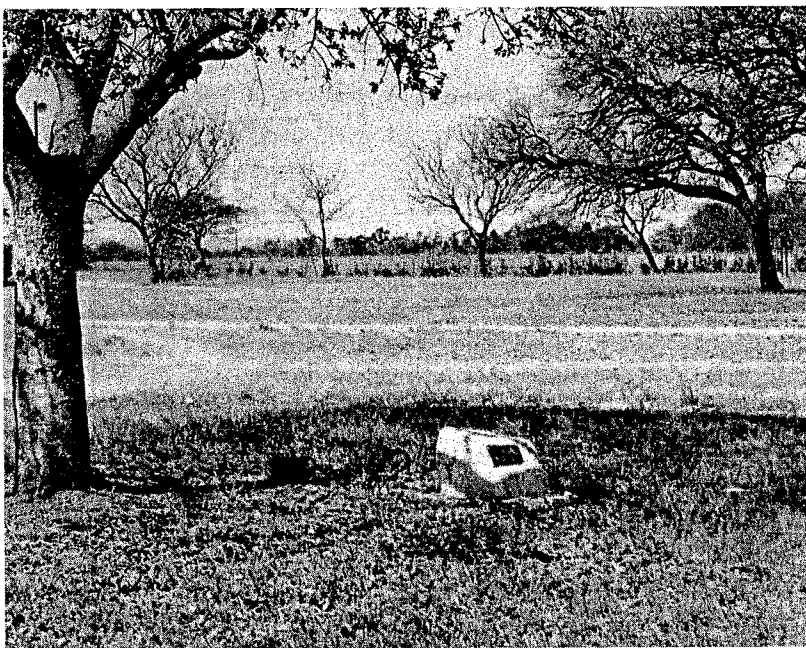
On the evening of June 2 the group inspanned their oxen and started out. At first Sparrow suffered severe back pains, which delayed them four days. When he was able to travel, they made up for lost time. So fast did they go that Anderson noted in his daily diary that their outfit passed every other wagon on the road.

As had been expected, the rains were over and some of the water holes were already dry. Often when the party camped for the night, the oxen had to be led several miles to the nearest water supply. The road was far from smooth, and sometimes those who decided to stay in bed and relax while riding were sorry when they reached rough places on the road or when the wagons lurched from rock to rock across dry riverbeds.

The Bechuanas, through whose territory they passed, were surprised to learn they were on their way to Matabeleland.

"Why are you going to the land of the fierce and cruel Matabele when we are prepared to welcome you here?" they asked. The missionaries explained that they were pledged to a mission already picked out to the north. Elder Tripp did promise that someday they would return to the Bechuanas and teach them the gospel. More than twenty years were to pass before Anderson would have the privilege of redeeming that promise.

The days dragged on, one by one, for seven long weeks. Finally on Thursday, July 25, 1895, the weary group came to a road leading westward that led them across the Khami and then the Gwaai, rivers. When they outspanned that Thursday night, Sparrow jumped from his wagon and joyfully announced that now, at last, they were on mission-farm land. The next day they would be home!



The marker indicates the spot where the Solusi pioneers spent their first night on the mission's land.

CHAPTER FIVE

Getting Started

AS THE heavily loaded wagons drew up beneath one of the few large trees on the mission farm, the missionaries noticed two mud huts. Did nostalgia for the comfortable homes they had left behind sweep over them? What kind of a life could they live in those huts? But they could not linger. The day was Friday; Sabbath was coming on. There was little time for speculation. Elder and Mrs. Tripp moved into one hut. The trade goods went into the other. The Andersons were to sleep in the wagon.

The Tripps gathered dry grass on which to sleep. The hut was small and dark and only fourteen feet square. It had only one chair. Their trunks could do duty as tables.

"Cheer up, Mother," remarked Tripp. "We will soon be living in something better than this."

Sabbath morning Fred Sparrow guided his friends to a third hut in which he had been holding Sabbath services.

"There are more people here than usual," remarked Sparrow. "They want to see the new missionaries."

After Sparrow had taught the Sabbath school lesson, he interpreted for Elder Tripp and Dr. Carmichael, who spoke briefly, telling the people why they had come. Tripp emphasized they were in Africa for the sole purpose of helping the people. Carmichael told them he had come to care for them when they were sick.

In the afternoon the new missionaries explored a small part of the mission farm. How different it was from anything they had ever seen before! Scrub brush and stunted trees stretched to the horizon.

On their way back to camp they watched enthralled as the sinking sun lighted the heavens with glory. This display made them feel very humble. Looking at their condition, they wondered how they were ever going to support themselves with their limited resources. As they knelt to bid farewell to the Sabbath, they offered earnest prayers for guidance in the days ahead.

Another cold night followed. Writing to the *Review and Herald* later, Elder Tripp urged that missionaries following them should bring plenty of bedding. The next morning they noticed that, once the sun was above the horizon, the earth became delightfully warm.

That morning Elder Tripp made a survey trip around the farm on foot. He was dismayed by what he saw. Here and there, scattered over the vast tract of land, rose gigantic piles of rock fifty to one hundred feet high, called *kopjes*. The few trees to be seen were mainly leafless. The nearest running stream was more than three miles away. To the director, the soil looked poor. How could they possibly operate a self-supporting mission on this twelve-thousand-acre tract of land? he wondered. Looking back on his impressions that first morning, Elder Tripp later wrote, "Truly it was a most desolate-looking place."

The remarks made by F. L. Mead, the second superintendent of the mission, were even blunter. Three years after the arrival of the first party Mead was to say, "For agricultural purposes I would prefer a farm in western Kansas or Nebraska, poor as they are, to a farm here. As a business enterprise, I would not give a dollar for this big farm of twelve thousand acres and be obliged to live on it for a year!"

These statements by the first and second directors of Solusi help to highlight the truly heroic achievements of missionaries working that farm during the first twenty years of the twentieth century.

"Self-supporting," Elder Tripp murmured to himself. Then he valiantly set to work to prove to the Mission Board

that their confidence in him had not been misplaced. He would do his best, and leave the results in the hands of God.

For a number of years the mission would carry a variety of names. The Foreign Mission Board referred to the enterprise as the Zambesi Mission. When the workers wrote articles about it, they sometimes called it the Matabeleland Farm, the Bulawayo Mission Farm, or the Matabele Farm. Often it was referred to simply as the mission farm, which was fine until other Adventist missions began operating in Rhodesia.

The name that finally prevailed over all others was Solusi, a corruption of the name of the leading chief—Siluswe. Although the other names appeared off and on, Mr. Burton wrote in his diary that the name *Solusi* stuck when the government placed a fort on the farm for a few months.

In later years the institution was known as Solusi Training School, Solusi Mission Training Institute, Solusi Missionary College, and, finally, by the simple name by which it is known today—Solusi College.

Mail arrived by train from the Cape to Mafeking, and thence to Bulawayo. No effort was made by the postmaster to sort it out and send it to the addressee. Instead, it was thrown into a heap on the floor, and anyone might claim his own. Fearing that mission mail would be lost, Tripp supplied the postmaster with a box and asked him to put all mail for Solusi in it. Tripp paid one pound (five dollars) a week for this service.

To support their enterprises, the missionaries began trading with the Africans. Except for animals, fruits, vegetables, and cereals, the Africans had little to trade at first. But when the mission offered such things as pots, beads, blankets, axes, and articles the nationals could not make for themselves, business picked up, and the Africans began growing more produce.

Gradually, the influence and example of the missionaries led the villagers to wear clothing, and cloth became a popular commodity.

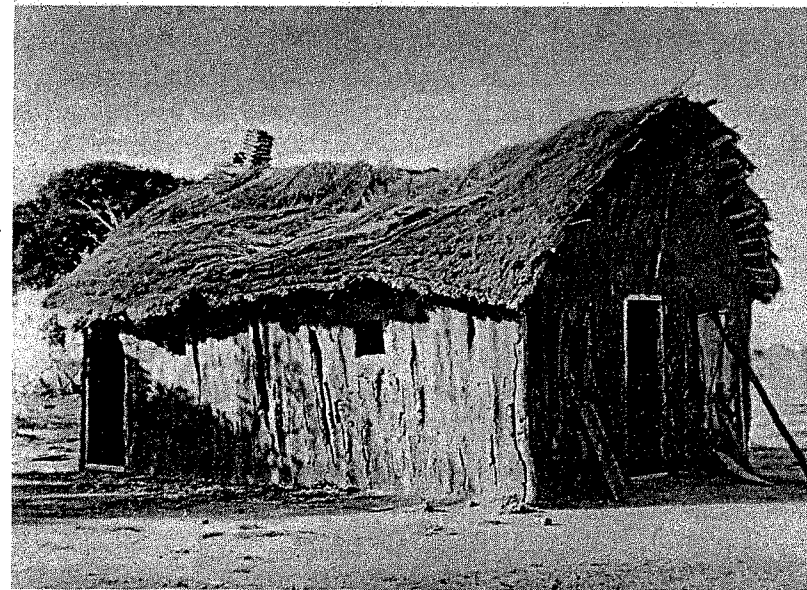
Dr. Carmichael kept so busy with his patients that he had no time for trading. The friendly, peaceful, Makalanga people who lived in and around the mission welcomed the arrival of the doctor, who was soon treating their illnesses from morning till night. He worked happily in a hut a half mile from the other houses, never losing an opportunity to tell his patients about the love of Jesus.

Food was a potential problem. For a while, the provisions the missionaries had brought with them would supply their needs. But a day would surely come when these would be gone. Then they would have to depend on local foods. Thus it was necessary to clear some land immediately. Day after day Tripp and Anderson spent many hours grubbing out trees and bushes, and removing rocks, many of which lay just below the surface, waiting for the plow to strike them with disastrous results. The seeds would be planted as soon as the rains came.

As August turned to September and October, the heat became intense. Yet they dared not slacken their efforts lest the coming of the rains find them unprepared. Once the land had been cleared of rocks, they could use their plows to good effect.

The missionaries did not fear starvation. There was always Bulawayo, thirty-two miles away. But the idea of buying food there and hauling it to Solusi was unthinkable. To begin with, most imported foods were too costly. Even local products were expensive. Salt cost ten cents a pound. Cornmeal, a staple item of diet, cost eleven dollars for a two-hundred-pound sack. Eggs were from two to three dollars a dozen, and butter cost two dollars a pound. The meager salaries of the missionaries seldom exceeded eight or nine dollars a week.

Determined that his wife should have a better house and kitchen, Anderson set up a stove in one corner. The Africans had never seen one before. Mrs. Anderson later wrote to her mother, "They almost reverence my stove."



The home of the W. H. Andersons at Solusi Mission. It was here that a wall collapsed, burying Mrs. Anderson's new stove under inches of mud.

Anderson set up his stove on November 8, 1895, gave it a coat of blacking, and declared that breakfast would be prepared on it the next morning. To the two missionary wives who for five months had been doing all their cooking over a smoky outdoor fire, that stove looked almost too good to be true! Nora Anderson went to sleep, and dreamt of preparing a smokeless breakfast for her husband the following morning.

That very night the first heavy rain of the season came. When Nora awoke in the morning, she found that the kitchen wall had collapsed, covering her beautiful stove with six inches of mud. There had been insufficient time for the mud walls to dry out.

Nora shed a few tears, but there was no time for mourning. She set to work carrying out oozy red mud while her husband replastered the damaged wall.

While the rain had hardly helped the house, it was a blessing to the farm. Anderson and Tripp wasted no time planting the garden on which so much depended. But, unfortunately, that first rain did not herald the arrival of the rainy season. Day after day the sun continued to beat down on parched and thirsty soil. The seeds germinated, poked welcome green shoots out of the ground, then withered and died. The discouraged missionaries faced the prospect of having to replant their cleared land.

The big question was, "When will the rains come again?" The two men had heard from old-timers that Southern Africa was subject to severe droughts, when so little rain fell that crops were almost a complete failure. Would this year bring another such season? They could only hope and pray that such might not be the case.

It was not. The rains came, and the crops grew.

CHAPTER SIX

Setbacks

ATTENDANCE AT Sabbath meetings increased steadily. The hut, built to accommodate one hundred persons, became too small to care for the people from the surrounding kraals, and soon they were meeting under the trees. Looking forward to the rainy season, the missionaries persuaded the Africans to assist in erecting a larger building.

The Sparrows, Harveys, Landsmans, Burtons, and Brother Goepp, who had settled on the fringe of the mission farm, rode in every Sabbath by carriage or ox wagon to attend the service.

Little time was available during the day for the missionaries to learn the languages—Sindebele, the tongue of the fierce Matabele, or the Makalanga of the local people. So in the feeble glow of their coal oil lamps, they struggled with languages full of clicks and involved, tongue-twisting words. After the long hot day on the farm, it was often difficult to keep awake in the evenings.

When Elder Tripp preached, he would listen carefully as Fred Sparrow translated. In this way he picked up many words. On Sabbath he took Colossians 3:19 as his text: "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." He had heard that African husbands often beat their wives. This was wrong, Elder Tripp declared, and extolled the blessings of family love and harmony.

A few days later an influential African came to the missionary with a tale of woe.

"Mfundisi," he said, his eyes focused on the missionary's shoes. "I am in trouble."

"What's wrong?" asked Elder Tripp.

"I have four wives. When we came to my house after the service last Sabbath, they took sticks and beat me. What can I do? You say I must not beat them."

Elder Tripp was sympathetic. He told the aggrieved husband to go home and maintain his authority as head of the house; he would talk to the women the next Sabbath. Speaking from the preceding text, he pointed out that wives were to submit to their husbands. Harmony was restored.

A still more amusing incident occurred a few weeks later. There was to be a wedding in a nearby village, and the missionaries were invited to attend. Tripp and Anderson were too busy to go, but to show a friendly spirit, Mrs. Tripp and Mrs. Anderson went, remained all afternoon, and learned much in regard to African marriage customs.

When they set out for their homes at dusk, Chief Chaba Chaba, the village leader, decided to accompany them part way. He had noticed that the missionary men always kissed their wives when parting from them, and decided it would be proper for him to do the same. Putting his arm around Mary Tripp, he gave her a resounding smack. Nora Anderson, who saw what was happening, managed to escape before her turn came.

At last the belated rainy season began. Gardens were replanted. The world turned from dry, dusty yellow to lush, living green. Seeds germinated and grew. Then one Sabbath, just when things seemed most promising, the missionaries looked up during Sabbath school and saw a vast swarm of locusts flying overhead, darkening the sun. Sabbath school came to an end as the Africans rushed out pell-mell to capture as many of the creatures as possible. To them, this was food from heaven.

Hordes of locusts settled on the mission gardens, with sad results to the growing crops. When the swarm had passed, there was little left that could be eaten. Fortunately, the corn sprouted again and resumed normal growth. But beans,

pumpkins, sweet potatoes, and other crops had to be replanted a third time.

When another swarm arrived a short time later, the missionaries were prepared. The Africans had told them what to do. As soon as the locusts appeared, everyone seized every kettle, pot, pan, or kerosene tin available and, rushing up and down the rows of corn and beans, beat on these with sticks. This kept the locusts moving with no time to eat, and the growing plants were saved. However, the crops did receive a setback, and would be very late in maturing.

But the missionaries felt they had much for which to be thankful. They had never worked so hard in their lives, but they had much to show for their labor. In the four months since their arrival they had built houses, erected a church, dug a well, and cleared and planted more than thirty acres of land. A store had been built and a profitable trade started with the people. They could even converse a little with the Africans in their own language. So, as they went into the new year, it was with the hope that their greatest privations were in the past. Surely, brighter days lay ahead.

Toward the end of January, Mmlevu, the friendly chief of the Makalanga, came to the mission for a private talk with Elder Tripp. He brought Fred Sparrow with him to interpret.

"There is trouble ahead," warned the headman. "The Matabele are planning to rebel and drive all the whites out of the country." The time for the uprising had been set at two moons away.

Elder Tripp took the warning seriously. Knowing the military might of England, he could see only disaster ahead for the Africans should they carry out such a plan. He warned the Makalanga living on and around the mission farm against having any part in the forthcoming rebellion.

At a general meeting, Tripp told the people about the might of the British Army and Navy. They had guns that could shoot hundreds of bullets a minute. He told them that

more people lived in a single city in England than in all Matabeleland, and that even if the rebels succeeded in killing every white person in Rhodesia, the British would come from their own land and destroy the Matabele.

The chief seemed much impressed and promised that his people would take no part in the threatened uprising.

Did Elder Tripp pass his information on to the British authorities in Bulawayo? We have no way of knowing, but if he did, his report was doubtless received with scorn. Most whites felt that the Matabele had been crushed and would never rise again. Nevertheless, certain factors were at work that would make such a rebellion inevitable. Some of the darkest days for the missionaries lay just ahead.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Disaster!

THE YEAR 1896 is remembered in Rhodesian history as one of her saddest hours. It began with a three-shock thunderclap. During the latter part of 1895 Dr. L. S. Jameson, the Charter Company's administrator in Rhodesia for several years, mustered the police and professional soldiers in Rhodesia and rode away with them to a point near Mafeking, not far from the border of the South African Republic. It was Jameson's purpose to help overthrow the Boer Government, then at war with Britain.

The venture ended in total disaster. Forced to surrender, Jameson and his men were clapped into a Pretoria prison and Rhodesia was left virtually defenseless. The prestige of the British as fighters suffered heavily as a result of this military fiasco.

The second calamity came in the form of locusts. Food became scarce, and hard times came to white and black alike. It was not difficult for the witch doctors to persuade the Matabele that the spirits were angry because they had allowed white men to invade their homeland.

The third and by far the most calamitous woe to be suffered took the form of rinderpest, a particularly deadly cattle disease. Thousands of animals were dying in every part of the country. In trying to stamp out the infection, British veterinarians shot not only the sick and dying animals but apparently healthy cattle, as well. The fury of the Matabele knew no bounds. They accused the whites of deliberately seeking to impoverish their nation by destroying their cattle. Within one year's time the number of oxen and cattle in

Matabeleland dropped from 100,000 to only about 500.

The exorbitant prices that prevailed in Rhodesia for nearly every variety of goods in early 1896 can be largely attributed to this cattle disease. Since the railway had not yet reached Bulawayo, transport riders found their business brought almost to a standstill when their oxen died. Horses and mules were drafted to take their place, but they were too few to move the large quantities of goods needed by the growing country.

The three calamities led the Matabele to revolt in March, 1896. Rumors of an uprising finally reached the ears of the military authorities in Bulawayo. But, unfortunately, they did not take them seriously. It was felt that the Matabele, having been decisively defeated in 1893, would not wish to challenge the deadly Maxim machine guns a second time.

What the military did not even suspect was the influence of Mlimo, a highly revered witch doctor living in the fastnesses of the Matopos Mountains. This man offered the Matabele warriors medicine that, he claimed, would turn the white man's bullets to water when applied to their bodies.

By early March, rumors of the coming uprising were widespread. Noticing the peaceful attitude of the local Makalanga, Tripp could hardly believe that such a catastrophe was imminent. Nevertheless, he walked to Bulawayo to learn from the military authorities the true political position. They informed him that all the chiefs were being summoned to headquarters for consultation, and that he should return to the mission farm and await further instructions.

The persistent rumors of trouble ahead worried Fred Sparrow and his fellow lay workers on their farms around the mission. So, a week after Tripp's journey to Bulawayo, they decided to send Barry Burton to investigate. At the same time Anderson went to Bulawayo on business.

Going afoot because of a lack of oxen, Anderson arrived about six o'clock in the morning with some Africans carrying butter and eggs to the early-morning market. Those items

disposed of, he busied himself with other matters of mission business.

About nine o'clock he saw a stranger galloping a foam-covered horse up Seventh Avenue. The man was waving his hat and shouting, "The Matabele have risen and are massacring everybody in the Fillibuzi District!" So it was true! Rumor had become reality! Most of the farm families in that area were taken by surprise and killed. Before the rebellion was crushed, 145 European settlers, along with their wives and children had lost their lives.

Naturally, Anderson's immediate concern was for his wife and the other workers. Had the Matabele invaded Makalanga territory? The only way he could find out was by returning to the mission. Fearing that his African helpers might collide with roving bands of Matabele, Anderson sent them by wagon road while he took a more direct route through the bush. After darkness fell, he found it difficult to make his way around the thickets of thorn trees. But, guided by the stars, he pressed steadily westward, reaching the mission farm at about two o'clock in the morning. His heart rejoiced to see all the buildings intact. In a few moments he was calling his wife's name outside her bedroom window.

Meanwhile Burton went to General Willoughby, the officer in charge in Bulawayo, to ask whether it was true that the Matabele were rebelling, and whether all whites should take refuge in the town. Willoughby told him a rebellion had begun but assured him that, with the exception of those killed in the first few days, all settlers had been brought into Bulawayo. Very politely Burton informed him that the missionaries at the mission farm, and several local farmers in that area, were still on their land.

General Willoughby refused to believe that what Burton said was true.

"Why don't you call up the native commissioner and ask him?" suggested Burton.

Willoughby reached for the telephone.

"Is it true," he asked, "that all the settlers have been brought into Bulawayo for safety?"

"That's correct," replied the native commissioner.

"A man here in my office insists that the people on the mission farm, some thirty miles west of Bulawayo, are still there. Is he correct?"

Willoughby heard the commissioner's fist crash down on his desk.

"Those poor people have been forgotten!" the commissioner exclaimed.

Willoughby instructed Burton to rush home and tell all the settlers to gather on the mission farm. An armed escort from town would escort them to Bulawayo.

On the way home Burton met Tripp, who had mail he wished to send to Cape Town. Hearing the news, Tripp accompanied him back to the farm.

The next day Elder Tripp called Chief Mlevu and his people together and once more urged them to have nothing to do with the rebellion. They promised they would not. Then Tripp handed over to the chief the remaining oxen owned by the mission, as well as their fowl. The rest of the mission property was buried in various spots. Some items were placed in caves.

There were so few oxen that only one wagon could set out for Bulawayo. All available supplies of food were packed into it. Tripp knew that when war strikes, prices go up. If Bulawayo were going to be besieged for a time, food would become scarce.

When all was ready there began an anxious wait for the promised military escort. But the sun sank low without any sign of a protecting force. At length they set out, heading for Mangwe Pass on the borders of Bechuanaland, south and west of the mission. They chose this route because they were under the impression that the Matabele lay between the mission and Bulawayo.

