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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE SOCIETY'S STRATEGIES OF CONVERSION, 1930-1990**

#### **Introduction**

In chapter Two we discussed the establishment and growth of the Pilgrim Wesleyan Missionary Society in Choma District and in some parts of the Southern Province of Zambia and its subsequent spread to other parts of the country. This chapter examines conversion among the Tonga. It argues that the Society's strategies of conversion centred around the provision of education, medical services, material rewards, evangelism and pastoral training. The chapter is divided into four sections. Section one defines conversion in the context it has been used in this study. Section two discusses evangelism and conversion. Section three examines the role of education in conversion while the last section examines the role of western medicine in conversion.

#### **Defining Conversion**

Over a long period of time, conversion assumed different meanings. Rambo for example says that:

Religious conversion is a change in the area of one's ultimate concern, while intellectual conversion was concerned with a fundamental change in the way we understand, and moral conversion has to do with a change in the values by which we live.<sup>1</sup>

For the purpose of our discussion, the above conceptions have been taken to mean a "process of religious change that takes place in a dynamic force field of people's events, ideologies, institutions, expectations and orientations".<sup>2</sup> Rambo further argues that

“conversion was a process of change over time influenced by a matrix of relationships, expectations and situations as there was no one process or cause of conversion and no one consequence of that process”.<sup>3</sup> Crim defines conversion as climatic or gradual. “Climatic conversion is normally an adult phenomenon because it entails a deliberate decision which has a psychic, sociological and religious consequence” and it implies more or less “instantaneous consequences” of a particular religious system”<sup>4</sup> Crim further argues that conversion can be through cosmological orientation as a person’s cosmology and metaphysics remain virtually unchanged because his/her conversion is simply a sociological movement within culture.<sup>5</sup> For the purpose of our study, we argue that these moral and intellectual transformations were in the case of the Tonga of Choma District achieved through provision of education and health services, evangelism, pastoral training and women activities.

### **Evangelism and Conversion**

To achieve a sustainable conversion, evangelism was adopted as one of the fastest means. The Society established mission stations in villages as first points of contact between Christianity and the Tonga. In 1938, Rev. Strickland remarked that: as they moved from village to village evangelising, whenever they came into contact with a large group of people concentrated in one area they asked them about starting an outstation and when they agreed and when their Chief consented a mission station was opened.<sup>6</sup> In this way evangelism expanded and converts were won to Christianity.

The Society’s evangelical strategy took advantage of the Tonga macrocosmic belief concerning the existence of God or the Supernatural Being. To some degree this

belief was explored using natural and supernatural threats against chiefs, headmen and the rest of the people who still believed in "heathenism" side by side with Christian ideals.<sup>7</sup> Besides the use of threats, the Society discredited traditional beliefs to win converts. Christian teachers at Jembo mission, for example, destroyed ancestral shrines, broke ceremonial drums and beer pots, disrupted communal rituals, and disobeyed "heathen" elders.<sup>8</sup>

Like at Jembo, in Siachitema area Miss Peyton and Mrs. Strickland organised camp and prayer meetings to quieten the shrine of Nekuni at Bilili where every evening drumming, singing and ululating were heard from invisible performers.<sup>9</sup> The incident surprised the local people and consequently many of them got converted.

Very often during evangelism, the Society gave people clothing materials, blankets and many other material goods in order to win them as converts.<sup>10</sup> Rev. Strickland for example, used gifts to facilitate his evangelisation of the Gwembe Valley Tonga during his tour of the area in 1944. "The Natives had been pleased to see their fellow blacks wearing good clothes and they gathered at once for a service hoping to receive the same", he remarked. At the end of the service, a few people were converted including Village Headman Sinafala.<sup>12</sup> Once converted, Sinafala encouraged many people in his village to accept Christianity and allowed the missionaries to establish a station in his village. Whether or not the use of material items as bait to win Christian adherents fostered real conversion, the local