After driving some twelve miles in darkness, made more

difficult by muddy roads occasioned by heavy rains, they camped by a small stream. The next afternoon, just as they were preparing to continue their journey, an African messenger arrived with a note from the belated military escort, instructing them to return immediately to the mission farm. Hastily Tripp wrote a reply: "Will meet you at the Gwaai River." This river was seven or eight miles from the mission. Tripp felt that meeting the escort there would save many miles of travel.

Arriving at the Gwaai, the party looked in vain for the promised escort. Finally they outspanned and prepared to sleep, although they knew they were in dangerous country. Elder Tripp assigned Anderson and Burton to patrol their camp.

The third time Anderson finished his side of the beat where he was to meet Burton, the latter did not appear. Following the path on Burton's side, Anderson came upon him, leaning his head against a tree, fast asleep. The strain of the past few days had proved too much for him.

The camp came to life around 3:00 A.M. The oxen were inspanned and started along the road to Bulawayo. The group had gone seven miles when they were overtaken by two members of the armed escort, who insisted they return to join the rest of the soldiers five miles behind. Doing so, they found twenty African police escorting many others, as farmers living along the Bulawayo road joined the party.

The following evening the party made its way through a narrow canyon with high hills on each side. They were later to learn that the rebel chief, Mayeza, had arrived at the pass two hours afterward, determined to kill them all.

Dawn was breaking when the wagons with their exhausted occupants rolled into the city of Bulawayo. It was suggested that they join the laager* not far from the hospi-

* A South African term referring to wagons or armored vehicles drawn up in a circle for protection. In this case sandbags were placed around the wheels, with small spaces for firing rifles.

tal. The day was spent trying to make living under difficult circumstances as easy as possible. It was impossible to find rooms in the town. The mission wagon had to shelter eighteen people, three of them children.

As night fell a ring of Matabele campfires were seen on the hills surrounding Bulawayo. The city was under siege. There were no illusions of what would be the fate of the city's inhabitants should the twenty thousand warriors outside break through and overwhelm the town.

That evening, as the missionary group held worship in their wagons, many earnest prayers were offered for divine protection in their hour of peril.

"How long will we be here before we can go home?" asked 10-year-old George Tripp.

"I don't know, son," replied his father. "It may be weeks, it may be months. Only God knows."

Soberly the mission family retired for the night.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Besieged

THOUGH THERE were a few soldiers in Bulawayo, its defense rested almost entirely on the vigilance of the settlers. Two laagers had been formed, one near the location of the present railway station, and the other in front of the town hall. At first the missionaries did not join either but remained near the hospital.

The Sparrows, who were with the group, and the Tripp family occupied the mission wagon; the Andersons and Dr. Carmichael beneath it. After they had been in Bulawayo for two weeks, Nora Anderson woke her husband one night to tell him it was raining.

"Yes," replied Harry, aware that his bed was becoming damp.

"Well," she suggested, "let's get up."

"Up where?" was his practical question.

Since there was no place to go, they remained in the damp bed all night, enjoying what Anderson called a "wet sheet pack."

It was hard for Tripp to reconcile himself to the loss of the mission cattle and the thirty-five acres of corn and other crops. One morning shortly after the siege began, he slipped out of town, evaded the Matabeles and walked to the mission farm.

Chief Mlevu and his people warmly welcomed him. But there was bad news. The day before, a Matabele band had come and driven off all the mission cattle. Not only that, they had threatened to return and loot the mission. Realizing that it would probably be fatal to meet the Matabele, Tripp

returned to Bulawayo, walking through the night and arriving just in time for breakfast.

The defenses of the town had been entrusted to a retired British officer. One morning he visited the Tripp wagon.

"You can't stay here any longer," he said. "It is too dangerous." Elder Tripp was surprised. To him, everything was peaceful.

"I am sorry to inconvenience you, but you must move your wagon to the marketplace. Let me tell you what happened last night. I made a tour of inspection to all our sentry points. You will find this hard to believe, but at every point I found sleeping guards. I took guns out of their hands without waking them. The wives and children of those men were threatened by their slackness. How could they do it?"

So the mission wagon was moved to a site near the market.

The officer was not the only one who investigated Bulawayo's defenses. After the war, some of Anderson's African friends told him that on more than one occasion Matabele warriors penetrated the city by night, pondering whether to recommend an attack. Moving like silent shadows from point to point, they too had found the sentinels sleeping. They returned to their chiefs, reporting that under no circumstances should they attack the town, since it was evident that the whites were depending upon witchcraft to protect them. So no attack was made.

The principal threat to the laagers came not from the Matabele warriors but from problems of sanitation, health, and food shortage. The death of the cattle from rinderpest had brought transport practically to a standstill. Now and then, a mule-drawn vehicle managed to get through, but the drivers charged twenty-five cents a pound for transportation costs.

In early April, Elder Tripp wrote to the Mission Board, quoting some current prices of basic commodities. A one-pound loaf of bread cost sixty cents, sugar was seventy-five

cents a pound, while eggs were five dollars a dozen. Because of these exorbitant prices, the missionaries were forced to live principally on coarse grains such as millet or cornmeal. Much of the ill health from which they were later to suffer could be traced to the inadequate diet on which they were compelled to subsist during the five-month siege.

The time came when Mrs. Anderson's stomach refused to accept the coarse food. Strangely, she longed for the smoothness of canned pears. If only she could have just one taste! Since all food was strictly rationed, Anderson had to secure a permit to buy such a luxury item. But secure it he did, paying one dollar and seventy-five cents for a one-pound tin. The pears did bring Nora some relief, and satisfied her craving.

After returning to Bulawayo from the mission farm, Tripp got word to Chief Mlevu urging him not to endanger his people by trying to recover the mission oxen from the rebels. But before this message reached him, the chief sent out his men, recovered all of the cattle, and herded them into his own kraal. But so eager was he to do exactly what the missionary wanted that when Tripp's message reached him, he promptly handed every animal back to the rebels.

By June, when the siege had gone on for nearly three months, Tripp told Anderson that the mission money was nearly gone. He had only enough for another month. This was serious, since no funds could reach Bulawayo from South Africa, and there was no knowing how long the siege might continue. So the two men decided to take turns walking out to the mission farm to see what food supplies they might find.

As leader of the company, Tripp insisted on going first. So at twilight he slipped through the rebel lines, walked all night, and safely arrived at the mission. News of his arrival quickly spread, and the Africans hurried to greet him. Before long they had brought a large amount of foodstuffs—peanuts, corn, chickens, eggs, pumpkins, beans, and other

produce the missionaries might use or exchange on the Bulawayo market for other types of food. Hiring some strong African youth, Tripp divided everything among them and set out again late that same afternoon. By walking all night, he and his bearers reached the city about 4:00 A.M. Happy to hear Tripp's welcome voice, his colleagues rose quickly and held a praise meeting, thanking God for bringing their leader back safely and for the provisions.

The next time supplies began running low, it was Anderson's turn to make the trip. At the mission they told him he would find it easier to procure supplies at Seluswe's village not far away. As he hurried along the winding path, he suddenly heard a voice speaking to him: "Get out of here; you are in danger."

Not knowing what direction the danger might be coming from, he turned off the path, entered some dense bush, spread his blankets on the ground and slept through the night. The next morning he met a band of friendly Africans.

"Where were you last night at sundown?" they asked.

"In the bush, not far from the river," he replied.

"Did you see any rebels?"

"No."

Then they told him that three hundred armed Matabele had used the very path he had been following to Chief Seluswe's kraal. From the description, they must have arrived only minutes after Anderson had received the warning.

In spite of such dangers, Tripp and Anderson took turns hiking out to the farm every fortnight for provisions, until permission was given for the refugees to return to their station.

On one trip Anderson found some Africans with six donkeys they were prepared to sell. Thinking it would be much easier to ride than to walk, he bought the animals, strapped loads on five of them, mounted the sixth, and set out for Bulawayo in the evening.

All went well until the donkey Anderson was riding suddenly raised his head and shattered the silence of the night with a vigorous bray. The missionary was badly frightened, and hoped it would not happen again. But just as he reached a most dangerous place, where he could actually see the rebels' campfires, the donkey gave forth with a still-louder bray. Shaken, Anderson handed the reins to an African assistant, slipped off into the bush, and reached Bulawayo safely. An hour later the Africans arrived with all of the donkeys.

Toward the end of July the siege was lifted, and the men were permitted to return to the farm. Their wives, however, had to remain in the wagons in Bulawayo. There were too many bands of Matabele warriors roving around for it to be safe.

A sad sight met the men's eyes when they arrived at the mission farm. The land they had left green and flourishing had gone to weeds. Out of 175 fowl they had left on the farm, only fifteen scrawny birds remained. All the cattle were gone except for ten oxen and a few cows, which, as Tripp pointed out in a letter to the Foreign Mission Board, might die of rinderpest at any time. He wrote that they would need \$5,000 dollars to replace what had been lost.

The returned men learned that Solusi was the only mission in all Matabeleland that had not been looted and burned. They attributed this to the overruling providence of God, and to the friendly attitude of the Makalanga. The Makalanga, however, had suffered for their loyalty to the missionaries. They had been attacked by the Matabele for not assisting in the war—they had been driven into the rocky hills, their houses had been burned, and many of their animals had been stolen.

During the rebellion, the British South African Charter Company had promised to compensate the Rhodesian settlers for their losses. But when settlement time came, it was unable to meet the losses in full. It had cost as much as

\$20,000 a day to crush the rebellion.

When Elder Tripp received a deputation from the company to assess the amount of damages sustained on the mission farm, he asked for £800 (\$4,000) to compensate for their losses. In the end the company settled for 25 percent, so Tripp received only £200. This represented a heavy loss to the mission, but it was better than nothing. With brave hearts the missionaries set about restoring what had been destroyed.

After the missionaries returned, Chief Mlevu carefully returned the things that had been committed to his care six months before. Although some of the nonmetal household articles had been damaged by white ants, not one item was missing.

Surely, now the worst of their calamities were past, the missionaries thought. First, the locusts had devoured their crops. Then drought had killed the growing plants, and they had had to replant. Their oxen had nearly all died of rinderpest. They had survived a six-month siege. But they still had the land, and they still commanded the love and respect of those for whom they had come to labor.

CHAPTER NINE

Famine

EARLY IN September, only a few days after the men had returned to the farm, word came that danger of attack from warring Matabele had abated sufficiently to permit the wives and children to return. When Anderson received this good news, he sent some Africans with the ox wagon to Bulawayo. Elder Tripp was there when it arrived. He was just starting to load the wagon when he slipped, spraining his ankle so severely he could do nothing more. Since it proved impossible to recruit African help, Mrs. Tripp and Mrs. Anderson, with the help of young George and an African teen-ager who had been working for them, had to do all the loading. But the prospect of getting home was so pleasing that they made no complaint.

The oxen found the task of pulling the heavily loaded wagon hard work, for they had been without exercise for many months. So when they came to the Kwasiz River, they refused even to try to climb the steep bank. Hour after hour the wagon and its helpless occupants remained in the dry riverbed. Finally, about nine that night, the oxen gave one long sustained pull, dragged their burden to the top of the riverbank, and continued on their way.

It was now the height of the dry season. There was no time to be lost if the land were to be ready for planting in November when the rains might be expected. This brought the missionaries face to face with a major problem. How was the ground to be prepared when they had scarcely any oxen left, and the few they did have were in danger of contracting rinderpest? To avoid losing them, Tripp had them driven to

an isolated part of the farm where they would be in less danger of catching the disease from other infected cattle.

It was clear that the task of preparing land fell upon the missionaries. With nothing but hoes, spades, and axes, they had thirty acres of sun-hardened earth ready for planting when the time for the rains came.

October was the hottest month of the year. But from sunrise to sunset every day, Anderson and Tripp labored, hoeing, raking, and digging.

It was vitally important that an abundant crop be realized. Matabeleland would soon face a food shortage of tragic proportions. Not only had thousands of the Matabele been off making war when they should have been at home growing food, but the supplies the rebels had managed to store up were stolen from them by the Makalanga and other tribes who did not participate in the rebellion.

Worse still, in order to destroy the fighting spirit of the Africans and bring them to peaceful negotiations, the European soldiers had felt it necessary to confiscate or burn thousands of bags of corn. Writing to the editor of the *Review and Herald*, Elder Tripp painted a bleak picture of conditions all around the mission and throughout Matabeleland in general.

"A few months ago the natives were all comparatively comfortable in their primitive way, with plenty to eat. . . . Today, as the result of this mistaken course, their homes are desolated, burned by the soldiers as they sought to subdue the rebellion. More than this, their grain was either taken or burned, to keep it from sustaining the natives in their efforts against the white men. Their cattle either died with the rinderpest or were taken by the soldiers. Sheep, goats, and fowls were also taken, and now that the natives have seen that they must surrender, they return to their homes with nothing; and starvation is not far away from many. What a prospect! Home desolated, and the wail of starving children appealing to fond parents who know they are powerless to

supply their needs."—*Review and Herald*, Dec. 8, 1896.

The situation was aggravated by the disruption of the transport system, and food prices became astronomical. Corn sold for twenty dollars a bushel. Even potatoes cost sixty cents a pound.

Fortunately, the missionaries had previously been able to buy a fair supply of corn. However, thousands of Africans perished of hunger before the new crops were ready to harvest. The poor people wandered far and near, searching for practically nonexistent food. During this dreadful time the Europeans were not indifferent to the sufferings of the Matabele. As the rebellion collapsed, the Charter Company came forward and distributed five million pounds of grain among the starving people.

The condition of the children was especially pitiful. Parents brought their little ones to the missionaries, asking permission to leave them there because they could not bear to see them starve. By the time the famine was over, there were thirty children under the care of the missionaries, and separate housing had been built for them.

At first these children were of all ages. But the teen-agers, unwilling to submit to discipline, would quickly disappear when punished, in spite of the famine conditions prevailing everywhere. So by the time the famine was over, the children were mainly between the ages of 4 and 8.

As soon as the children were accepted, they were bathed in a tub of warm, soapy water. Mrs. Tripp and Mrs. Anderson were amazed at the change this made in their appearance. At first some of the children were afraid of the water, but after a few days they came to take delight in their baths, especially the girls. Soon the children were calling the Sabbath "holy." The garments they put on on Friday evening they called their "holy clothes."

Anderson wrote concerning these waifs: "If you could only see their little black faces, and hear their expressions of love and appreciation for what is done for them, you would

say, "Take all you can!" At the close of each meal, before leaving the table, they thank us for their food. This is done from the abundance of the love in their hearts, for we have not taught them to do so. Today I had to leave the table before the others finished their dinners. About an hour afterward, one little boy, 5 years old, came to me and thanked me. I asked him what for, and he said, for his dinner."

One day a stranger came to the mission and offered to barter a slave boy in exchange for three bags of grain, each worth seventy-five dollars. Anderson told him he could not buy his slave, but urged him to set the lad free and leave him at the mission. This the man reluctantly agreed to do. The boy was named Malomo, meaning "mouth." His body seemingly consisted of nothing but skin and bones. An abundance of good food soon restored him, although the pangs of hunger remained with him for weeks.

One evening as Anderson inspected the room where the boys slept, his foot caught on the edge of Malomo's blanket. He pulled it back, revealing a handful of crackers the boy had stolen from the kitchen.

That evening after worship, Anderson spoke to Malomo about the New Jerusalem, and told him that no one who steals can enter there. He then showed him the crackers he had found in his bed. Bursting into tears, Malomo seized the missionary's hand and, looking him in the face, said between sobs, "Father, I will never steal again." Then he added chokingly, "But I was so hungry!" Anderson prayed with him, and Malomo kept his promise.

As the famine increased in severity, so did the number of victims who crowded around the European homes, pleading for food. The workers found it extremely difficult to eat their meals when every time they looked up they saw hungry eyes in the pinched faces of starving men and women staring at them through the windows. "It makes me choke when I see it," wrote Mrs. Tripp.

The missionaries decided that as long as they had food, they could not refuse to share it. Would not the words "I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat" apply to them in the judgment if they refused to divide what they had among these poor people?

Elder Tripp appealed to the Rhodesian Government for food, but for some time he received no reply. Finally, the sad morning came when he had to tell the children that there was not a grain of corn left. Many earnest prayers for help were offered, and God gave an immediate reply. That very afternoon Anderson returned from Bulawayo with a plentiful supply, donated by the government.

When again the time came that there was no food, Adventists in South Africa sent more than a hundred dollars. Fully aware of the crises, the children learned the meaning of faith as they saw their prayers answered.

In a letter to the Foreign Mission Board, Anderson described conditions during the famine, concluding with the words, "We must have help!" Unfortunately the board had no money. But Adventists in America read Anderson's appeal in the *Review*, which was followed by a note from the editor: "We invite those with pleasant homes and well-dressed little ones to remember the children mentioned by Elder Anderson and send them help."

The orphans were being cared for, but the question remained, Was the diet of the missionaries, consisting mainly of cornmeal, sufficient to nourish them? Perhaps the tragic losses that the mission later sustained were directly traceable to a poor diet during that time of food shortage.

As the Lord revealed to Ellen G. White the situation under which the missionaries labored in Africa, she was moved to write: "The poverty of the missions in Africa has been recently opened before me. Missionaries were sent from America to the natives of Africa, and no provisions made for them to find support. They have suffered, and are still suffering for the necessities of life. Think of it! God's

missionaries, ready to suffer the greatest inconvenience in order that the message of mercy might be carried to those sitting in darkness in heathen lands, are not sustained in their work."

Meanwhile, in spite of being carefully guarded, the mission oxen contracted rinderpest and died one by one. Starving Africans begged permission to eat the carcasses. Dr. Carmichael protested strongly, stating that if they did, they too would die from rinderpest. When they ate it and lived, the good doctor predicted that they would soon break out with sores and ulcers. A credibility gap developed when none of these things happened.

With grim determination the pioneers continued their rigorous program.

As Tripp and Anderson laid plans for the future, they decided that no better step could be taken than to open a school for their orphan children. The erection of a mud-and-pole school shelter was not difficult. A far more puzzling problem was, Where could they find a teacher? Remembering a likely candidate the missionaries had met in Bulawayo during the siege, they contacted him.

The man's name was John Ntaba Luthuli. Born and reared in Natal, he and his wife had been living at a mission in that country, where he had become a well-trained teacher. But seeking to make more money, Ntaba bought oxen and a wagon and went into the transport business. The family had been caught in Bulawayo by the rebellion. Unfortunately, Ntaba was a heavy drinker. During the rebellion he passed the idle hours away by drinking more and more heavily, nearly drinking himself to death.

Finally, he sent for Dr. Carmichael, who treated him, and warned him of the dangers he faced unless he reformed. With Ntaba was his best friend, Alvin Tshabangu, who was to play an important part in the development of Solusi.

When the siege was lifted Anderson invited John Ntaba to take charge of a school at the mission. He agreed, and he

and Anderson sat down together to plan the program. What a school it was! No textbooks, no blackboards, no equipment. Ntaba told his students, "Your textbook is going to be your Bible. Your songbook is going to teach you English." They learned to write by marking in sand.

In spite of handicaps and shortages, the children made excellent progress. John Ntaba settled down happily with his family. A son was born at Solusi whom he named Albert. Many years later, in 1960, this son became world famous when he was awarded a Nobel prize.

Had John Ntaba continued to teach the Solusi school, a firm foundation would have been laid. Unfortunately, his services were to be cut short.

In November the rainy season began. Once again the missionaries felt that one more trial and danger now lay behind them. The drought and the locusts, rinderpest, rebellion, and finally the famine were gone. But whether the days ahead would be as bright as a rainbow or as dark as midnight, the workers were not discouraged. Time after time, in their letters and articles, the same theme reappeared: "We are not sorry that we came. Our courage is good. If we fall, send others quickly to take our places."

Dark Days

THE ISOLATED group at the Mission Farm was greatly cheered to learn that a new missionary family was on the way to help them. Mr. and Mrs. F. B. Armitage and their infant daughter, Violet, were already somewhere between the railhead and Bulawayo, and were completing their safari by donkey wagon.

As week followed week, Elder Tripp became increasingly anxious to know what had become of the Armitages. One day in Bulawayo, a stage driver informed him that an American family traveling by donkey cart was a few miles from the town. Tripp and Anderson immediately hitched up their mule team and hurried to meet them. At Figtree they met a miner who had also seen the missionaries. He informed them that the woman was ill, and had to be lifted into and out of the wagon.

The two men hurried on. Two days later they came upon the Armitage wagon, upside down in a mudhole. To their relief they learned that Mrs. Armitage had merely sprained an ankle. They helped right the wagon, then all traveled on together, spending Sabbath at Figtree. On Sunday they transferred some of the Armitage goods to the mission cart. Two days later, on the first day of September, 1897, the weary travelers reached their destination.

Armitage's arrival was most opportune. Convinced that the missionaries' health would decline rapidly unless they could be adequately housed, Elder Tripp had burned bricks and gathered other supplies for the erection of three homes. Unfortunately, neither Tripp nor Anderson was familiar

with the craft of bricklaying, so one of the first questions they asked the newcomer was whether he knew how to lay brick. They were delighted when he replied in the affirmative.

There was no time to lose if the new houses were to be ready before the rainy season arrived. After resting for only one day from his long, arduous trip, Armitage started on the building project. In a short time three houses stood ready for occupancy by the Tripp, Anderson, and Armitage families. A separate place had been erected to house the orphans. Dr. Carmichael still lived a half mile away.

The railway began its operation to Bulawayo in November, 1897. Now visitors could reach the mission comfortably and rapidly. The first visitor they entertained was Elder O. A. Olsen, who had looked forward to this visit with keen anticipation, since his sister was the wife of Elder Armitage.

Elder Olsen had laid down his responsibility as president of the General Conference early in the year. He immediately set out on a trip around the world, eager to gather as much information as possible about Adventist mission stations. Before sailing from New York, he had requested the Mission Board for authorization and sufficient money to enable him to visit the mission farm. The board replied that funds were so limited that they did not see the way clear to authorize this extra trip. On his arrival in South Africa, however, Elder Olsen learned that the conference officers there felt it was important for him to visit the mission, and had arranged to finance the trip.

Elder Olsen's train arrived at Bulawayo fourteen hours late. On the platform stood Elder Tripp, who had waited all night for him. The two men drove out to the mission in a mule wagon, reaching there about 10:00 P.M. All the missionaries had retired, but when they heard Elder Olsen arriving, they dressed and hurried to greet him.

During the eight days that Elder Olsen spent at Solusi, his keen eye observed many things he felt should be changed. Noting the village children walking from two to eight miles

each morning, he urged that outschools be established around the mission farm. Tripp agreed that it would be a good idea, but as yet they had no village teachers. This plan was later adopted.

Elder Olsen was troubled that the missionaries were working far beyond their strength. The European women were occupied from morning till night, visiting villages and teaching the African women to sew, cook, and keep their huts clean. He wrote to the *Review and Herald*: "Sister Anderson's health is not equal to the demands on her with all the other cares and labors that must be performed."

Elder Olsen conducted a Bible study for an hour each day he was at the mission. Many years later Harry Anderson described how good it was to sit at the feet of such a Bible scholar. It was with sorrow that the workers saw him depart. Little did he realize that he would see his sister no more.

Their second guest, Dr. Kate Lindsay, from Battle Creek Sanitarium, stayed much longer. As she visited the nearby villages, observing the pitiful living conditions among the Africans, she decided to do what she could to show them a better way. After consulting with Elder Tripp, she had a message sent out announcing that on a certain day she would begin a series of classes in which she would teach the villagers how to live more healthfully.

The response was excellent. Anderson, who by now was proficient in the Sendebele language, served as interpreter.

When the classes ended, Dr. Lindsay bade the people goodbye, told them she was leaving the next day, and expressed the hope that they would put into practice what she had taught them. Then she retired to the Anderson home.

However, her pupils did not go home. Thinking they wanted more instructions, the doctor gave them another half-hour lecture. Still they were not satisfied and continued to walk around the house. Finally Dr. Lindsay asked Anderson whether they wanted still more.

"They want something, but not lectures," he told her.

When asked, a spokesman replied that they had come faithfully day after day, neglecting their gardens, which had suffered considerably. Now they felt it was her duty to pay them for their attendance at her classes. Naturally, Dr. Lindsay was indignant, and stoutly maintained that nothing should be given them. But Anderson, following a wiser course, took them to the store, where he divided several yards of calico and some cartons of matches between them before they were satisfied and went home.

The rainy season that year proved to be one of the heaviest in Rhodesian history. For days at a time the mission family could hardly carry on their work. Besides, the hardships they had endured during the siege and famine had seriously undermined their health, making them susceptible to malarial fever.

The General Conference Bulletin spoke truthfully of "our feeble Matabele Mission, struggling almost to death to be self-supporting." It had indeed entered upon a life-and-death struggle for survival, battling against illness and privation.

At the time of Elder Olsen's visit, it was evident that Elder Tripp's health was declining. His co-workers urged him to go with Elder Olsen to the Cape and remain there long enough to regain his strength. This he resolutely refused to do, pointing out that such a course would only throw heavier burdens on those who remained behind.

Anderson, who had grown up in Indiana, was well acquainted with the symptoms of malarial fever, and knew that the regular use of quinine was the only known remedy. So when he began suffering headaches and his temperature rose, he recognized the symptoms of malaria. In Bulawayo he purchased a quantity of quinine, which he and his wife used regularly. Unfortunately, some workers rigidly maintained that quinine was a dangerous drug, detrimental to health. They said its use was a demonstration of a lack of faith in God's healing power, and refused to use it.

All through February the downpours continued, making it the worst year for malaria Rhodesia had ever experienced. Every hospital was full. A doctor told Anderson he did not think there was a completely well person among the 7,000 whites in Bulawayo.

About the middle of February, Dr. Carmichael took to his bed. The Andersons moved him into their house, nursing him as well as they could. Gradually he became weaker, until on the morning of February 26 he died, the first of the group to lay down his life.

Elder Tripp was so weak from repeated attacks of fever that he could barely conduct the doctor's funeral. The next day he could not leave his bed. By now all mission activity, including school, was at a standstill, for John Ntaba was suffering from fever also. Elder Tripp was nursed by Mrs. Tripp and Elder Armitage. In the Armitage home little Amy Sparrow lay dying. In the Anderson home Chris Sparrow, an Adventist operating a farm near Solusi, his wife, two sons, and a white man who had been working for Sparrow, were all fever patients.

On March 7, 1898, Elder Tripp passed to his rest. Three years before, to the very day, he had been appointed director of Solusi. He was buried a short distance from Dr. Carmichael. That same day Mr. Sparrow's little girl was also buried.

The next fever victim was young George Tripp. In response to an urgent appeal for help, Dr. George Replogle, of the Claremont Sanitarium in South Africa, hurried to the station. But he was unable to save George, who died on the 2d of April. Significant were the words of his epitaph: "A Youthful Sacrifice."

Next, Mrs. Tripp became gravely ill. Alarmed, her fellow workers urged that the only way to save her life would be for her to leave Rhodesia. So in the middle of April Mrs. Anderson and Mrs. Tripp, accompanied by Dr. Replogle, left Solusi for the Cape, where Mrs. Tripp made a slow but steady recovery. Meanwhile, at the mission, both the Armi-

tages came down with fever. Mr. Armitage's temperature soared to 108 degrees, but he responded to treatment. This was not true of Mrs. Armitage, whose symptoms became alarming. As soon as her husband was sufficiently recovered to travel, he decided to leave with his wife and child.

He started south from Bulawayo on the first available train. But his wife's condition deteriorated, and it became evident that she could not live long. Unable to bear the thought of his wife dying on the train, Armitage pleaded with God to prevent this. His prayer was answered. She rallied slightly, and at Kimberley was carried off the train and hurried to a nursing home. Two hours later she closed her eyes in death.

The mission family was to suffer one more grievous loss. John Ntaba became desperately ill with fever. Daily Anderson visited his bedside and did all he could for the stricken man. There was a steady improvement in his patient, so Anderson was shocked one tragic day when John Ntaba's son rushed to his house with the startling news that his father was worse. Anderson hurried to the bedside of the stricken man, only to find him unconscious. That night he died.

Bewildered as to what had caused John Ntaba's death, Anderson later learned that on the morning of the day he died, a friend brought him some ears of corn. Thinking they would taste good, Ntaba asked his wife to cook a half dozen ears, which he ate, with fatal results.

The death of John Ntaba was a great loss to the school. Later, one of his sons, who had been partially educated, stepped in and did his best to fill his father's place. Elder and Mrs. Anderson, both excellent teachers, gave as much time as they could spare to the school.

For Anderson the mission was now a lonely place. Of the original seven who had arrived on July 26, 1895, only three were still alive, and two were at the Cape recovering from malaria.

News of the tragedy was flashed to the Foreign Mission

Board, and steps were taken to find replacements for those who had fallen. But for Anderson the question remained: Why did the board wait until the overburdened pioneers had fallen in death before sending new recruits? Had helpers come in time, those precious lives might have been saved.

One interesting development followed the deaths of Mrs. Armitage and Elder Tripp. After a suitable interval, Elder Armitage invited Mrs. Tripp to share his mission career, an invitation she gladly accepted. So they were married and subsequently spent more than twenty years laboring in the mission field.

The land on which Solusi was founded had indeed been a gift, but that was the only free thing about it. Everything else was paid for in toil, sweat, sorrow, disappointment, heart-break, and death. Elder W. A. Spicer wrote concerning it, "No missionary enterprise we have ever started since has had to endure so savage a trial."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A Wider Vision

NEWS OF the deaths of Elder Tripp, his son, Dr. Carmichael, and Mrs. Armitage was received with sorrow by the church in North America. But there was no lessening of the determination to press on with the foreign mission program in Africa. It was evident that a fresh band of workers would be needed immediately to man the mission farm.

In August, 1898, the Foreign Mission Board voted to invite F. L. Mead to assume the directorship of the station. Elder Mead was well known to church members in various parts of North America, having acted as general canvassing agent in the United States for a number of years.

"He was a man of rare good judgment, and blessed with a superabundance of common sense—just the qualifications necessary for a successful missionary," W. H. Anderson wrote many years later. At first Elder Mead hesitated, but at the end of a week he indicated his willingness to go to Africa, accompanied by his wife and two teen-age children, Lena and Walter.

As a replacement for Dr. Carmichael, the board called Dr. and Mrs. H. A. Green to accompany the Mead family. To assist with the general mission work, G. J. Lloyd and wife were called. Two single workers were also included in the group: Miss Hiva Starr, a teacher, and J. A. Chaney, who had already had some mission experience in West Africa.

Toward the end of 1898 the party sailed from New York for England and the Cape. Early in 1899 they arrived in Cape Town, to be warmly welcomed by W. S. Hyatt, leader of the work in South Africa. Hyatt strongly opposed the idea

that the new recruits should go directly to Solusi. In Rhodesia the rainy season was at its height, and fever was widespread. The doctor at the Claremont Sanitarium likewise urged them to wait at the Cape until the rains should taper off. Mead also kept in touch with Dr. Vigne, a physician at Bulawayo who advised him to keep his group an extra month at the Cape because of the protracted rains.

Mead secured a tent in which the company might live, and found a teacher to instruct them in the Sendebele language. Soon everyone was working on it.

At Solusi during the one-year interval between the death of his co-workers and the arrival of the Mead party, Harry Anderson was extremely busy. As the only overseas worker on the mission farm, every type of burden fell on him. After two months the Armitages and Mrs. Anderson returned from the Cape and helped lift some of his burdens. How the orphan children rejoiced when their foster parents returned! And the missionaries likewise rejoiced when they saw how rapidly the children had grown spiritually and physically.

One day when Mrs. Anderson was writing a letter, a 4-year-old boy asked her what she was doing. She replied she was writing a letter to friends in America.

"Tell them, for me, to send more missionaries here to teach our people about God. My mother knows nothing about the true God and the right way to live." Not long after this, the child received word that his mother had died. He cried bitterly, not only because she was gone but because she had died without knowing God.

When the time arrived for the planting of the crops, the mission did not have enough oxen to pull the plows. At a most opportune time five stray oxen wandered by. These were easily guided into the mission kraal and, with the animals already there, made into an adequate team for plowing. Although Anderson knew his neighbors for miles around, he could never discover the owners of the oxen.

On April 5, 1899, Elder Mead and company arrived at the mission, glad that their long trip was over. Mead quickly saw the privations under which the workers were laboring, and the results of the heavy financial losses suffered during the rebellion and subsequent famine. Eager that Solusi should become self-supporting, he wrote to the Foreign Mission Board, requesting \$2,500 for commercial purposes, and urging that the money be sent at once. The board voted to send him \$500. This was a disappointment to the new superintendent, who, eager to see the work expand, needed a more adequate source of income than he had found on arrival. To Mead, the board's requirement that the mission should be self-supporting was unrealistic in view of other instructions he had received. "We are about as well equipped for self-supporting work as a carpenter would be if his only tools consisted of a saw, an ax, and a jackknife," he protested.

Mead's reports to the board were much appreciated, even if they were not always acted upon. One of his first projects was to report in detail conditions at the mission. In its meeting of July 25 the board acknowledged, "A communication was read from Elder Mead, dated June 11, 1899. This communication contained much information relative to the conditions prevalent in Rhodesia which has never previously been furnished to the Foreign Mission Board, and which was highly appreciated."

In spite of setbacks, plans were laid at the mission to expand the work greatly. Elder Olsen had emphasized that Elder Tripp had been so occupied with routine work that it had been impossible for him to do the evangelistic work that should have been done. The new superintendent was determined that the strong band of new recruits should not become so bogged down at the central station that they could not spread the gospel into surrounding areas. Just twenty days after his arrival, Mead set about expanding the work. Elder Armitage, Brother and Sister Lloyd, and Brother Chaney took a team and some trading goods and went

twenty-five miles north to Umkupavula, where they pitched a tent and declared a mission station open. Harry Anderson and Elder Mead hitched up a team, loaded on some trade goods, went six miles south, pitched a tent, and declared another station open. Now instead of having one mission, they had three to care for.

These outstations were entirely dependent upon Mead for their supply of trade goods. As a result he was frequently on purchasing trips between Solusi and Bulawayo. He would often leave Solusi on Sunday and not return until Thursday. Seldom was he at home with his family. He wrote, "Every week but one since we reached Matabeleland, I have slept from one to five nights on the wagon."

But Mead's very satisfactory philosophy of life helped him in this new situation. "Since it fell to my lot to drive the team," he wrote, "I find it very handy to know how. Driving an eight-mule team is not the worst kind of work in the world; and when a man knows that he is where the Lord wants him to be, he can be as happy driving a team of mules or oxen, as riding on a railroad on a half-fare ticket."

At the main station, Dr. and Mrs. Green were kept busy treating the Africans who often came long distances for help. Occasionally he would visit the two new stations, knowing that things were well taken care of at the main station by his wife. Mrs. Mead was mission treasurer and bookkeeper. Lena Mead taught in the school, while Walter took charge of the store. Anderson gave most of his attention to the school, with Hiva Starr assisting.

Shortly after the new workers arrived at Solusi, a rather humorous situation developed. An old chief noticed that Miss Starr had no husband, a situation regarded as a disgrace among African women. One day he asked Elder Anderson why Miss Starr had no husband. Anderson replied that in European countries, a girl had to be asked before she could marry, and probably no one had proposed to Miss Starr. The chief thought about this for a few days, then returned to

Anderson, stating that although he had several wives already, he was prepared to marry Miss Starr and take away her reproach. Anderson then told him that the girl would have to give her consent, so the chief went to Miss Starr to "pop the question."

Unable to comprehend much of what the old man was rattling off, she went with him to Anderson for an interpretation. At first she was bewildered, until Anderson was well into the topic. When comprehension dawned, she covered her burning face with her hands and fled to her house. Anderson then told the chief it was evident that the lady did not wish to marry him.

Miss Starr's health deteriorated, and on the first of August, only three months after arriving at Solusi, she left for the Cape.

One day a personal calamity befell the Andersons and Greens, who were sharing the same house. On the morning of September 27, 1899, the house caught fire because of a faulty chimney flue. Within minutes the entire place was engulfed in flames, and both families lost everything. Particularly grievous was the loss of all Dr. Green's medical books. Many articles unobtainable in the Bulawayo stores were also lost. Everything the Andersons had accumulated during their four years at Solusi was gone.

In view of the calamities that successively befell Solusi and its workers, it is not surprising that some members of the Mission Board began to wonder whether the right location had been selected for a mission station in Central Africa. Whatever doubts they had were confirmed by the testimony brought by Philip Wessels, a South African who described the Mission Farm to the board members.

"The soil," he said, "absorbs decaying vegetation, so that when the rains and the hot season appear, it must always be a fever pesthole." Wessels strongly urged the board to insist that the European workers move to a more healthful climate, warning that unless they did, they must be prepared to face

the grim prospect of adding to the eleven graves already there—four European and seven African.

The board did not wish to be responsible for such a tragedy. In what might have been a far-reaching action, G. B. Thompson moved that "we advise the superintendent of the Matabeleland Mission, Elder F. L. Mead, to discontinue the work of trading and farming, and to arrange for laborers connected with the mission to engage in evangelistic work because of the unhealthfulness of the location."

This action was carried unanimously. Mead was further instructed to move the mission to a more healthful site. Matabeleland headquarters should be turned over to trustworthy African leaders. The new mission might be established in Bulawayo, Johannesburg, or some healthful location—anywhere but Solusi. Mead was to inform the board as soon as possible how much it would cost to make such a move.

Mead left no record by which we may gauge the mental distress these instructions brought him. Should the mission really be disbanded? If they forsook Solusi for some more healthful site, what would become of the Africans who had grown to love and respect the missionaries? Had the workers who had laid down their lives done so in vain? What would happen to the orphans and the school? Should this "desolate spot," as Elder Tripp had once called it, be abandoned because the going was hard?

In the end, Mead decided that the investment already made had been too great. He would not abandon Solusi.

Had he been able to look into the future, to witness the struggles of his successors against sickness and drought during the next seventy-five years, would he have changed his decision? We cannot tell.

CHAPTER TWELVE

A Boy Named Summer

ONE MORNING as Anderson was teaching his classes a student told him someone wanted to see him outside. Rather annoyed by the interruption, the teacher stepped out into the bright sunshine, where he found an unusually tall lad of perhaps 15 or 16 years of age.

"Were you looking for me?" Anderson asked.

"Yes, *Mfundisi*. I have come to school."

As Anderson looked at the lad, he wondered whether he had ever become acquainted with a substance called soap. He also noticed that the boy was very, very thin.

"Have you had food today?" he inquired kindly.

"No, *Mfundisi*," was the reply. "But that doesn't matter. Just let me attend school."

"Well, you shall have something to eat before anything else."

He took the boy to his house and asked Nora to prepare some food for the lad. Two pair of eyes watched him as he sat on the veranda eating. "If God can do anything with such a fellow as this," he said to his wife, "then I doubt there is anything impossible for Him."

School had been dismissed, and the students sent into the fields to work. Anderson wondered what to do with his new applicant. His first impulse had been to send him on his way. Then he decided to assign the lad a task so unpleasant that he would probably refuse and so could easily be sent off. He brought him to where they were digging a well, showed him how to drill holes in the rock for the dynamite, and left him to his task. Without protest the boy descended the ladder

and began work. Anderson was surprised, for he knew about the fear the Africans had of going underground. (Today those feelings no longer exist.)

Three or four times that afternoon Anderson passed the well and glanced down. The lad was always steadily at work. About five o'clock he came and informed the missionary that the work was finished. Since he had assigned quite a task, Anderson found it difficult to believe that the job was completed. But on investigation he discovered that the boy had actually done more than a day's work in one afternoon. After that there was no further doubt. He wrote the lad's name in the school register.

Anderson found that the lad knew a smattering of English. It was easy to draw his story from him. His name was Mayinza—"summer." He was neither a Matabele nor a Shona, the two principal tribes in Rhodesia, but a Baila from north of the Zambezi River. He and his mother had been seized by a band of Matabele raiders, taken to Matabeleland, and forced to work as slaves.

When the two had tried to escape, they were recaptured and separated to discourage them from running away again. Mayinza's mother had repeatedly told him that his father's name was Sigabasa, and that the Matabele were not his people. Sometime he must escape and return to his homeland.

After the Matabeles were crushed in 1893, the British Government proclaimed freedom to all slaves, and the Matabele chief for whom Mayinza had worked for many years released him. For a time he found work with a man mining for gold. A heavy drinker, this miner wasted all his money on liquor. Not wanting Mayinza to follow his example, he frequently said to him, "Don't drink. Don't be the kind of a man I am. Go to the mission and get an education, and become God's own boy."

Mayinza listened to the miner and took the road that led to Solusi, Anderson, and school.

Mayinza proved to be an earnest student and a fast learner. He became very proficient in English. He had come to the mission with no intention of becoming a Christian. He simply coveted an education, knowing that educated Africans usually earned much more than uneducated ones. However, as he listened to the teachings of the missionaries day after day and attended Sabbath services, his heart was softened; he enrolled in the baptismal class. According to custom, he chose a Biblical name for himself—James. It was soon shortened to Jim. He so endeared himself to the missionaries that they came to refer to him as "our Jim," and by this name he was known for more than twenty-five years.

After finishing his first and second readers, Jim was ready to begin reading the Bible. Unfortunately, no Bibles were available in Bulawayo. Then Anderson heard that one might be purchased from the Brethren in Christ Mission, about five miles southeast of Bulawayo. When the missionaries of this denomination had first arrived in Rhodesia, Anderson had transported their goods from Bulawayo to their site and had become friendly with them. He therefore wrote to the mission, asking whether they would sell Jim a Bible. The thought of walking one hundred and twenty miles on such an errand did not daunt the boy, who set off with the letter and money to buy the Book.

Jim was gone for a week. When he returned, carrying his Bible, Anderson discovered he had memorized the whole of Matthew 5 during his homeward journey. When asked how he had accomplished this, he explained that he would sit down and try to fix the words of a verse in mind. Jumping up, he would run to make up for lost time, repeating the verse over and over again until he had it memorized. Then he would sit down again and begin learning the next verse.

Jim Mayinza never wasted time in idle talk with his fellow students. Every spare moment was spent with his beloved Bible. No Solusi student ever mastered the Book as Jim did, and soon he asked for baptism. Elder Mead questioned him

carefully to make sure he was ready for this step. Jim said that he had read in the book of Acts, Romans, and Corinthians that his desire to follow the Lord was right, and that since he had decided to obey God in everything, he wanted to be baptized. Twelve other candidates expected to be baptized soon, and Jim joined the group.

Baptismal day was a happy one for the entire mission family. Accompanied by scores of Africans from surrounding kraals, they walked three miles to a stream, where Elder Mead led Jim into the water and baptized him. The date was December 1, 1901, a memorable one for the missionaries who had waited and prayed five and one-half years for this first convert.

The other candidates watched with growing apprehension as Jim was led into the stream and plunged into the water. They were convinced that the missionary was drowning him. To avoid a like fate, they took to their heels and fled. Afterward, talking with Jim about the ceremony, they lost their fears and eventually were baptized also.

Like the boy Jesus, Jim continued to grow physically, mentally, and spiritually. It was recognized that he was head and shoulders above his fellow students. So when the mission lost the services of the Lloyds, Mr. Chaney, and Miss Starr, Anderson was happy to see him go into the classroom as a teacher of the lower classes. But Jim never discontinued his intensive study of the Bible. Pastor Isaac Nkomo, one of the African pioneers at Solusi and a personal friend of Jim's, declared him to be the greatest African Bible student the Adventist Church in Africa ever produced.

In 1904, Anderson obtained the permission of the Mission Board to make a trip across the Zambezi in the hope of locating a site for another mission station. The news of this proposed expedition greatly excited Jim, for Anderson would be traveling through the country from which he had been stolen. Possibly his father was still there. He earnestly requested permission to go with Anderson, but the mission

director, M. C. Sturdevant, regretfully refused because he was too valuable a teacher. So Jim had to satisfy himself with Anderson's promise that he would try to locate Sigabasa.

When Anderson returned, having traveled a thousand miles on foot, he brought the sad news that although he had made extensive inquiries, he found no trace of Jim's father.

The years that followed found Jim going from strength to strength. He was the first to lead a group of Solusi students to the outskirts of Bulawayo, where he conducted meetings and baptized many converts.

In 1911 Jim decided he could spread the message faster by selling books than in any other way. So, securing some from the mission, he began selling in Bulawayo. He was promptly imprisoned for selling books without a license.

After being released, he discovered that a license would cost fifty dollars. He promptly requested the leaders at the mission to obtain a license for him. But money was scarce, and they hesitated to take such a step before knowing whether Jim would succeed as a colporteur.

Jim promptly wrote that if they would not buy him the license, he would sell one of his cows and pay for it himself. He would also buy a donkey to carry his books. When one remembers how Africans treasure their cattle, how in those days they would almost starve rather than sell a beast to buy food, the strength of Jim's resolution is better appreciated. Respecting this determination, Elder W. C. Walston, director of Solusi at the time, talked to the native commissioner. As a result Jim was given his coveted license at no expense to the mission. Naturally he was delighted, and wrote, "I received your letter, and read it, and was very glad to hear the way was opened for me to get a license to canvass. The letter seemed to come from Jesus. The work of selling books is very great, and I love it as I do my food, and want to canvass the whole of Matabeleland."

A little later he wrote, "There is only one thing that gives me pleasure, and that is the Bible. I read and study it hard

every day." In less than a year, he sold a thousand Bibles, books, and pamphlets.

When Jim showed signs of tuberculosis, letters were written to all the missionaries in Rhodesia, asking them to pray for his restoration. They did, and he was healed. On one occasion when Jim heard that Solusi was having a Week of Prayer, he persuaded some of his Bulawayo friends to go to the mission with him. Five were converted and joined the baptismal class.

The depth of Jim's dedication can be judged by his words to H. M. Sparrow: "O *Mfundisi*, I greatly enjoy my work. I do not care if my wife and children cannot come here. I will stay and do God's work."

Perhaps Jim's greatest triumph came sometime around 1904 when J. C. Sturdevant directed the mission. A European missionary of another denomination stopped at Solusi one night and heard Jim preach. A fortnight later the head teacher of this man's mission arrived at Solusi to spend the night with Jim and his family. This teacher had been sent to lure Jim away. Jim was told that if he would join the other mission, his salary would be tripled. Jim studied with this man all night, and by sunup he had another convert.

It is unfortunate that Jim's life story cannot end on this note. But it would not be complete. Somehow, in his old age, he came to feel that he was not being treated fairly, and retired from the work to live in Zambia. There are indications that he became actively involved in politics. But before he went too far, his eyes were opened, he turned around, and once more went forward with God's people. Toward the close of 1923 he was rebaptized and from then on threw his considerable influence upon the side of truth and right.

The lad named Summer had traveled a long road, from being the slave of a Matabele *induna*, or headman, to becoming a servant of Jesus Christ. The thousand converts he won will be looking for him when the saints of God unite to sing the song of Moses on the sea of glass.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Strange Providences

THE EUROPEANS living on Solusi missed their homeland fruits. There was not even much local fruit. A visitor once remarked, "Rhodesian fruit consists of three parts—the peel, the pit, and the pucker."

Although Elder Mead, and other directors who followed him, set out many fruit trees, few survived long, because of two handicaps: a lack of water during the dry season, and the unceasing activity of the white ants, otherwise known as termites. Nothing belonging to the vegetable kingdom was safe from their voracious jaws, and the missionaries suffered constantly from their depredations.

The mud-and-pole buildings were speedily riddled by the insects because the builders of those days had not yet learned the art of antproofing. Poles supporting roofs seldom lasted more than a few months. Boys were regularly sent into the orchard to inspect young trees and do their best to prevent the ants from chewing at the bark.

On one occasion the activities of the termites brought embarrassment to Elder Anderson. One evening while on safari he fastened his trousers to a tree limb over his camp cot. During the night a wind sprang up, and the trousers were blown to the ground. When he woke in the morning, he found that one leg of this essential garment had been eaten off near the thigh. Fifty miles from home, he was fortunate to be traveling with people who were not too bothered at his appearance.

Almost from the time of their arrival at Solusi in 1899, the number of new recruits who had come with Elder Mead

began to diminish. Miss Starr could stay only three months. The Lloyds left the station to take up mission work in South Africa before returning to the United States. Next, both Dr. and Mrs. Green contracted malaria and had to leave Rhodesia and, ultimately, Africa. Albert Chaney, stricken, fled to the south, where, in the pleasant province of Natal, he recovered his health and gave several years' service to mission work among the Zulus.

With every departure, an increasingly heavy burden fell upon the shoulders of those who remained. By the beginning of 1901 only the Andersons and Meads remained at Solusi. No wonder Mead wrote, "Send us help, and send it at once."

In October, Mead left the mission to attend an important conference at the Cape. Two weeks later the mailbag arrived as usual from Bulawayo. In it were two telegrams, one for Mrs. Mead, and one for the Andersons. Anderson opened his telegram and read:

"Elder Mead died of apoplexy.

Break the news gently to family.

"J. V. Willson"

This tragic message from Kimberley was not easy for Anderson to deliver to the stricken family. Mrs. Mead collapsed, and it seemed for a few moments that her heart might fail under the terrible shock.

A letter arrived the following week with details of Mead's death. In order to save money for the mission he loved so dearly, he had purchased a third-class ticket for his train trip to Cape Town. As his train neared Mafeking, it passed through a heavy tropical storm. Riding in a leaky carriage, he became soaked to the skin. Then, during a ride of several hours to Kimberley, he suffered a severe chill, which rapidly developed into pneumonia. By the time the train reached Kimberley, Elder Mead was a very sick man.

Loving friends carried him to the house of J. V. Willson, where he was tenderly and skillfully treated by a nurse,

Amelia Webster. At the end of the week, a doctor pronounced him cured, and no longer continued to visit him. Elder Mead packed his suitcases preparatory to taking the Monday train for Cape Town.

Sunday night the doctor felt impressed to visit his patient. Miss Webster informed him that Elder Mead had apparently suffered a slight stroke. All night long the nurse sat by his bed. Mead was delirious and talked incessantly. Sometimes he would be back at the mission farm, driving the oxen. About 4:00 A.M. on October 7 he suffered another stroke, and died before the doctor could arrive. He was buried in the Kimberley cemetery, not far from Mrs. Armitage's grave.

Saddened by this tragic event, Anderson wrote, "When he left us, he was unusually well. Why he should be taken away at this time we do not know. We can only say, 'Thy will be done.' Our mission has lost an efficient superintendent. The cause has lost a devoted worker, and we have lost one who has been a father to us."

Elder Mead had ideas for the development of Adventist missions in Central Africa, and he was intending to lay his plans before the committee at Cape Town.

Word of Mead's death was cabled to Battle Creek. In his prayer during the morning service in the tabernacle on Sabbath, October 12, A. G. Daniells tenderly besought the heavenly Father to remember in His great mercy the bereaved companion and children of Brother Mead.

Although Mead's service in Africa had lasted only two and one-half years, he had established the work on a firm basis. In a moving letter to Elder Spicer, his aged mother wrote, "My heart aches for the dear ones left behind, and for the work he loved. . . . They felt it their duty to go, and I would not hold them back. I laid my sacrifice upon the altar of Africa then, and I have never taken it back, and I hope I never shall."

Writing to the Foreign Mission Board, Elder Anderson requested that Mead's plan be carried out. This consisted of

having two men and their wives at the home station where they would conduct a training school for workers to be sent out into villages to teach Christianity.

In conclusion he wrote, "I do not think we have asked much. So please give us all we ask. These workers should arrive here not later than April of next year." These words were written only ten days after the death of Elder Mead.

"Whom shall we send, and who will go for us?" was the question facing the board in Battle Creek. It was not possible to send all the workers Anderson requested, since other missions in Africa, Asia, the islands of the sea, and in South America were also imploring them for help. The missionaries available were too few to meet the needs. Because of this, for the next twenty years Solusi would have only two families, with sometimes a single worker to assist. Not until the 1920's would it again have as many workers as it had during the early days of Elder Mead.

God had His man ready. Melvin Sturdevant was an Adventist farmer in Alabama. One day, walking in his large field of corn, admiring his crop, he was surprised to see two black girls walking toward him. One of them said, "Our blood is upon you!" With these mysterious words they vanished as suddenly as they had appeared. What could it mean? Sturdevant wondered. He knelt right there among the cornstalks, asking the Lord to direct him and reveal to him what he should do.

Shortly after this, he read in the *Review*, of how Elder Mead had fallen at his post. Again he knelt in prayer: "If it be Thy will, let me go to Africa to take up Elder Mead's work."

Shortly afterward he received a letter from the General Conference asking whether he would be willing to go to Solusi and take up the uncompleted task left by Elder Mead. He replied that he, with his wife and young son, Jonathan, was ready to go immediately.

The Sturdevant family was met by Anderson and Elder

Mead's daughter, Lena, at the Bulawayo railway station on April 15, 1902. They had met the deadline that Anderson had set with the Foreign Mission Board.

Sturdevant went to work immediately. One day he was serving in the store when two girls who seemed strangely familiar wandered in. When he asked them what they wanted to buy, they mentioned trifling trinkets. As he was getting the trinkets from the shelf, it suddenly flashed upon his mind that these were the girls he had seen in his cornfield back in Alabama. When he turned to look at them more closely, they vanished.

Sturdevant told this story to his students at Solusi many times. One of those who heard him describe this strange experience was Pastor Isaac Xiba Nkomo, who recorded it in his memoirs. All his life Elder Sturdevant was convinced that two angels in the form of children had been sent to encourage him and his family to answer the call to Africa.

Melvin Sturdevant

WHEN MELVIN STURDEVANT, his wife, and 14-year-old son, Jonathan, arrived at Solusi, Elder Mead had been dead for six months. During this interval Anderson had been in charge. His wife, while devoting most of her time to the school, was also responsible for feeding, clothing, and training the orphan children. She also cared for 3-year-old Naomi, who had brought joy into the Anderson home.

Sturdevant found only Lena Mead and the Andersons on the station. Lena remained a few months, teaching in the school and helping Mrs. Anderson, then she left to be with her mother at Claremont School, near Cape Town.

When the Armitages had left to open a new mission at Somabula, they had taken ten of the orphans with them. This reduced the school enrollment. Anderson was assisted by Jim Mayinza. The son of John Ntaba also helped.

In 1902 a third worker joined the Solusi family. A South African who had just graduated, Claude Tarr, joined the mission to begin a long career of mission service. When he arrived in Bulawayo he was surprised to find no one at the train depot to meet him. Mail traveled slowly in those days, and word of his coming had not reached Solusi.

Fortunately, while wandering around Bulawayo, he met Chris Sparrow. Sparrow had ridden to town on a bicycle and now suggested that they share it between them on their way home. So Chris rode for a half mile, left the bicycle beside the road, and walked on. Claude then rode the bicycle a half mile beyond the walking Chris, left it, and began walking himself. They reached the mission at about 5:00 P.M.

Claude enjoyed farm work, and became Sturdevant's right-hand man on the farm. Tripp had described Solusi as a "desolate spot," while Mead said he would not give a dollar for the entire farm. But Sturdevant looked on it very differently.

Mead had said, "On this farm of twelve thousand acres there are probably two hundred acres worth cultivating; but it is scattered in small patches from one-half to five acres in a place." But Melvin Sturdevant saw great potential in the land. During the eight years of his stay at Solusi, the thirty acres of land being cultivated when he arrived increased to more than three hundred.

A man of wide vision, Sturdevant discussed with Anderson the lessons that preceding missionaries had learned about the land and the school. He assured Anderson that the time would come when, instead of a small school of twenty or thirty students, hundreds would be taught there.

So a program of farm expansion was begun. Acres of trees and stumps were grubbed out. Rocks lying just beneath the surface, waiting to break the plowshare, were removed. Bushes with vicious thorns were cut and burned. So year by year, the amount of land being tilled increased. Time after time the rains failed, but Sturdevant refused to be daunted. Having learned the principles of dry farming, he applied them to the Solusi farm. After every shower the soil was cultivated to hold every drop of moisture. In this way he was able to grow crops even in dry seasons. This method of farming paid off, even in years when the European neighbors reported partial or complete crop failure.

When rain fell, it often seemed that more descended upon Solusi than on the farms of adjoining white settlers. So noticeable was this that some farmers requested the mission to establish outschools near their lands, since the schools seemed to attract the rain. Many years when the school family met to pray for rain, their prayers were graciously answered. During good years, the mission stored up grain

sufficient to carry them through times of hunger.

Rain shortage was not the only serious problem facing the new director. Locusts were a perpetual threat to the farm and its products. In 1907, after he had been at Solusi for five years, Sturdevant described his feelings toward locusts:

"Before breakfast I went to the back of the field and, at the end of our peanut patch, just outside the fence, were the locusts as the sands of the sea. They will be in the field before night. I tell you, the heart of man trembles in this country. What is coming next we know not. Only we do know the Deliverer is 'even at the door'!"

He watched with pity as Africans, threatened by locusts, flocked to the *kopjes*, or small hills, with beer and other gifts for Satan, pleading for his mercy, and begging him to remove the plague. "Last year," Sturdevant wrote, "it was not the locusts but the drought. Nevertheless we had the best crop of any year since our arrival, and having a good market this year, we have come out quite well. Our mission is out of debt, and to the present we have all our needs supplied."

The next year the government came to the rescue. "In the beginning of the planting season, locusts lay all around us as the sand of the sea. But the government furnished all the farmers with spray pumps and poison needed to destroy them. The boys and I went to work on it, and we destroyed twenty-seven swarms—twelve swarms more than anyone around us," Sturdevant wrote.

As the amount of land under cultivation increased to three hundred acres, it became possible to grow a thousand bags of maize in a normal year. In this mechanized age, it is difficult to comprehend the toil and sweat required to produce such results. Day in and day out, Sturdevant and Tarr were in the fields, plowing and planting, cultivating and reaping.

In 1905 the Andersons, the only ones of the original missionaries to Solusi to remain there over the years, left. Following a furlough Harry and Nora, with baby Naomi,

piled their household belongings in their wagon and went north. Crossing the Zambezi River above the famous Victoria Falls, they proceeded northeast to a place where they founded the Rusangu Mission.

To replace these experienced workers, the South African Union sent G. A. Ellingworth, a graduate of Claremont Union College. Ellingworth made the school his principal field of activity. The following year J. V. Willson arrived. Both of these newcomers would give strong assistance to Elder Sturdevant.

About this time a government educational inspector visited the school. Asked how Solusi compared with other schools, he replied that it was one of the best training centers in his jurisdiction.

Soon Willson took a short leave to the Cape, where he married Jane Page and brought her back to Solusi to share the burdens with him.

The burdens would have been far heavier had it not been for the love, loyalty, and devotion of the Africans. Mrs. A. M. Sparrow comments on the feelings of those people toward the missionary in her time. "There was nothing but contentment and admiration in their attitude. I feel they would have laid down their lives to protect us."

An incident that took place in Rusangu in the early days served to illustrate this point. Harry Anderson was often away from home for weeks at a time, an aspect of mission life that Mrs. Anderson found very trying. One afternoon, Mrs. Anderson, who frequently suffered from malaria, felt the fever coming on. Mrs. Willson urged her to stay in the Willson home during the night, but she said it would not be necessary. She had a revolver some friend in the States had given her for snakes or dangerous animals. If she felt a need for help during the night she would fire a shot.

About midnight the Willsons heard a shot. Dressing hurriedly, they rushed to the Anderson house. As they neared it, they became perturbed to see a crowd of Africans

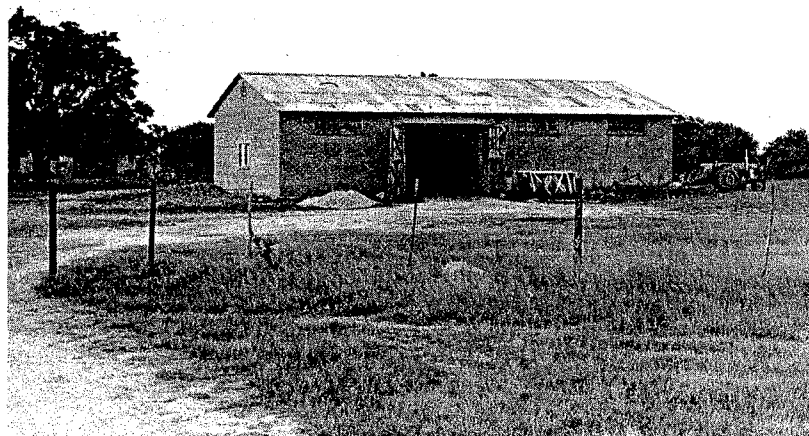
surrounding it, bare shoulders and assagais glistening in the moonlight. Were they going to attack the missionary?

One of the teachers stepped up to the Willsons to explain. They had heard the shot and had hurried to protect Mrs. Anderson, thinking she was in danger. They left when they learned she was safe. The Willsons found the patient sitting by a fire, suffering a severe malarial chill. Mrs. Willson stayed with her through the rest of the night. Mrs. Anderson had not fired the shot. The one who had was never discovered.

The farm prospered under Sturdevant. When R. C. Porter, president of the South African Union, visited Solusi a few years after Sturdevant became director, he and Sturdevant visited two hundred acres of corn ready for harvesting. Walking through the cornfield, Porter pulled down three ears. Each measured nine inches around and was a foot in length. The farm owned 145 cattle, mostly used for plowing. It is not surprising that Sturdevant was able to expand his outschool program and take in many more boarding students.

The momentum of the farm program inaugurated by

The barn built by Elder Sturdevant served the mission for many years.



Sturdevant carried on for several years after he left. In fact, Solusi became so flourishing that it was able to give him \$500 to help establish a new station. It also supplied five trained teachers.

The farm program reached its peak in 1913, after which it declined slowly for several years.

In 1913 a government inspector visited Solusi and made the following report: "The crops raised were 1,550 bags of mealies [shelled corn], each bag holding 200 pounds of grain, 220 bags of monkey nuts [peanuts], ten tons of sweet potatoes, half a ton of beans, and a small quantity of lemons and guavas. The stock carried was 224 cattle, 6 mules, 1 horse. There were sold during the year 1,258 pounds of butter, and 188 dozen eggs." The inspector went on to ask, "Has it [the mission] established a system of useful industry for the natives?" His answer followed. "The fifty-seven natives housed on the farm have been the instrument by which this result has been produced. They were made to work steadily and they plow, harrow, and cultivate with modern instruments and on modern methods. The great fields of mealies I saw were in excellent condition."

In closing his official report, the inspector wrote: "I have dealt with this mission in some detail partly to place on record the good work it is doing, and partly because it seems to me the type of mission that should be encouraged in this country."

All inspectors' reports were not so favorable. Sometimes there were misunderstandings. One inspector, who wrote critically of Seventh-day Adventists, confused their work with that of the Apostolic Faith Mission. Another man, more knowledgeable, hastened to inform the administrator of the mistake of the previous inspector:

"To my personal knowledge, the members [SDA] are hard working and sincere. The Solusi Mission and the mission on the Lower Gwelo reserve have been very helpful. The latter has rendered great assistance in supervising the

dipping of the native cattle. Generally, their policy is to teach the natives to acquire industrious habits."

Twenty years had passed since the day when Elder A. T. Robinson made his historic visit to Cecil Rhodes. At that time he emphasized the fact that Seventh-day Adventists intended to establish a mission station whose program would be different. They would teach improved farming methods. To make this possible, they would import the most modern farm machinery from the United States, and teach the Africans how to use it.

These promises were kept in the days of Melvin Sturdevant.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Sowing Time

OF THE many missionaries who worked at Solusi through the years, few had a more optimistic outlook than M. C. Sturdevant. Looking back over the long trip from Alabama to Rhodesia, he recalled the journey with pleasure. The day after his arrival at Solusi he wrote to friends in the homeland: "We could not be more contented and happy in the Lord than we are this lovely morning. So glad we are here. And truly we could not have had a more pleasant trip—no storms, no roughness, no sickness except for a few days on the sea. From the first it was a most pleasant trip."

As he looked around and saw almost limitless possibilities for service to the African people, he expressed his hope in these words: "I want to be found here when my Saviour comes, whether in the grave or caught up alive. O glorious thought! Would that the people at home might wake up, and stir themselves, get out in the work, and grow up in the Lord. Jesus would then soon come."

Shortly after Sturdevant's arrival, the Andersons left for the Cape. They had been on the mission alone, and were in dire need of rest. Anderson was happy to place responsibility for the mission program in the capable hands of the Sturdevants.

It would be a mistake to assume that missionaries from overseas were carrying all the load. Solusi was still surrounded by Adventist farmers who arrived a year before Elder Tripp's party. The farms "Riverbank" and "Good Hope" were still in the name of Pieter Wessels, but were managed by the Sparrow brothers, Chris and David. The

regular attendance of these laymen to church services held at Solusi was beneficial, and on their farms they did all they could to spread the good news of the gospel.

As previously noted, the first baptism at Solusi was held on December 1, 1900, about a year before the death of F. L. Mead. Jim Mayinza had been the only one baptized. On the bright Sabbath morning of June 25, 1902, the entire mission family, joined by two hundred or three hundred spectators from surrounding kraals, gathered at the river for the second baptism. As the student body stood on the bank of the stream singing appropriate hymns, the twelve candidates were led into the water one by one and baptized by Elder Sturdevant. That same afternoon the first Solusi church was organized with a membership of twenty-nine. Elder Sturdevant was chosen as first elder, and W. H. Anderson, as deacon. Eight years had passed since the arrival of the first missionaries, and these were the first fruits of their work for God.

Toward the end of 1902, a dark cloud of sorrow settled over Solusi. Fourteen-year-old Jonathan Sturdevant took to his bed with a high malarial fever. Holding rigidly to the conviction that the use of quinine was wrong, his father refused to make an exception in the case of his son.

The days dragged on while Jonathan tossed with burning fever. In spite of all the hydrotherapy treatments administered, the boy wasted away to a virtual skeleton. His sufferings were so intense that death, which came on February 10, 1903, was a welcome relief. He was buried beside 12-year-old George Byron Tripp in the Solusi Pioneer cemetery.

Five months later Elder Sturdevant wrote to the editor of the *Review and Herald*: "There is much fever among the children, but God has blessed our water treatments to the recovering of all without a drop of quinine. The natives outside our station say there has never been so much fever in one season. I believe our people must wake up to the importance of simple treatments without drugs."

Church membership increased slowly during the first decade after the formation of the Solusi church. Some names had to be dropped, as individuals slipped back into heathenism.

The school enrollment also grew slowly. The number of boarders during this period never exceeded fifty. It was not until near the close of Sturdevant's term as director that it increased to nearly one hundred. The number of boarders was largely influenced by economics. When crops were abundant and storehouses overflowing, it was possible to accept more boarders. But when drought and locusts reduced the available food, fewer boarders could be cared for. This was one reason why Sturdevant was eager to grow as much food as possible on the mission farm.

With many Africans flocking to church every Sabbath, it became evident that a larger building was needed. When the minister laid the problem before his members, all agreed that the time had come to build a new—and termite-proof—church. During the winter of 1905 they burned eighty thousand bricks. They hoped to get their edifice up before the coming of the rains.

Not being a builder, Sturdevant feared he might make serious mistakes putting up the church. So he earnestly prayed for divine guidance before setting to work. After a building site, forty-four by twenty-six feet, was measured out, cement foundations were poured, and then work begun on the walls. More than once, as the walls went up, Sturdevant was forced to cease for the day when strong winds made it too dangerous to continue. But the task went forward steadily.

Schoolgirls and African women spent many days putting down a typical earthen floor made of earth from anthills. Their work was excellent, and the shiny red floor brought real pleasure to the beholders. At last the building was ready for dedication.

Elder G. A. Irwin, a former General Conference presi-

dent, arrived just in time to participate in the service. When he learned that it had been supervised by a man who had never done carpentry work, he was surprised. He was even more surprised when told that the total cost of materials had not exceeded \$75. This church would be used for nearly twenty years.

Elders Irwin and Sturdevant spent long hours discussing how the gospel could be carried more effectively to vast areas where the church had no representatives. At the time there was only one Seventh-day Adventist mission in Malawi, one in Zambia, and two in Rhodesia.

With many other missionaries, Sturdevant longed for the ability to preach in the vernacular. And he felt that he should be able to speak in not one, but all the prevailing languages around Solusi, of which Makalanga and Sendebele were chief. Fortunately these dialects had many similarities.

Four years after arriving at the mission, Sturdevant wrote, "I freely admit that it has been a hard task for me to wrestle with three languages at once, but now I hope soon to be preaching to the natives in their own tongue. Oh, my heart longs to speak to the people in their own tongue and face to face. I can talk to them in private conversation, and be well understood, but I fear to preach in their language."

As Sturdevant faced the local members Sabbath after Sabbath, he could not forget the thousands, even millions, of Africans in every direction who had never heard the name of Christ. He wrote of his burden to Elder Hyatt, who was in charge of the work in Southern Africa, asking whether it could be arranged for him to make a trip north to try to find a suitable site for a new mission.

Elder Hyatt was sympathetic. He promised to come and take charge of Solusi himself while Sturdevant was away on his exploring expedition. Hyatt's wife, Sadie, would spend the time at Somabula with her brother, Frank Armitage.

Just before leaving on his long journey, Sturdevant told the boarding school students what he was planning to do,

and invited them to find some way to raise a few dollars to help open up a new mission.

Taking the train from Bulawayo to Victoria Falls, and then to Mission Siding, Sturdevant was met by Elder Anderson and taken to Rusangu Mission. After discussing his plans at length with Anderson, Sturdevant went on. But although he walked for hundreds of miles, and found several potential sites for mission stations, he was faced with the problem of who could go and occupy the territory. No one could be spared.

Back at Solusi, Sturdevant asked the children what they had done to raise money for the new mission. They led him to a garden they had planted and cultivated. Whatever grew there was to be their gift. When the crops were reaped, the products from this garden sold for about twenty pounds—\$100. This delighted the children as much as it did their beloved pastor.

Elder Sturdevant found his wife worn and tired. While Elder Hyatt had been busy teaching in the school, superintending the farm, and keeping the mission accounts, Mrs. Sturdevant had taken full charge of the boarding establishment. Everything called for her attention, even the extraction of aching teeth.

Before he left on his trip, Sturdevant bought a dog to protect his wife while he was away. This animal was quite a hunter, and roamed the bush in search of ant bears. When he found one, he would set up a howling that the boys immediately recognized. They would then go after the ant bear and kill it.

One day, hearing the dog's familiar howl, the students rushed to find the ant bear. It turned out to be a very young one, so instead of killing it they took it to the dormitory, where they debated what was to be done with it. Those in favor of sparing it prevailed, and the animal was placed in a box.

In the middle of the night, a boy who had voted in favor

of killing the animal got up and struck the baby ant bear a fatal blow with a stick. Contrary to the silence usually shown by this species, the animal sent up a sad wailing before it died. In the morning the boys warned the one who had killed the baby ant bear that in some way he would be punished for what he had done.

That morning several students, among them the boy who had killed the ant bear, went with a two-wheeled cart to fetch firewood. As they were riding along, this boy fell off the cart. A wheel ran over his head, killing him instantly. No wonder African superstition dies hard.

In 1910 the Sturdevants moved to a new mission, Inyazura, in eastern Rhodesia. But they left their mark on Solusi. During his term of service, a church had been organized and a chapel and dormitories and houses erected. Many trained teachers had been sent out. The farm had been developed to a high degree of productivity. Two years before he left this worthless(?) farm for which a former director would not give a dollar, Solusi could list \$13,497.95 in assets. Since there were no debts, this represented current worth.

F. B. Jewell, who went to Africa at the invitation of Elder Sturdevant, and of whom more will be said later, paid this tribute to his co-worker: "There are very few missionaries who have so greatly endeared themselves to the Africans of Rhodesia as he. He was a man of prayer. . . . He knew his Bible and his God. . . . He had his special places on the mission station where he was accustomed to retire for prayer. A well-worn path leading to these sacred resorts was evidence that he met his appointments with God. Without fail on Friday afternoon, after the toil of the week was over, and before the beginning of the Sabbath, he repaired to one of these places.

"Sister Sturdevant wrote us that in his last semiconscious state he was still remembering them [the African people], praying for them, and calling some of them by their names.

He loved to think of the black people as his sons and daughters, and he would have died happier if he could have been buried here in one of our mission cemeteries."

But it was not to be. Melvin Sturdevant died in the United States at the age of 68, ending his work as a faithful toiler in God's vineyard.

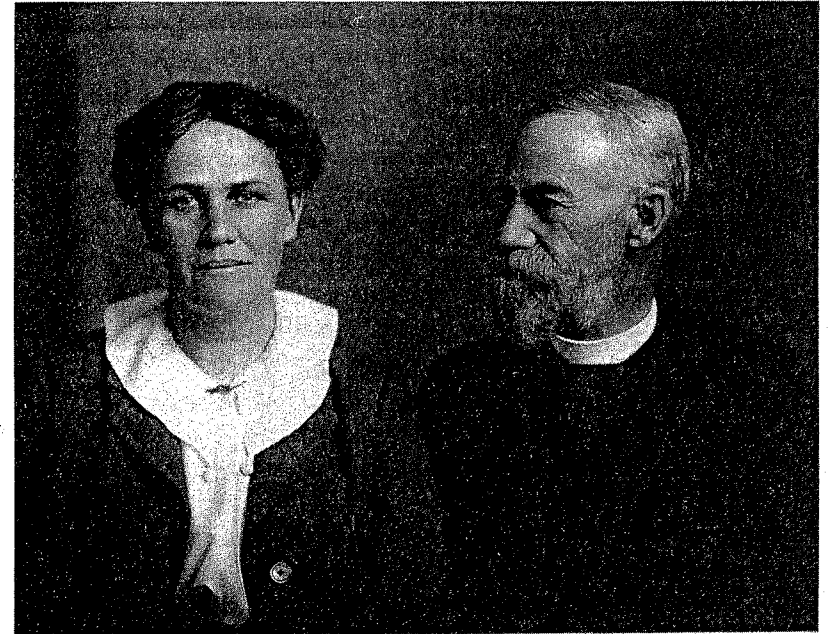
A Day on the Farm

WHEN M. L. STURDEVANT left Solusi in 1910, he was followed by a man of wide experience and extensive talents. W. C. Walston, whose term of service lasted nine years, arrived, with his wife and daughter, to take over a flourishing farm. The kraal was filled with scores of sturdy oxen. Every year between 1902 and 1911 had seen an increase in the amount of land put under cultivation.

Four years after Walston's arrival, World War I broke out, and the slogan "Food Will Win the War" began to be heard around the world. We have seen how, in 1913, the farm produced 1,550 bags of shelled corn. From that time on there was no increase in the amount of land put under the plow, but through careful planning and hard work bountiful yields continued.

Walston wrote a vivid description of everyday life on the farm in 1916 for readers of the *Review*, detailing the frustrations and rewards of a farm manager:

"The day's work begins just before daylight, when one hears the rattle of milk cans and buckets. The milkboys are going to milk. It would amuse our American farmers to witness the milking process here in Africa. The idea prevails that the calf must begin in order to induce the mother to give down her milk. Then the small boy who attends each milker takes off the calf and holds him until the good portion of the milk is taken, after which the calf is allowed to finish his breakfast at leisure. The cows do not always submit kindly to being milked. Sometimes a screen has to be thrown over their horns and tied down before they will allow of milking.



Elder and Mrs. W. C. Walston. The clerical collar, sometimes worn by Adventist ministers in past years, helped smooth the way in many situations.

"Soon after the milkboys are astir there is a good deal of shouting and cracking of whips. The ox drivers are inspanning for their morning's work. These long whips have a stock like a fish pole, and a lash nearly twenty feet long. The drivers crack them so they sound like pistol shots. A team for transporting is sixteen oxen; for farm work, less. We have three teams of oxen and our mule team, which are kept busy all the time. While the drivers are inspanning the foreman blows his whistle, and the whole mission family is soon astir. . . .

"It is planting time now (December). The teams are plowing, harrowing, and planting. Some of the white workers drive the planter, as it is difficult for the native to go in a straight line. The work of the morning goes on until seven o'clock, when the bell rings for worship and breakfast.

All come in, except those with the teams; they continue until eight o'clock, and then outspan until three o'clock in the afternoon.

"After breakfast the bell rings again, and the beginners have schoolwork until 10:15, when they are dismissed to take their turn in the field, while the older students come in. At 1:45 P.M. school is out, and the whole family prepares for dinner, which comes at two o'clock.

"'Who cooks the dinner?' someone inquires. This is done by the girls. . . . At three o'clock the bell rings for all to go to work again, which continues until sundown, when everybody comes in and an hour is spent in play. All have a good time, and are pretty noisy, but we do not mind.

"At seven o'clock the bell calls all the students in for night school, which is really but the preparation of lessons for the following day, except for the herdboys who are out all day with the cattle.

"They recite what they have learned on the veldt during the day, as they always take their books with them while they herd. At eight-thirty school closes, and at nine the silence bell rings. Quiet is supposed to reign until morning, though sometimes it takes more than the tap of the bell to induce quietness. This schedule is carried out through the whole year, with the exception of four vacations of two weeks each.

"We have our difficulties on these mission stations. Some of the stations are a long way from a repair shop, and it is necessary that there should be someone at hand who is an all-round workman, for when there is a break in some implement it would mean a long delay to send thirty miles for repairs.

"Here is one day's experience. The superintendent starts out with the planter. The foreman comes to him and says, 'Teacher, the calf that was sick is dead.'

"'Very well, take off his skin and bury the calf.' He reaches the field only to find that the driving chain that revolves the plates in the planter has been tampered with,

and the planter does not work.

"A small boy must be called to hold the mules while a return is made to the mission to find the lost section of chain. When it is found and adjusted, the planter starts, but gets only about halfway across the field when one of the plowboys comes running to tell the teacher that the plow is broken.

"Again the small boy holds the mules, while the teacher goes to fix the plow. Returning, he makes one or two turns, when another plowboy rushes up to tell him the disc plow has gone wrong. He spends thirty minutes setting it right, and then the work goes merrily on until something else is wrong. The natives have very little idea of how to use modern farm implements properly, and there are many breaks.

"We are all of good courage here at Solusi Mission, and are the recipients of many blessings in our work."

Struggle for Survival

THE NON-CHRISTIAN African villagers did not always welcome the missionary with open arms. It was convenient not to have to walk thirty miles to Bulawayo for medical aid. While happy to have a store where they could buy essential trade goods or barter their maize, they did not flock into the church. To accept the white man's religion was a step they were in no hurry to take. Particularly was this true of the older people. Baptismal classes grew slowly.

Sabbath after Sabbath, young men and women from Solusi walked out into the villages, conducting services in kraals as far as twenty miles away. During the meetings the old people would generally sit and listen, sometimes smoking their pipes, but making no response when invited to accept Jesus as their Saviour.

Elder Sturdevant frequently traveled far and near, looking for villages in which to put a teacher. Often after he had pointed out the advantages of having a school, the old men would shake their heads, fearing that the teachers might usurp their position of authority. But the young men were not always prepared to accept the negative verdict of their elders. They often informed their parents that if no school was provided, they would leave and go to Solusi.

Many boys from the villages did go to the mission. Realizing that if the young men left home it would deprive them of their labor at harvesttime, the elders often reversed themselves.

The number of girls attending Solusi increased year by year. Their parents' efforts to keep them at home were often

thwarted when they ran away to the mission. One determined mother who followed her daughter to Solusi and literally dragged her home returned a few days later with the girl. "I cannot keep my daughter at home any longer," she explained. "She cries all the time to go to the mission school."

Although the number of boarding girls increased, they were never to outnumber the boys. The missionaries discovered that girls were much more difficult to control than boys. As Sturdevant explained it, "Having always been slaves at home, when they break loose from the restraint they become proud and stubborn. But girls must have a share in the gospel too."

On Christmas Day, 1909, twenty-two young people presented themselves for baptism. To the surprise of the missionaries, two elderly widows also asked for baptism. They had faithfully attended baptismal classes and, although unable to read the Bible, had accepted Jesus as their Saviour. These two were the first fruits from among the older generation of Africans. When questioned, they said they could not let all the young people go to heaven, then be left out themselves. Since they were ready and had given up snuff, wine, and beer, and renounced the worship of other gods, permission was given, and they joyfully joined the twenty-two baptized.

For the first few years that Sturdevant operated Solusi, severe droughts forced him to limit the number of students. When the cycle changed and abundant rain fell, a larger enrollment became possible. Those who visited Solusi more than once noted the improvement. "When Mrs. Porter and I visited this mission one year ago, there were thirty-four students at the main station school with an average attendance of twenty-five in each of the four outschools. Now they have ninety-two in the main station, seven outschools with about the same average attendance. . . . As the result, we now have a church of eighty-eight members, including three white teachers." By this time Solusi had trained and sent out

twenty-nine teachers. Of course, they were not professionally qualified, but they knew God and did not hesitate to make Him known to others.

Walston felt that his work should not begin and end with the Africans. He and his wife visited Rhodesian planters living around the mission, and frequently left books and papers in their homes. Some of those people returned the visit and came to see Solusi. Walston's training as a nurse made him very popular. One afternoon a European neighbor drove onto the mission with his little girl, one of whose fingers had been bitten off by a dog. Walston treated the mutilated hand and brought relief to the child. Fortunately, the dog was not rabid.

For three years the Walstons and the Willsons comprised the entire European staff at Solusi. Then Raleigh and Lena Robinson arrived from the United States in 1914. They had left America expecting to go to a station farther north, but the call was changed to Solusi. Their arrival made it possible for the Willsons to go to Rusangu Mission to help the Andersons.

It did not take Walston long to realize that the Robinsons would provide solid, dependable help. They took over the school with the determination to make it the best in Matabeland, and they were successful. As word spread that Solusi had become a top-notch school, so many students flocked in that not a few had to be turned away.

In late 1916, when it was time for the rainy season to begin, the skies were cloudless. It was evident to the mission family that they were in for a dry year. It was time to pray. Night and day their prayers ascended, asking the heavenly Father for rain. A few days later the rain began to fall and continued night and day for two days. This being the first significant rain in nearly two years, everyone was happy. Walston wrote, "All nature is rejoicing and there is a smile on all faces. It does seem good to have no dust and a fresh look on everything. The birds are singing and the cattle are

running and playing. Is it amusing to watch the mules! They lie down and roll again and again in the wet sand. The natives are excited and are digging in their gardens. . . . We shall be very busy during the next two months getting in our crops."

Prosperous days returned to Solusi. The land yielded abundantly, and Walston reported having 4,000 bushels of corn in bags in his barn. Africans came from all directions. The price was high and advancing all the time, so Walston reported:

"You will be glad to hear that we have all of our indebtedness on the Solusi Mission paid off except for about \$400, and we shall be able to pay this within a month. We shall be glad to sing the jubilee song, and hope to keep out of debt. With a thousand bags of corn in stock, and prices high, I think we shall be able to do so. With plenty of food for the students, enrollment took another upward leap."

One morning shortly after his arrival at Solusi, Robinson talked to the students in assembly. He wanted them to understand that he had come to help them. He said that if there was any way he could benefit them, day or night, he would be glad to do so. He invited them to feel free to come to him with any of their problems.

Not long after this he had an opportunity to show that he meant exactly what he said. One of the students came down with pneumonia, complicated by pleurisy. Realizing that the student was very ill, Robinson consulted a doctor who happened to be passing through Solusi. The doctor assured him that there was no hope for the boy.

Robinson refused to accept the verdict. He took the youth to a room in his own home and began treating him almost nonstop. The boy's temperature soared to 105 degrees. Every evening Robinson knelt by the patient's bedside and prayed for his recovery. Those prayers were heard, and after ten days, an improvement could be seen. The boy's fever dropped, and before long he was able to return to school.

This incident made a deep impression on the students. One of them said to the missionary, "Now I know your words are good. When you said you would help us anytime, I said, 'I am going to watch and see whether he does it. Now I know you love the black man.'" This treatment of their black brother did much to establish the confidence of the students in their newly arrived teacher.

But the time came when so many fell ill at the same time that he could not save them all. The year 1918 is remembered for the terrible worldwide epidemic of influenza. More people died from the disease than died as a result of World War I. Thousands died in Rhodesia. One day five students were buried in the Solusi cemetery. Nine more were buried in a single week.

When the worst of the epidemic was over, Robinson himself came down with influenza. Careful nursing by his wife and Elder Walston helped him recover completely.

In 1919 the Walstons left Solusi on furlough to the United States. When they returned, they were assigned to a different place of labor. The Christopher Robinsons were appointed to fill their place. But since they could not come immediately, the H. M. Sparrows filled in temporarily. Raleigh and Lena Robinson remained at Solusi until 1921, when they left to open work in the Congo.

During the next decade Solusi was to have a number of directors. The postwar 1920's would bring many adjustments to the world, and Solusi would feel the effect of these changes.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

They Came and Went

ELDER AND MRS. WALSTON spent nine years at Solusi. In spite of the wartime shortages, Elder Walston continued to build on the strong foundations Pastor Sturdevant had laid. The mission became practically self-supporting.

The decade between the departure of the Walstons in 1919 and the arrival of W. B. Higgins and family in 1929 saw many workers come and go. None remained long. It is difficult to tell what position each worker held, since there were three commonly used titles: director, superintendent, and principal. The first two usually referred to the manager of the mission as a whole. The term *principal* referred to the individual in charge of the school.

While they were on furlough in South Africa, the Raleigh Robinsons' field of labor was changed to the Congo. With them went the Christopher Robinsons. To fill the vacancy at Solusi, Elder U. Bender and family were called. Bender found the physical plant in a rundown condition. The church Elder Sturdevant had built was in bad shape. The roof leaked and white ants had been busy devouring window frames and doors. Bender constructed a church so durable that it served the mission family as a place of worship for forty-one years, being replaced in 1961. The new building was in the shape of a cross, with a wing branching off from the pulpit on either side.

The Benders remained at Solusi for a little more than a year. For a time, H. M. Sparrow cared not only for the outschools but for the mission as a whole.

During his outschool safaris, Sparrow came in contact

with many interesting Adventist workers. One 20-year-old woman who was baptized at camp meeting returned home overflowing with missionary zeal and began working for friends and neighbors. Conducting Sabbath meetings on her own, she had a baptismal class of twenty-six.

A vital part of the success of the Solusi venture was the role played by African workers through the years. Isaac Nkomo arrived at Solusi from Gwelo in 1922 to remain for twenty years as teacher, pastor, promoter, and counselor. This man, standing in the forefront of the working force, was the first African to be ordained outside South Africa. Another man, Mark Mlalazi, devoted his life to working particularly for the young people. Clarence Moyo started some village schools, paying the teachers out of his own pocket.

These, and scores of others, were converts of Anderson, Mead, Sturdevant, Walston, Armitage, and others. From Solusi these Africans drew the inspiration that caused them to work among their own people.

Jim Mayinza also continued to develop in his own unique way. He introduced the older Solusi students to the thrill of personal soul saving, organizing a team that accompanied him to Bulawayo, where he rented a hall in the African township and held nightly meetings.

Remarkable success attended his work. H. M. Sparrow wrote, "The beauty of Jim's work is that he is getting some well-educated men into the truth, and we shall not have to spend much on them before they can become teachers."

One of Jim's converts was Gumbo Baleni. Baleni was the first African Christian in Rhodesia. He was converted to Christianity through the work of the London Missionary Society.

One night during a fearful storm, a Solusi student found refuge in Baleni's house. While enjoying the warmth of his host's fire, the student introduced Baleni to the Sabbath truth. It was soon evident that here was a man seeking

further truth. A few days later the student put Baleni in contact with Jim Mayinza. Bible studies followed, and as a result this man, his wife, sons, and their families, eleven in all, were baptized by H. M. Sparrow.

Before long, Jim was pleading for more helpers. As people in Bulawayo heard the message, they told their relatives and friends in outlying districts. Jim would then be called to go and teach them. They in turn would tell others, until an ever-widening circle made it impossible for one man to follow up all the interests. Jim wrote, "Oh, I wish I could cut myself into fifty pieces, so I could get to all those places and teach the Bible and the ways of God. . . . In the past four months one hundred and thirty persons have been baptized." Jim was ordained on August 27, 1922.

Among those who came to study at Solusi was Register Ndhovu, a member of a highly respected family. Thrilled by the Bible truths he learned, Register returned home and told his mother, who attended the next camp meeting. Hearing Jim Mayinza preach a moving sermon, she resolved that her son should be trained to know the Bible as he did, so she enrolled Register as a student for the next term. Before leaving the mission, she gave him this unique charge: "Now, my son, you are my egg. I am sending you to that mission to get all you can. A hen never forgets her eggs, but sits on them to hatch them. So when you come home, we will sit on the news and hatch it out just as a hen does her eggs."

In his capacity as outschool inspector, H. M. Sparrow realized how much better teachers could instruct if they themselves had adequate training. This led him to do a little self-examination, and he asked himself, Why not become a better-trained worker myself? In 1921 he asked the Zambesi Union Committee permission to go to the United States to study at an Adventist college at his own expense.

The committee made no promises, but agreed to keep his request in mind. Sparrow patiently waited, repeating his request in 1922, and again in 1923. Finally, in the spring of

1924, his request was granted with the understanding that he would be responsible for the total expenses, including two-way transportation for himself, his wife, and their 3-year-old daughter, Audrey.

W. C. Flaiz, the educational secretary for the Zambesi Union, had been living for some months at Solusi. He highly appreciated Mrs. Sparrow's work as a teacher. When he discovered that she had been working without salary, he took the matter to the union president. As a result, she was paid for the nine months' teaching at three pounds per month. Years later, looking back over their great adventure, she spoke of what a godsend that money had been. The Sparrows were the first workers from South Africa to seek education abroad. Upon their return Sparrow was director of Solusi for a time.

A short time before they were due to leave Solusi, the little daughter became ill and died in a few days.

On July 26, 1924, Pastor and Mrs. Sparrow boarded the S.S. *Ballarat*, bound for the United States. They would serve as trailblazers for many workers of various races who would follow in their steps.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Many Directors

F. B. JEWELL, a missionary on furlough in South Africa, was invited to serve as outschool inspector and teacher. He and his family reached Solusi shortly after the Sparrows left.

The Jewells, who played such an important role in Solusi history, left the United States in response to a call from M. C. Sturdevant, arriving at Inyazura Mission in 1913.

For several years they labored with the Sturdevants. In 1921 Jewell requested a furlough to the United States. Unfortunately, funds were lacking but the Zambesi Union promised to ask the division to supply money for a furlough the following year. However, it is apparent that they did not get a furlough until 1926, but they were at the Cape when the Sparrows sailed for the United States.

The Jewells entered heartily into their work at Solusi. Mrs. Jewell began a long career as teacher, with a salary of two pounds a month. There was hardly a subject in the curriculum that she did not teach at one time or another during the next thirty years.

Meanwhile, her husband traveled far and wide, inspecting schools. But the outschool work was rugged, and gradually his health deteriorated. Hoping to avoid a complete breakdown, Jewell requested an overseas furlough for 1926. The committee agreed, and the Jewells departed on what was to be their only American furlough during their forty-three years of service in Africa.

While they were away John van de Merwe, a recent graduate of Spion Kop College, an Adventist school in Natal, became outschool inspector until Jewell returned. Wanting

to lighten Jewell's load, the committee asked Van de Merwe to stay on as his assistant. But in spite of the rest he had enjoyed during furlough, Jewell's trouble returned. Continual exposure to the elements, and long journeys by bicycle and on foot, wore him down. In mid-1929 the Zambesi Union committee voted to place him on sustentation. He was 54 years old.

Fortunately, he did not stay on sustentation. Gradually he recovered his health, and no overseas couple put in more years of continuous service at Solusi than the Jewells.

In 1923 S. W. Palmer arrived at Solusi. When a director departed—as frequently happened—Palmer often took charge. W. C. Flaiz joined the teaching staff, and Evelyn Tarr took over the farm. Tarr was responsible for building the first dam at Solusi, the first of many futile attempts to solve the chronic winter water shortages.

Another family that served at Solusi were the Joseph Stearns. They remained three years. Stearns taught at the school while his wife served as normal director. In his history of Solusi Pastor Isaac Nkomo described Mrs. Stearns as "perhaps the best normal teacher who ever trod Solusi."

Mr. Stearns was mechanically minded and enjoyed tinkering with cars. In Bulawayo he found a number of ancient discarded vehicles that he hauled to Solusi one by one and spent many hours tinkering with. When the time came for furlough, he had eight cars in various states of disrepair occupying his back yard. Before departing, he hired a truck and towed the eight cars to Bulawayo all at one time, making an impressive procession along the dusty road.

The number of Solusi outschools, many of which could be reached only by rough tracks through the wilderness, continued to increase. The inspectors' visits to those faroff places were not pleasure jaunts. Jan van de Merwe described one such trip:

"With Elder Boger [president of the Zambesi Union], Elder Sparrow, and the writer as guide and dentist, we

started out on our outschool trip, leaving Bulawayo in Elder Boger's Dodge car on the afternoon of January 18. Sabbath, the nineteenth, we stayed at the Malungane outschool. Several teeth were extracted; the next day another seventy miles were done, which brought us to a school.

"That night the rain came down in torrents. Elder Boger, sleeping on the side of the tent from which the rain was coming, woke up and found himself in a pool of water because of a leak. The following day we did only twenty-five miles in eight hours because of the wet roads. Part of the time we spent lifting and digging the car out of the mud, carrying the goods waist-deep through the rivers, taking the carburetor off in order to haul the car through the river with oxen, and attempting to get rid of water in the gas tank.

"That evening we were welcomed by a company of about two hundred people at a place where Elder Sparrow was to perform a marriage ceremony. This was done under a large tree while it was raining. By this time all the food was soaked and spoiled, and we had to live on cabbage and tomatoes given us by the Africans."

Solusi grew, and improved facilities were added. But the great need was for someone who would devote, not one or two, but ten years to the upbuilding of the school. In response to this need, the General Conference found a man who accepted the challenge. In December, 1928, Elder and Mrs. W. B. Higgins sailed out of New York bound for Africa. Under their leadership a period of stability lay ahead, and Solusi would become a modern, thriving institution.

Water! Water!

ALMOST FROM its establishment in 1894 Solusi had been short of water during dry seasons. This problem had been so serious that it overshadowed almost every other. In normal years the average rainfall was approximately twenty inches. Coming evenly through the year, it could have been sufficient, but practically all of it fell during the summer, between November and March, leaving eight rainless months. By October the country was parched and brown. Boreholes had died a slow death. Grazing for the cattle was poor, and all except the largest rivers had ceased to flow.

To operate a school in such a situation, with five or six hundred students, as was done in the 1930's, was very difficult. Yet it was accomplished year after year. Available records indicate that only once was it necessary to close the school early. In a desperate attempt to prevent this, the mission hauled water from the Gwaai River, seven miles away. They sunk additional boreholes, but found no water. Encouraged by their experience with a dam built previously, they erected a second one.

If a normal dry season brought hardship to students and staff, it was vastly more disruptive when insufficient rain came during a so-called wet season. There is no record of any year in which rains completely failed. Between 1910 and 1964 the highest reported rainfall was in 1925, when forty-six inches fell. The lowest was 1947, with only eight inches falling.

It was bad enough when one year went by with hardly any moisture; two rainless years were much worse. Three years

of drought were a catastrophe, bringing the country to the verge of famine.

Over a period of years Rhodesia has become drier, particularly the western area. It has been suggested that the Kalahari Desert may be slowly advancing eastward. The first missionaries found large swampy areas at Solusi that have long since dried up. Seeing those many damp areas, Elder Tripp concluded that, even in dry times, it would be possible to raise crops, provided birds and locusts didn't interfere.

One of the first visitors to recognize the need for a dependable water supply was Dr. Kate Lindsay. At the time of her visit, in 1897, she donated a windmill on condition that a well be dug. Walter Mead helped dig that first well.

The first crops planted by Tripp and Anderson were smitten, first by drought and then by locusts. The rains came, but so late that no crops could be reaped before the group had to flee to Bulawayo because of the Matabele rebellion.

During Solusi's early years good crops were vitally important. Small crops inevitably meant a small enrollment. Not only was the farm expected to feed the students, but grain was needed to sell for cash. With this income teachers were paid and clothing was provided for the students. But unless there was sufficient water, whether produced by rain, rivers, or provided by dams, the mission program could not be carried out.

What could be done to provide water continuously? The very existence of the college was at stake. Everything depended on finding a satisfactory answer to the problem. The mission directors started by digging wells after the fashion of Bible times. Many of these turned out to be dry holes. The most successful borehole, sunk in the Lehumbe River valley, produced 140 gallons of water an hour. This, combined with other sources, was an excellent supplement. But it was a long distance from the mission, and had to be pumped continuously during droughts.

By far the most hopeful method of solving the water

shortage was the building of dams. Whereas hundreds of pounds were spent in digging boreholes, thousands were expended on dams. In 1927 Evelyn Tarr built the first one. When it became evident that this could not meet the needs of the growing school, it was decided to build another to hold 16 million gallons of water. When this was completed, it was optimistically hoped that it would solve the problem. Unfortunately, it did not. Other dams followed.

The experience of J. R. Siebenlist—who was at Solusi during the 1940's—was typical!

"Everything was new when we first arrived at Solusi, and when the rains came about six months later, in January, it had rained day after day until every creek was overflowing. . . . Nobody seemed to remember that the overflow needed to be watched, and we were all new missionaries, except Brother Jewell, and he was too sick to care. Well, the dam wall broke, all of our water for the year went down the river, and here we were with 550 students and no water. . . . At first we had a two-wheeled cart with three gasoline drums to carry water. It made four trips daily for the missionary homes and the student body. Every missionary home had a drum which was filled each day, or at least partially filled.

"The native teachers had to forage for themselves, and the students took baths wherever they could find water. The second year was really rough. For cooking and drinking purposes, we had a well near the girls' dormitory, and I would go and give each missionary family about two paraffin tins of water, morning and evening. . . . On Fridays I would go down to the Gwaai River with the truck and get about ten drums for water for the mission for Sabbath. Each dormitory got about four drums a day for cooking purposes, and each student would come with his small can or cup to get his drinking water for the day."

In 1951 it was voted to construct a dam on a tributary of the Lehumbe River at a cost of £3,000. This helped for a while, but when it became evident that something larger was

needed, another dam was built in 1958 to hold 34 million gallons. To circulate this water to all parts of the mission, a 96,000-gallon concrete reservoir was built on a nearby *kopje*, or hill, into which water was pumped from the dam.

When still another bigger dam was built two years later, it became a novelty for the mission family to see people driving out from Bulawayo to boat and fish on its waters. By this time the Solusi family had grown so that from 20,000 to 30,000 gallons of water were needed daily.

Three years later the Rhodesian Government suggested that yet another dam, with a capacity of 21 million gallons, be built directly beneath the power line so that low-cost power would be available to pump water to the mission.

With all these boreholes and dams, which, when full, held more than 100 million gallons of water, why was it that as the 1965-1966 drought fastened its grip ever more tightly over the land, there was not enough water to serve the mission family? The solution lay in one word—evaporation. Mathematically, it was simple for the dam builders to prove there would be no more water shortages. The dams held so much; the school needed so much per day, so 100 million gallons of water would last for three years. But evaporation reduced the water level in the dams by an average of eight feet per year. So the drought worsened, the hot winds blew and the sun blazed down over the land.

Rhodesian water laws also tended to prevent Solusi from getting the water it needed. For instance, a storage dam with a capacity of 56 million gallons was built on the Lehumbe River. But that river does not have its source on mission land and, according to law, anyone owning property on it could build a dam, providing it did not exceed fourteen feet in height.

After Solusi built the Lehumbe dam, five smaller ones were erected by farmers living higher up the watershed. This reduced the amount of water available for Solusi. There seemed to be only one solution—economize.

But even economy could not produce water. For this the missionaries depended on a higher Source, appealing again and again to their heavenly Father, who makes the rain to fall. Mrs. Higgins wrote, "When October and November came, it seemed as if we were always praying for rain." There were many times when those prayers were not answered immediately. There were others when they were answered spectacularly.

One such occasion was in August, 1965. The drought had lasted three years, and the first Sabbath of that month was set aside as a day of fasting and prayer. The school family gathered in the church and began to pray. Hardly had they finished when there was a heavy clap of thunder, and almost immediately rain was pouring down. Within a half-hour three inches of rain fell. Unfortunately, the parched earth sucked up the moisture so that very little water reached the dam, and thus only temporary relief was provided.

Toward the end of 1965 the staff had to decide whether to open school as usual in January. Some suggested it might be wiser to follow the example of the Salvation Army in announcing there would be no school until rain fell, thus avoiding the embarrassment of having to send students home, many of whom lived far away.

J. J. Blanco, Bible teacher at the college, urged the staff to move out by faith. The challenge was accepted, and the usual date set for opening the 1966 school term. At the same time, Elder Blanco sent word to some of his former congregations in America, asking them to join Solusi in praying for rain.

The day before the opening of school, the staff met and prayed earnestly for rain. Before sunset that very day rain fell in such abundance that there was plenty of water impounded behind the dam wall, and water even poured into the mission homes. Downpours continued for two weeks, during which time nineteen inches fell.

In September, 1964, at the beginning of the drought we have been describing, Dr. R. L. Staples, the mission director,

appointed a committee to study Solusi's water problem and suggest a solution. A memorandum sent to the division stated, "The conviction fastened itself upon a number here that if there is no way of providing adequate water for Solusi College on an economical, sound basis, it would be cheaper to build a new Trans-Africa Division college in a more favorable locality, and respectfully request that earnest consideration be given to this matter."

Providentially, at that very time, the Rhodesian Government stepped in and helped solve the problem with a plan to build a huge dam some ten miles west of Solusi, which would catch and impound more than 2 billion gallons of water. Invited to hook up with this dam, Solusi would be charged £850 (about \$2,000) per year for all the water it could use. The mission would have to lay seven miles of pipe costing in the neighborhood of £13,000.

Recognizing that a hookup with Mananda Dam, which was erected in 1968, would prove far less expensive than moving the college, it was voted to accept the government's invitation.

In 1965 the Trans-Africa Division received an overflow Thirteen Sabbath Offering of \$95,000, all of which was channeled to Solusi College. Some was used for improvement of library facilities; the balance paid for laying the pipe that became Solusi's lifeline.

W. B. Higgins

PASTOR AND MRS. W. B. HIGGINS and their 5-month-old daughter arrived at Solusi in January, 1929. This date closed a decade marked by many comings and goings. Eight men held the position of director during that decade. Fortunately they had been able men, ready and willing to devote their energies to the ever-expanding mission.

It was equally fortunate that the General Conference had been able to find a man with such qualifications as those possessed by Elder Higgins who was ready to devote himself wholeheartedly to strengthening the school. His wife was to play an extremely important role in developing educational opportunities for African women and girls.

When the Higginses arrived at Bulawayo, the rainy season was at its height. The morning after their arrival, E. C. Boger, president of the Zambesi Union Mission, took them in his car to Solusi. When they reached the Gwaai River, some seven miles from their destination, they found water flowing deeply and strongly over the drift, or ford. Was it rising or falling? For a while it did not seem to be doing either. While they hesitated, another car arrived. In it were Jan van de Merwe and his wife. They also were traveling to Solusi.

The two couples were determined to cross, either in the cars or on foot. The cars, however, could become stranded in midstream. Should more rain fall, it might become impossible to cross at all. So Higgins and Van de Merwe took off their shoes and socks, rolled up their trousers, hoisted their wives onto their backs, and started across. Fortunately, the

Higginses had left their baby with Mrs. Boger.

In midstream, Bill and Ruth Higgins started laughing so hard that he lost his hold and dropped her into the water. She emerged on the far side soaked through, with water sloshing out of her shoes.

By this time it was evident the water was receding. Soon the cars were driven across, and they traveled the last miles to Solusi.

The new missionaries' future home turned out to be a cheerless place. Its ceiling was moisture-stained muslin tacked to the tops of the walls and sagging sadly. When a door was opened, suction caused the cloth to swish up and down, dropping clouds of dust everywhere. In one corner of the kitchen stood a wood-burning stove; in the other, a zinc-covered table. There was no sink, no refrigerator, no pantry. Nor was there any room resembling a bathroom. That "little house" stood in a distant corner of the back yard.

Four other families were living at Solusi. The H. M. Sparrows occupied a house near the church. He was president of the Rhodesian Mission Field, but did not move into permanent quarters at Gwelo until 1931. Mr. and Mrs. Roy Mote were engaged in schoolwork, as were S. W. Palmer and family. The Palmers later moved to Gwelo and Inyazura missions.

The Jewells were still at Solusi. Although Elder Jewell went on sustentation that same year because of ill health, he was not a man to sit idly by, waiting for something to turn up. Realizing that the poultry department was sadly neglected, he requested permission to take over. That would be only a temporary job, he believed, until he regained his health.

Although a trained nurse, Jewell had not worked much along medical lines. Now he decided to become a medical missionary. Not since the days of Drs. Carmichael and Green had there been a full-time nurse at Solusi. In his quiet way, he began to treat the sick, using the back porch of his house as a dispensary. Meanwhile, Higgins was busy expanding the

school program. One of his principal goals was to make the courses practical, enabling students to gain useful skills.

The main reason why an industrial program was not inaugurated in the 1920's was because of the continual staff turnover. Now the time had come. Elder Higgins borrowed a printer from the Malamulo Press in Malawi, and soon a flourishing printing business was underway. This industry would continue for nearly twenty years.

Other practical subjects were added or improved one by one: blacksmithing, carpentry, agriculture, metalwork, clay modeling, brickmaking, animal and field husbandry, dairy farming and poultry. Students had plenty of practice when it came to building construction, for new buildings were going up continually. Before many years had passed, students from Solusi were found all over Rhodesia, earning their living by the use of the practical skills they had acquired at the school.

During Elder Higgins' early years, the entire world was engulfed in the great depression of the thirty's. Thousands of institutions closed for lack of funds. Over a four-year period, general mission budgets, including Solusi's, were cut no less than 40 percent. Under these conditions, how did Higgins manage to keep things operating?

For one thing, he saw to it that the industries paid their way. Also, enrollment increased steadily, thus bringing increased funds from school fees. An even more important and steady source of funds was government aid. Educational inspectors visited Solusi and wrote glowing reports to their superiors in Salisbury.

As early as 1930, when Higgins had been at Solusi less than two years, an agriculturalist for native education spent a number of days there. Later he wrote Higgins: "I have visited missions all over Rhodesia, and it is my opinion that Solusi Mission ranks with the best in the work of the advancement of the kingdom and the Christian development of the Africans."

A woman inspector called at Solusi. After her visit she remarked, "If all the villages of Southern Rhodesia were like these, I should pack my boxes and go home. My work would be finished."

Elder Higgins soon recognized the need of a strengthening of the instructors in the village schools. Thus he began a training course for teachers in 1933. To help shape up a normal training course, he secured the services of Maud McEwen for a number of years. Teachers graduating during those years inevitably carried with them a noticeable amount of her infectious enthusiasm.

Word began to spread that Solusi was a school where education was skillfully imparted to its students. When 87 percent of its students sitting for examinations passed, there was another rush of applicants. They came in so rapidly that many could not be accepted.

In 1935 the Higgins family, now increased from three to four, went to the United States for furlough. To care for Solusi, Dr. E. M. Cadwallader was invited to divide his time between his work as educational secretary of the Zambesi Union and the interests of Solusi College. This plan was satisfactory, and the school continued to grow.

Second Term

THE END of 1937 found the Higginses back at Solusi. Elder and Mrs. Higgins had studied at the University of Maryland during their furlough.

Mrs. Higgins was deeply interested in the health and welfare of the women and girls. Shortly after arriving at Solusi during their first term, she began conducting classes for mothers, teaching them cooking, sewing, mending, and, above all, how to keep their families clean. The schoolgirls were enrolled in homecraft and baby-care classes. The teachers worked closely with Elder Jewell.

It was evident when the Higginses returned from furlough that if Mrs. Higgins were to continue to expand this home-management work, she would have to have a suitable building. While wondering how to solve this difficulty, Elder and Mrs. W. H. Anderson came to visit their old station. Mrs. Anderson, deeply interested in what Mrs. Higgins was doing, saw the need of a place to care for babies, and to help train mothers and mothers-to-be. One day she suggested to Ruth Higgins, that she write to Mrs. Leslie Trott in the United States, whose husband was a doctor and who was interested in African mission work.

When Mrs. Trott received the letter, she took it to an organization interested in such projects. As a result, a generous donation was sent to Solusi, and soon the Trott Baby Welcome Clinic was opened. This place was to prove a blessing to the school and community for many years.

For a time, while the Higginses had been on furlough, the Jewells had been on furlough at the Cape. While there, Elder

Jewell had studied everything he could find on obstetrics and mother and baby care. Shortly before the Higginses left Solusi permanently, in 1941, Elder Jewell began to do maternity work in earnest. This was to continue until his retirement in 1956. The man who was forced to go on sustentation in 1929 made a great comeback, came off the sustentation list, and contributed a great deal to Solusi.

While Mrs. Higgins busied herself in building up the women's and girls' work, her husband focused his attention on the school. In fact, he *was* the school, having been named director, principal, and business manager by the board.

In 1933 the training of teachers and ministers had begun in earnest. Both the normal and theological courses could be taken by anyone successfully completing standard three. During the thirteen years Higgins spent at Solusi, the enrollment rose steadily from 250 to 350. The increase was largely in the upper or professional courses. And just before Higgins left Solusi, he stated that during his thirteen years there he had seen 1,000 persons baptized, most of them students who had come seeking an education, but ultimately had found something vastly more important, the good news of salvation.

Solusi also became an important center for the conducting of institutes. Publishing and ministerial institutes were held, and nearly every year witnessed the holding of normal institutes, when teachers from surrounding village schools were called in for refresher courses.

Camp meetings were held annually at Solusi. Africans flocked in from far and near—some in donkey carts or ox wagons. Others came on foot, carrying their provisions on their heads.

With other Adventist schools around the world Solusi went Ingathering. In 1934 Elder Higgins reported that practically 100 percent of the student body participated. Vernacular Ingathering papers and envelopes were distributed to all. The girls, given territory near the mission,

returned at night, while the boys, going to more distant areas, remained out overnight.

Not much cash was collected, but students returned with a large variety of produce. When the counting was completed, it was found they had nearly £5 in cash, fourteen chickens, twenty-six eggs, one basket, and 1,250 pounds of six kinds of grain.

One crippled schoolboy named Jude, a victim of meningitis, who could only crawl about on his hands and knees, came to Elder Higgins, pleading, "I want to do something for the Lord's Ingathering."

"But what can you do, Jude?"

"I want to go to town and maybe I can do something," the boy responded.

So Higgins took him to town, placed him on a corner where many people passed by, and gave him papers and a can for offerings. When they opened Jude's can that evening, they found that it contained fifteen shillings (about three dollars), as much as had been solicited by the other four members of his band. Yet the largest coin was only sixpence, about a dime.

Camp meetings for African believers were held first in Malawi. Being successful, they quickly spread over Southern Africa. Solusi's camp meetings were usually held during the dry winter months to avoid the excessive heat of September, October, and November. Usually about thirty Europeans came from Bulawayo to enjoy the meetings. The four Solusi homes were hard pressed to find accommodations for all of these visitors.

In 1933, Elder H. T. Elliott, a General Conference secretary, preached to some 1,300 worshipers gathered under the trees. While he was leading up to a call for those willing to follow Christ to stand, a blind old heathen struggled to his feet, crying out, "*Mfundisi*, I want to give myself to Jesus." He was told to wait a little and he would surely have an opportunity. So when the call was made, he stood with

eighteen others. Taking a dirty old pipe from his pocket, he threw it on the ground, exclaiming, "I have destroyed my idol!"

An opportunity was given to bring an offering to the Lord. The people crowded forward with their gifts: maize, pumpkins, eggs, and other produce, as well as £39 (almost \$200) in cash. One old man who had a large family and was in very poor health gave all he had—one rather skinny ox. But he gave it gladly, so that someone else might hear the good news of the gospel.

On Saturday night groups of Europeans visited the various African encampments encircling the campus. Sitting around their small fires, the Africans began to sing hymns, and soon hundreds of voices were heard from all directions, praising God. The concert lasted far into the night, until finally the singers fell asleep around their campfires under the starry sky.

The high point of every camp meeting was the baptismal service. But this particular year the drought had been so severe that the candidates and their friends had to walk five miles to find an adequate pool. In spite of this, a thousand people gathered around the water hole that afternoon. Following a Bible study by Elder Ernest Marter, 122 persons were baptized.

On such occasions, the missionaries enjoyed a small foretaste of what it will be like when the Master of all says to His children, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

Golden Anniversary

WHEN THE Higginses left Solusi on coastal leave in 1942, they had already accepted a call to Malawi, where he was to become principal of the Malamulo Mission Training Institute. It was with regret that this couple left the place that had been their home for thirteen and one-half years. During those years they had seen 112 well-trained teacher-evangelists go into the field. At the close of his last Week of Prayer at Solusi, Elder Higgins could report that there was not a Solusi student above primary-school level who was not either baptized or a member of the baptismal class.

Pastor R. M. Mote, who had been president of the Northern Rhodesian Mission Field for five years, was called to succeed Elder Higgins. No stranger to Solusi, Mote had been on its teaching staff in the late 1920's. When the call came to him in late 1941, he accepted.

The Higgins family left a well-regulated, smoothly functioning school at Solusi, with a competent African staff headed by Pastor Isaac Xiba Nkomo. The European staff consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Bradley, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Cooks, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Garber, and Pastor and Mrs. F. B. Jewell. Bradley kept the complicated practical machinery of the mission functioning and supervised the building program, while his wife was in charge of teacher training. Mr. Cooks was farm manager, and his wife taught in the school. The Garbers, recent arrivals, trained African teachers and evangelists. The work of the Jewells has already been described.

Two other staff members were Rita Staples, who worked

in the business office, and Myrtle Hector, a teacher.

To relieve Elder Mote of many of the details of mission operation, and free him to care for the mission as a whole and push evangelistic work, the committee invited W. M. Webster to join Solusi as business manager.

Some of the industries that had been carefully developed over a period of time were proving to be no longer profitable. The dairy, a department in which the Zambesi Union committee was extremely interested, flourished. A reading of the college minutes causes one to smile at times at the little things to which the committee gave attention. For example, it set the price of dairy products. Milk was available at fourpence per quart; if skimmed, the price was sixpence per gallon. Butter cost one shilling and fivepence a pound, cream one shilling and sixpence per pint, and eggs one shilling and fourpence a dozen. At first these prices were higher in winter than in summer, but later on, the price was made the same the year round.

After staying at Solusi for a little less than two years, the Motes went to the Cape, then overseas. With Elder Mote gone, the committee faced another problem. The year 1944, Solusi's golden jubilee, was coming. Who could take charge? A request was sent to the Northern Rhodesian Mission Field for Elder C. E. Wheeler to act as director until a permanent one could be found. Since it would take some time for the Wheelers to make the move, W. R. Vail was asked to be acting director. At the same time, the committee requested the Southern African Division to place a call with the General Conference for a director-principal for Solusi.

Meanwhile, a committee that had been appointed to plan for the jubilee had not been idle. People who had taken a prominent part in developing the institution were among those invited. These included Elder and Mrs. W. H. Anderson, Elder and Mrs. Claude Tarr, and Elder and Mrs. W. B. Higgins.

Invited as honored guests were the governor of Rhode-

sia, Sir Godfrey Huggins, and his wife. African veterans who received invitations were Pastors Isaac Nkomo, J. S. Ngona, J. S. Moyo, J. N. Gama, and Stephen Ngwenya.

Elder A. T. Robinson, in his ninety-fourth year, wrote a letter describing his interview with Cecil Rhodes and the manner in which the land for Solusi was secured. This letter was read during the celebrations. Many other pioneer workers wrote their memories of the early days. Most of these were published in a special issue of the *African Division Outlook*.

The question was asked, Which year should be recognized as the jubilee? Did Solusi history begin with the arrival of the party from South Africa in 1894, or with the group sent out by the General Conference in 1895?

The mission had already celebrated two birthdays. The first, known as the fortieth anniversary, was held on July 26, 1935. Mrs. Higgins wrote a description of the reenactment of an incident that had happened years before: "A girl was sitting with other pupils in a little mud schoolhouse. Suddenly there was an interruption as an angry father burst into the room, grasping a rawhide whip. He began to beat his daughter while dragging her outside, where she received more painful lashings. Finally, she broke away, and darted for home, her dream of obtaining an education destroyed." Watching this drama, Mrs. Higgins realized how much Solusi had helped African girls during those forty years.

It was finally decided to hold the Golden Jubilee on July 26, 1944, fifty years after the Solusi farm had been pegged out.

When the day arrived, some 2,000 Africans and more than 100 Europeans were on hand. To begin the celebrations, W. H. Anderson drove a wagon pulled by sixteen oxen onto the campus. On the wagon rode Mrs. Anderson and Mrs. Jewell, dressed as pioneers. The wagon drew up at the grandstand, and the missionary wives were escorted to seats of honor.

Thus began a three-day celebration. Following the reading of a history of Solusi, messages and congratulatory telegrams from far and wide were presented. Appropriate remarks were made by a number of the visitors.

Next, everyone proceeded to the cemetery, where many African and European workers sleep. After prayer was offered, two of the mission children, Sharon Garber and Jean Fairchild, laid wreaths on the graves of the two Sparrow girls.

Lunch was served in a large tent pitched in the center of the campus. G. Start, an officer sent from Salisbury to represent the governor, spoke briefly on the contribution made by Solusi through the years toward the upbuilding of Rhodesia.

Later, there was a tour of the mission during which student guides led the visitors on an inspection of the various buildings and departments.

The three days of celebration were particularly memorable for W. H. Anderson, who had many memories of the hardships, pain, and poignant sorrows of the intervening years. But those memories only deepened his pleasure as he saw what the mission, once described as hovering near death, had become.

The evening before the Andersons were to leave Solusi, a knock came on the door of the home where they were visiting. Some people outside wished to see *Mfundisi* and *Nkosikazi*. A group of about twenty gray-headed men and women had come to bid farewell to their friends. One woman stepped forward and presented an intricately hand-woven basket to Elder Anderson. When he failed to recognize her, she told him she was an orphan he had saved during the terrible famine. Then another woman, who had also been from that same orphan group, presented a basket. Now a man came up to Elder Anderson and began speaking: "I am Molomo. My starving parents sold me to an African trader who tried to sell me to the missionary. *Mfundisi*

persuaded my master to give me to the mission. Do you remember that night when I stole some crackers and hid them under my blanket? You might have sent me away, but you didn't. Instead you prayed with me and taught me the right way."

Anderson remembered. That suffering boy had become a powerful preacher for God. Feelings of joy and sorrow mingled in Anderson's heart as he gazed into the faces of those friends of long ago and bade them goodbye.

The next morning Harry Anderson and his wife left Solusi for the last time. In one more year he would celebrate his own golden jubilee. He had given fifty years of his life in service to Africa. His was a name that would not be forgotten in the history of African missions.

Building Problems

THE 1944 celebrations at Solusi publicized the institution widely. The enrollment began to climb again, and so rapidly that the administration could hardly care for the influx. There was need for expansion on every side. The church was so crowded each Sabbath that it became necessary for the small children to meet elsewhere. The clinic was too small for the many patients who crowded in.

The time had come for standards seven and eight to be added to the school program. Elder C. E. Wheeler, the current director, appealed to the Zambesi Union for funds to provide housing for the Junior Certificate candidates. Since the committee was unable to authorize funds, it suggested the school request £500 of the government to get the building program under way.

The school's growing pains made it impossible to balance the budget for two or three years. M. L. Sanford, whose responsibility it was to control spending, found the trend too strong for him. He wrote the Zambesi Union Mission admitting he was unable to keep the school within its allocated budget.

Meanwhile, the invitation to be the director to guide the activities of Solusi reached J. R. Siebenlist in Iowa. Accepting, he and his wife and family sailed for Africa in 1945. Solusi was to be their home for eight years.

Siebenlist found many building projects only partly completed, but there was little he could do immediately. It would be another year before he would be appointed business manager.

Meanwhile, the Zambesi Union committee was eager that the new director be given an opportunity to get the school onto an even keel financially. As an aid to this, a special appropriation of £500 was voted. Although this appeared to be a generous amount, it was like the proverbial drop in the bucket when compared to the growing deficit.

When the mission's financial statement for the first six months of 1946 revealed a heavy loss, the committee realized that the situation was critical, but hardly knew how to grapple with it. At the end of that year Siebenlist was voted business manager, beginning on January 1, 1947. At the same time a carefully chosen finance committee was appointed to ratify all major school expenditures.

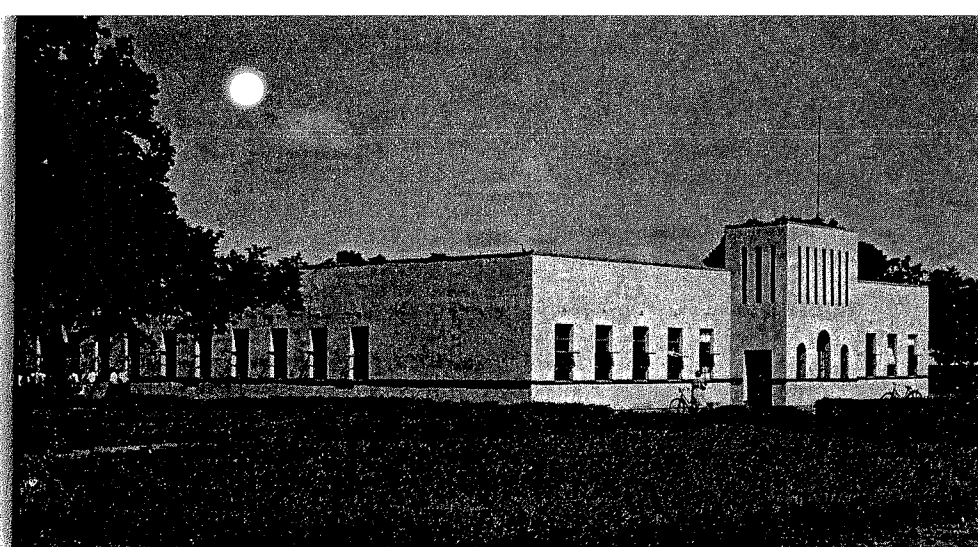
During 1947 expenditures were drastically cut in many directions—perhaps too drastically in some. But the members of the union committee soon realized that in Elder Siebenlist they had a man who knew how to handle money. As a result the finance committee was disbanded.

The year 1948 was a relatively prosperous one for Solusi, partly because of the ever-increasing enrollment, in spite of increased school fees. That year, Siebenlist reported an enrollment of 450 students; 100 applicants could not be accepted for lack of room.

The first Youth Congress conducted in the Zambesi Union was held at Solusi. Visitors on this occasion were Pastor L. A. Skinner, from the General Conference, assisted by Pastors Paul Sundquist, MV secretary of the Southern African Division, and Alfred Brandt, MV secretary of the Zambesi Union Mission.

The principal aim of the school continued to be the training of evangelists. Early in 1946 the need for someone to supervise the theological department was recognized, and Elder E. A. Trumper, from the United States, was appointed to this position. He became the spiritual leader of the school, and Solusi church pastor in August, 1946.

At the age of 72, after twenty years of teaching standard



The main classroom building at Solusi Missionary College.

six, Mrs. F. B. Jewell retired. But her husband, affectionately called Father Jewell, had no intention of quitting. He was still prepared to rise at any hour of the night in response to pleas for help, and pedal his bicycle along lonely paths to distant villages to attend women in childbirth. But most of his work was now done on the mission, because prospective mothers were urged to come to the maternity clinic to have their babies.

In one year, Elder Jewell rode 6,000 miles on bicycles, which explains why Elder Higgins had made it a practice to supply him with a new bicycle every three months.

Finally, in December, 1951, feeling it was time for the 76-year-old Father Jewell to retire, the union committee passed this resolution: "Recognizing the sterling services rendered by Brother F. B. Jewell over a long period of years as school nurse at Solusi, . . . and realizing his advanced age and impaired eyesight must of necessity now make the carrying of the heavy duties involved increasingly difficult, it was *Recommended* that Brother F. B. Jewell be honorably retired from those duties in the community as soon as a replacement can be arranged."

Voting Jewell's retirement was one thing; enforcing it was quite another matter. He loved his work and his people, and

they loved him, so he continued to carry on as if no such action had been taken. It was not until five years later, on December 16, 1956, that he decided it was time to cease his activities. During his final year of service, at the age of 81, he delivered forty-five babies, almost one a week. He later said that he had done the hardest work of his life between the ages of 65 and 80. Altogether this man delivered 1,350 babies at Solusi and vicinity. His life consistently revealed his deep and enduring love for his fellow men.

Father Jewell has never been forgotten at the Solusi school by its people, black or white. He sleeps today in the Solusi Pioneer cemetery, only a few hundred yards from the clinic where he labored so faithfully for twenty-five years.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

A College Is Born

WHEN J. R. SIEBENLIST took his overseas furlough in late 1952, he was granted one and one-half years of study leave. His position was occupied by a number of workers, perhaps as many as six or eight. When he left, the mission had £4,000 in the bank. On his return, in early 1954, he was dismayed to discover that every penny had disappeared, and that no merchant in Bulawayo was willing to grant further credit to an institution that already owed £4,000.

Such a situation could not be tolerated, and the union committee called Eugene B. Jewell, son of J. B. Jewell, to rescue Solusi. Working with Siebenlist, Jewell supervised the liquidation of the debts. Expenditures were drastically cut, and the debts were paid off. It was a gratifying day when this was completed, and there were £50 in the bank.

Before leaving the United States, Elder Siebenlist was notified that he had been appointed business manager of Helderberg College. To replace him at Solusi, Elder R. S. Watts, president of the Southern African Division, invited C. F. Clarke, who was on the Helderberg faculty, to accept the principalship of Solusi.

Elder Watts had very definite ideas of what he hoped Solusi would become. The time was ripe, he told Clarke, for Solusi to be upgraded to college level, offering a B.A. degree through a four-year theological course.

The new principal and his family arrived at Solusi on Friday afternoon, May 20, 1954. Saturday evening there was a farewell for the Siebenlists and a welcome for the Clarkes in the chapel, during which ceremony the keys were formally

handed to the incoming principal. By the time the Clarkes woke next morning, the Siebenlists were already far down the road, heading for Helderberg.

After a tour of the campus, Clarke returned to his office and listed the various projects calling for immediate attention: The teacher's house needed a new roof. The two new rooms of the girls' dormitory were without windows or doors. Water from the eaves of the girls' kitchen somehow emptied into the west room. The two new toilets that had been added to the kitchen had drains that ran uphill, so they didn't work.

Then there were the latrines. These caused Dr. Clarke the most concern. Standing on foundations baked hard as concrete, they served very well during the dry season. But when the rains came, he was told, the foundations turned to soft mud, incapable of supporting the concrete slab, brick walls, and roofs above them.

Apparently this had been a difficulty for some time, for one government inspector stated in her report that "Solusi is famous for its collapsing latrines." One of them came crashing down one day when a small boy was inside. In a twinkling he found himself surrounded by brick and asbestos. Although severely bruised, the lad escaped with no broken bones.

Florence Moline, Solusi's mathematics instructor, took a deep interest in the choir. She worked with them until they had mastered a complete Easter choral program. As their reputation grew, they were invited to travel widely throughout Rhodesia. They recorded a full hour's program at Broadcast House in Lusaka, and also sang live over the radio.

The choir sang twice at the meeting Elder R. L. Staples was conducting in a Lusaka suburb. From there they went on to Gitwe, then returned to Solusi, giving performances in Salisbury and Gwelo on the way. During that one tour they made twenty-seven appearances to full houses. Subsequently, the Solusi choir sang over the radio many times.

The following year's tour was even more ambitious. An enlarged choir traveled in Dr. Clarke's microbus while a passenger car carried members of the staff. They visited Malawi, where they made a triumphal trip of more than 3,000 miles, going as far north as Mzimba in the northern province, and singing at the court of M'belwa Nkosi ya Makosi, Nyasaland's sole paramount chief. The king did them the honor of receiving them in his royal robes.

But the triumphs of the choir did not eliminate Solusi's more mundane problems, such as water. One factor that compounded Clarke's troubles was the rapid growth of school enrollment, which demanded more water. During a drought the students dug holes in the clay at the bottom of the dam, then waited for seepage to fill their buckets.

As the drought grew worse, water became so scarce that some missionaries drove their families to Bulawayo, where they could rent baths at the railway station. The children had become so accustomed to bathing in dark-brown liquid that one of them, getting into the tub at the station, exclaimed: "Look, Mamma, look! I can see my toes!"

There were rare times when the country suffered from too much rainfall. One such year was 1954, when the rains fell so heavily that the drift on the Gwaai, seven miles from Solusi, washed out and the river increased in width by ten yards, so that it was impossible for cars or trucks to cross. Farm produce en route to market was driven to the river by truck and ferried across to a lorry that E. B. Jewell had driven around via Figtree.

In 1958, the project so dear to the heart of R. S. Watts was launched. At a meeting held in a Bulawayo hotel, a four-year college course leading to a degree in theology was laid out. Solusi thus became the first school in the East African Federation—composed of North and South Rhodesia and Nyasaland—to offer postmatriculation training. At first there were only a few college students. Four years later, a few weeks before the Clarkes left Solusi, the first gradua-

tion exercises were conducted.

Dr. Clarke knew that the success of the youthful college would depend largely on his success in recruiting teachers. When he learned that R. L. Staples, who had obtained a Bachelor of Theology degree in the United States, would soon be available, he sent a call through the division and secured his services for Solusi College. Staples gave strong leadership in the theology department.

A second urgent need was for an English teacher. As the Clarkes visited Helderberg on their way back to Solusi from furlough, Mrs. Clarke jokingly said to Mrs. Ruth V. Gorle, the English teacher there, "Why don't you come up and help us?" Mrs. Gorle answered, "I might." Back at Solusi, remembering this statement, Dr. Clarke phoned the division president, who promptly sent in a call for Mrs. Gorle. She responded favorably, and spent her last teaching years at Solusi, giving strong leadership in many departments.

Another teacher who joined Solusi in the mid-1950's was Lucille Haskin. Her contribution to the development of the college over a period of eighteen years was outstanding. Whether teaching English, history, or some other course, she went beyond the call of duty.

Another item Elder Watts had urged on Clarke was the erection of a new church. That such a building was urgently needed was evident to anyone attending services in the old church built by Elders Bender and Sparrow in 1922.

Consultation with an architect indicated that the cost would be about £22,000. Only a little more than £7,000 was available from all sources. At a fast-moving board meeting, plans and figures for the church were discussed at length. Since it seemed impossible to build what was needed with the money available, someone moved that £3,000 of this church reserve be reallocated to repairing and replacing existing Solusi buildings. The motion was carried.

Dr. Clarke was recording the minutes, and it took a few moments for the significance of this vote to sink in. Suddenly

realizing that if this money were spent for something else, it would be gone for good, he asked permission to build the church if he could do it with the money available. The board immediately rescinded its former motion, thus relieving itself of the responsibility of financing the new sanctuary. Dr. Clarke now had a task on his hands!

Many incidents regarding how the beautiful new Solusi church was erected could be told—of how Bulawayo merchants trimmed their charges for building materials; of how individual offerings poured in; of how two teachers, Kacelenga and Kapolo, volunteered to paint the roof. The cornerstone was laid in 1959, and two years later, dedicatory services were held, with Elder R. R. Figuhr, president of the General Conference, preaching the dedicatory sermon. Total building costs had not exceeded the money available.

For many years the mission used a generator to supply needed electricity. However, it frequently broke down, so it

The church and bell tower at Solusi.



was eventually decided that a hookup should be made with public power. But the nearest source was Figtree, seven miles away, and the cost would run to £500 per mile. But the decision was made, and on August 8, 1969, the hookup was completed, and lights came on all over the mission. Soon electric lights were shining at every street corner, and Solusi looked more like a small town than a country school.

The eight years that Dr. and Mrs. Clarke spent at Solusi were eventful. Elder F. D. Nichol, editor of the *Review*, visited Solusi and wrote, "Solusi College is in good hands." The building program went forward as new staff homes were erected for an ever-increasing nucleus of teachers. The secondary-school building, in the shape of the letter U, had its open end filled in by new classrooms, to become a hollow square.

There was still need for a college instructional and administrative building. In 1959 expert builder J. A. Schoeman completed the north wing of what was to become the college building, later to be known as Cadwallader Hall. The school library was moved into that wing.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

R. L. Staples

ON DECEMBER 22, 1961, the Clarkes left Solusi to return to teaching at Helderberg College. The transition of the principalship from Clarke to R. L. Staples was probably the smoothest in the history of Solusi College. The two men had worked together as a team for almost five years. During those years, Dr. Clarke had completed many of the half-finished building projects dotting the campus. At the same time, Elder Staples was pushing the up-grading of Solusi to college level.

In connection with his Solusi building program, Dr. Clarke had a number of old buildings torn down. Early in 1962, Elder Staples had several other no-longer-needed structures demolished. No one mourned their passing.

Of all the facilities provided by a boarding school, none deserves more attention than the student food services. On his arrival, Dr. Clarke found that instead of one central food-distribution center, the school had three, consisting of thatched-roof, open-sided huts in various parts of the campus. Porridge was prepared in three large pots. Several times careless students had poured cold water into a blistering hot pot and cracked it beyond repair.

Dr. Clarke eliminated these cooking centers and put up a building where all of the cooking could be done with steam. The idea of a central dining room was still a dream of the future. Before leaving Solusi, Dr. Clarke laid plans for erecting a modern dining room that would seat four hundred students. His successor kept the idea high on his priority list.

One day Elder Staples received a telephone call from the office of the governor of Rhodesia, Sir Humphrey Gibbs, in Salisbury. The governor had heard that Solusi College was different from other schools. Would it be convenient for him and Lady Gibbs to visit the institution?

Naturally, Elder Staples replied that such a visit would be extremely welcome, and a time convenient to the governor was set approximately two weeks later.

On April 18, 1963, a limousine bearing the governor and his wife drove onto the campus and stopped near the lower end of the mall, where the student body and teachers had gathered to welcome them. As the representatives of the queen stepped out of their car the mission group sang "God Save the Queen," followed by "Nkosi Sikeleli Africa" ("God Bless Africa").

After the welcome, the governor and his lady, with their attendants, set out on a tour of the mission, accompanied by the principal and Mrs. Staples and a group of Solusi teachers and students.

During his visit Sir Humphrey turned the first spadeful of earth for the proposed new dining hall. The visitors also planted two commemorative trees.

A formal program followed, during which the governor expressed his appreciation for Solusi's educational program, especially the practical manual and agricultural training. "You are extremely fortunate to have these opportunities," he told the students. "Don't just be proud that you have them. Use them."

Before leaving the campus, the governor was presented with copies of *The Desire of Ages* and *Education*, by Ellen G. White.

Back in Salisbury, the governor wrote, "We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to Solusi. Thank you so much for all you did to make it so pleasant. We send you and your staff our heartiest congratulations for all you have achieved, and best wishes for the future." He enclosed a gift of ten pounds with

which to purchase equipment.

Since the dining hall was built, many students have paused to read with pride the message on a plaque by the door:

The first spade cut in the
Foundations of this building was
Made on 18th April, 1963

By His Excellency
The Governor of Rhodesia

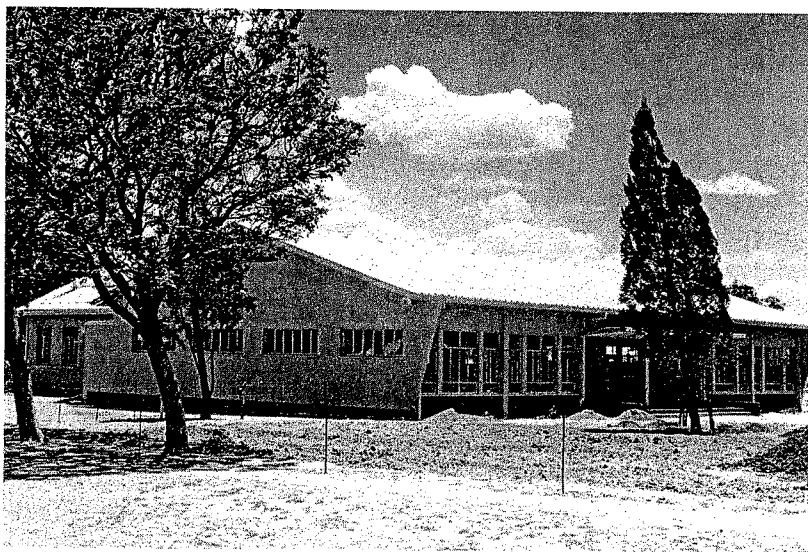
Sir Humphrey Gibbs, K.C.M.G., O.B.E.

Progress on the new dining room was rapid. Realizing that good food properly cooked was more important than the architecture of the building, Pastor Staples requested the college board to call for the services of Mrs. Pauline Long, who had been director of food services at Helderberg College for six years. She accepted the call, arriving at Solusi in September, 1964, just in time to cater for the guests attending the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the mission.

Solusi was now a division institution, and the division committee members realized the importance of building up the college, looking forward to the day when it could affiliate with Andrews University. Elder Staples indicated his goals for the college by drawing up a list of priorities for each year between 1962 and 1967. He requested generous sums of money: £16,000 in 1963 and £13,000 in 1966.

In 1966, only eight years after college work started, Solusi boasted a total enrollment of 544. Of these, 266 were in the primary school, 184 in secondary, 20 in ministerial, 16 in college, and 11 in special classes. In that year, there were 30 on the teaching staff and eight in administrative positions.

Elder Staples had set his heart on affiliation with Andrews University. Dr. Richard Hammill, the president of Andrews during Staples' tenure, visited the college several times and after each visit wrote a penetrating report, pointing out the areas in which it failed to meet the high require-



The governor of Rhodesia turned the first spadeful of earth, initiating the building of Solusi's badly needed dining hall.

ments of the senior college.

As if to mock Staples' hopes, there came a drought that baffled description—the worst of the century, according to the records. This crisis made Elder Staples decide that if there was any solution to this problem, he was going to find it. So critical was the water situation that some were urging removal of the college to a less arid location.

In September, 1964, a special committee appointed by Staples rendered its report. As every possible solution was discussed, Staples and his committee could not know that the worst years of drought still lay ahead. Then they learned that the government was considering the construction of a large dam—the Mananda—on the Manzanyma River, about seven miles from the school. But there was a price tag attached to the water. The school would have to pay almost \$40,000 for piping it from the dam to the campus. Where could such a sum be found?

The Sabbath schools around the world came to the

rescue. The General Conference voted that the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering overflow for the third quarter of 1966 should go to the Trans-Africa Division. The division committee voted to give the entire offering to Solusi. A portion would go toward bringing water to the school; the rest would be used to build an adequate library and provide more college-level books.

The overflow amounted to \$95,000, the largest ever received for any third quarter. How Solusi rejoiced when the good news came!

In 1964 Solusi's seventieth anniversary was celebrated. W. R. Beach, secretary of the General Conference, preached the Sabbath-morning sermon.

During the celebrations a wagon rolled onto the campus to reenact the arrival of the first Seventh-day Adventist missionaries to Solusi, and some old people who were among the group of orphans cared for by the mission were present.

The year 1967 marked a break with the past when Grandpa Jewell died at the age of 92. He had moved to the home of one of his children near Bulawayo when he had retired eleven years before. Now he was brought back to rest with other pioneers at Solusi. His casket was borne into the church by six of his fellow workers, then carried to the cemetery by six young men he had helped bring into the world.

The celebrations concluded with the graduation service in the church. The speaker was Dr. Clarke, who with his family had driven up from Helderberg College.

Early in 1967, Pastor Staples expressed to the Solusi board his desire to go on study leave that August to earn his doctorate in theology. During his term as principal, the building program inaugurated by Dr. Clarke had been carried forward. With the hookup of Solusi to the 3-billion-gallon Mananda Dam, it appeared that the nagging water problems were on their way to a satisfactory solution. There would be no more trips to the Gwaai River for barrels of

water. No more precious fruit trees would die in time of drought. The beautiful flowering shrubs planted by Elder Staples early in his term, only to perish in the drought, had been replaced and did much to add to the beauty of the campus. If Staples had done nothing more than solve the water problem, all future generations of Solusi staff and students would rise up and call him blessed.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

In Recent Years

ALTHOUGH RECOGNIZING the benefits of having a president with a Doctor of Divinity degree, the Solusi board was reluctant to see Pastor Staples leave. A number of new teachers had recently joined the staff, and his steadying hand was needed. Nevertheless, it was voted to grant him a two- or three-year leave of absence, as the need might be. It was agreed to release him in August, enabling him to reach Princeton University, in New Jersey, U.S.A., in time to enroll for the autumn term. (As it happened, Staples did not return to Solusi. Instead, he was invited to connect with Andrews University in 1971.)

Looking around for a replacement, the board learned that Dr. Daniel Walther was leaving Andrews University after being an instructor there for more than twenty years. Walther, a European, had served as president of the French Adventist Seminary at Collonges, France. In the United States he had taught at Union and Southern Missionary colleges, as well as at Andrews.

The calendar indicated that the time had come for Dr. Walther to retire, but when the Solusi board invited him to act as principal during the absence of Pastor Staples, he accepted.

Driving from Bulawayo to Solusi, Walther was painfully impressed by the atrocious condition of the Solusi road after it turned off the main highway. He had seldom seen a worse one, and resolved to do something about it. He lost no time calling on the official in charge of road construction in the district, inviting him to visit Solusi and see from experience

how bad the road really was.

After driving out from Bulawayo and making a few notes, the administrator promised to see about it.

Most men would probably have accepted this promise and done nothing more about it. But Dr. Walther realized that if anything were to be accomplished, the individual who had the authority to act would have to be contacted again and again. So he began the practice of stopping by this man's office whenever he was in Bulawayo and inquiring about progress on the Solusi road, which was sand and dust in winter and mud in the rainy season, with potholes waiting for the unwary motorist throughout the year.

At first it seemed nothing would be done. But resistance was gradually worn down, until one glad day equipment was assembled and work begun. A few months later, nineteen miles of the Solusi road was paved, all the way to the banks of the Gwaai, only seven miles from the college.

Had his sole accomplishment been the improvement of that road, Walther would long be remembered by the students and staff at Solusi. But he engineered other projects also. The new church had no bell, and what is a church without a bell to call worshipers together? Dr. Walther began gathering funds for a bell tower and a bell. Money came from friends in South Africa and the United States. Before long, the bell tower was erected under the supervision of Vivian Roberts, for many years the college builder.

In 1969, Solusi's seventy-fifth anniversary, it was decided to celebrate at graduation time, March 14-16. This would be a three-day event, beginning on Friday evening with a Solusi graduate, Pastor Duncan Walonga, speaking at the consecration service.

Since the city of Bulawayo had been established only a few months before the birth of Solusi, it was decided to invite the mayor and his wife to participate in the celebration. Following graduation services in the church, the entire congregation gathered near the bell tower and watched as the

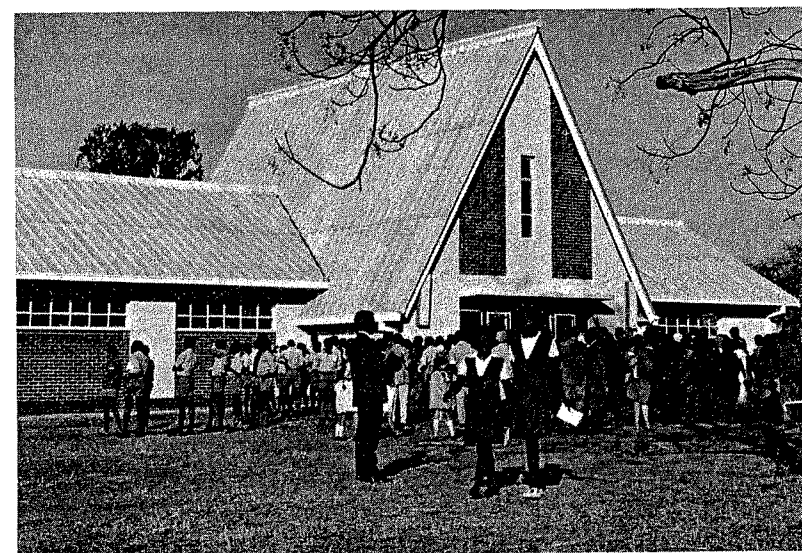
mayor unveiled it. On the tower they saw Solusi's coat of arms, containing the significant words *Fiat Lux*, "Let There Be Light." When the prayer of dedication ended, the bell began to toll, and everyone was thrilled by its fine mellow tone.

Dr. Walther had accepted the principalship of Solusi with the understanding that his term would not exceed two years. Thus the board had ample time in which to find his successor. They chose Timothy Gorle, who moved to Solusi with his family toward the end of 1969.

Gorle set his heart on the erection of a suitable library building, for which money had been available since 1966. Since his mother was the college librarian, it was only natural he should have a special interest in the project. Before long, the foundations were dug and work begun. On August 10, 1970, the building was ready for dedication.

In 1971 Pastor Gorle was unexpectedly transferred from Solusi College to the division office, where he took up work

The library building, dedicated in 1970.



as educational secretary. The Solusi board chose as his successor James T. Bradfield, a man who had already served as principal of a number of African schools. Unfortunately, it was impossible for Bradfield to respond immediately, and several months passed before his arrival. This threw a heavy load on Milton R. Siepmann, the college dean, who had to serve as acting principal and, for a time, as business manager of the college.

Toward the close of 1971, the Bradfield family arrived. The following year a new college dean, Ian Hartley, came, and at about the same time, Elmer Lampson took over as business manager of the college, thus giving the institution a completely new administrative team.

A unique feature was added to the college program in 1972 with the arrival of Dr. and Mrs. L. H. Lonergan, who inaugurated a strong program of healthful living. Students became health-conscious as never before. The Lonergans' two-year stay as Sustentation Overseas Service workers will long be remembered. It is significant that since their time, the college store has ceased to sell candy or pop.

The quadrennium beginning in 1971 witnessed a period of tremendous expansion. A science complex was erected and dedicated in 1974, with facilities for secondary as well as college classes. A dormitory was erected for male college students; new washrooms on both the men's and women's sides of the campus, and new staff homes, were built. Altogether, nearly \$200,000 was spent on buildings during this period. The only major structure Solusi still needed was an assembly hall large enough to hold the entire student body.

As buildings were going up, so was the enrollment. But the long-cherished dream of Solusi's affiliating with Andrews University was not fulfilled. In May, 1975, it was voted to encourage students seeking a B.A. degree to enroll with the University of South Africa as external students. Classwork would be taken at Solusi but the university examinations would be written.

One longstanding problem was finding accommodations for the many students wishing to attend Solusi. As recently as 1966, the headmaster of the secondary school received applications from 1,800 students for the first year of high school. There were accommodations for only seventy.

Principal Bradfield and his associates tackled the accommodations problem by erecting a block of dormitory rooms for the housing of forty-eight young male college students, thereby freeing space in the dormitories for more secondary students. The construction of the ten houses did the same for married college students.

To assist worthy young people wishing to attend school but lacking money, a four-point self-help student work program was introduced, making an education possible for any student willing to work. That college students availed themselves of the self-help plan is evident from the fact that during three terms in 1974, they worked a total of 53,775 hours.

One unique feature of the program was that teachers spent ten hours a week working with and supervising students in their work program. In this way teachers and students got acquainted in the best possible way—through working together.

* * * * *

When I was writing *The Solusi Story*, I had hoped that it might end on a different note than it must. That note was given by an announcement that appeared in the *Trans-Africa Division Outlook*, July 15, 1978:

"We regret to inform our readers that owing to the unsettled conditions in Rhodesia and with the safety of our workers in mind, it has become necessary to close both Solusi College and Lower Gwelo College until conditions settle down. We solicit your prayers for workers and believers in this lovely country."

Many who read this message, but did not know the details, wondered what disaster had happened at Solusi to

make it necessary to close the institution. Those closer to the situation were not surprised. Political conditions throughout Rhodesia had been deteriorating for several years, and when guerrilla bands struck missions of other denominations within twenty miles of Solusi, killing several staff members, the question was raised whether it would be wise to continue schoolwork there.

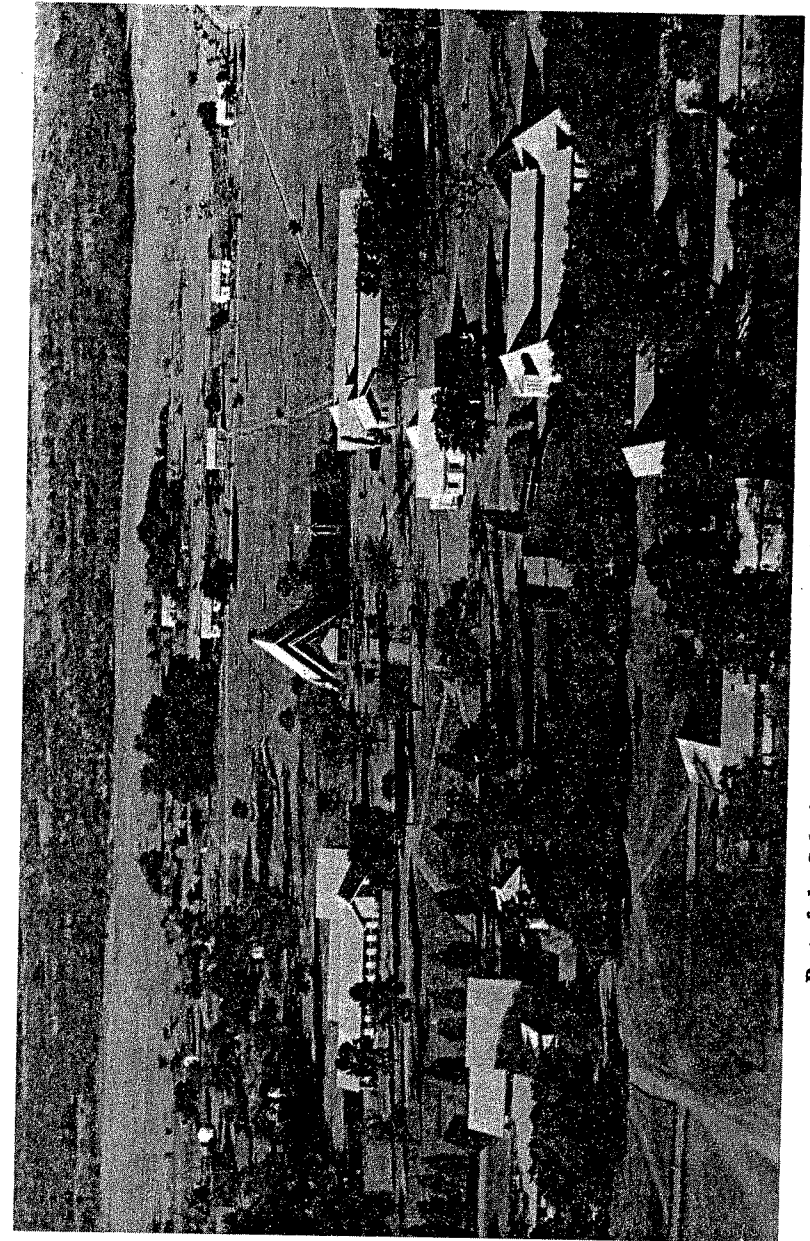
After earnest prayer and a thorough discussion of the situation, the staff decided that school should continue as usual. At the same time, precautions were taken to preserve, as far as possible, the safety of staff and students. The mission landing strip was enlarged so that it could be used by larger planes. Telephones were installed in every teacher's home on campus. Certain bush roads were closed to traffic. Everyone was instructed on how best to cope with emergency situations.

The twenty-sixth graduation exercises took place during the weekend of April 29, 1978. They were reported in the same issue of the *Outlook* that announced the closing of the college.

On June 13, a new term had begun, and classes met as usual. As darkness fell that day, about a dozen heavily armed insurgents struck.

They appeared first at the home of the African farm manager, asking how to find the various school officials. Then they split up into smaller groups. As they began to prowl about in the darkness, some brave person hurried to the home of Pastor Ian Hartley, the academic dean, and announced, "Dangerous men are on campus!" All staff members were telephoned and urged to stay indoors and to remain calm. They would be notified of ensuing events.

Knowing that school had recently opened, and that there might be a large amount of school fees in the safe, the insurgents had chosen this particular time to strike. It was money that they wanted. When W. M. Webster, the college business manager, answered a knock on his door, he found



Part of the Solusi campus. The church is in the center of the picture.

himself confronted by heavily armed men. He had no choice but to go with them. At gunpoint they took him to the administrative office and compelled him to open the safe, which contained approximately a thousand Rhodesian dollars. Webster was thankful that he had just deposited some \$24,000 in a Bulawayo bank. With their loot, the insurgents melted into the darkness, leaving Webster to return to his well-nigh-frantic wife.

Meanwhile, two or three other members of the group went to the dining room, where the students were finishing their evening meal. Seeing the intruders at the doors with guns in their hands, the terrified young people dived under the tables. Ordered out, they returned to their seats, to be lectured and informed that the school was to remain open. They must study hard, abolish tribalism, and work for an independent Zimbabwe.

Others of the insurgents broke into the dispensary to pick up whatever cash they could find. The keys of the college store were obtained and some items of merchandise carried away. Actually, the financial loss was not great. More important, there was no loss of life. The fervent prayers of the Solusi people, locked in their homes during the incident, were answered. Thankfully they learned that, after a little more than a half-hour on campus, the intruders vanished into the bush.

The police arrived a little after 10:00 P.M. The following morning they attempted to track down the band, but without success.

The next day the staff met and, with feelings of indescribable sadness, voted to close Solusi College. Soon the entire program ground to a halt. Buses were hired to carry boarding students to their home areas, many of them tribal trust lands controlled by guerrilla forces, and others in areas where fighting was going on. Usually, at the close of each term, the students left the campus singing lustily, but not this time. As they passed familiar buildings some of them might

never see again, tears trickled down many cheeks.

The staff members found accommodations in Bulawayo, and application was made to the town authorities for permission to carry on college classes in temporary quarters, but without success.

It is impossible to explain why Solusi, planted in faith and nourished through the years in sacrifice and prayer, should—for the present at least—cease to function. The beautiful library is no longer in use. The science building, so recently built and equipped, stands idle. No longer do happy young people fill the home-economics building, the dining hall, and the many classrooms. And the Solusi bell, which so often called students to prayer, to work, to church, and to study, is silent. Pray that it may soon ring again.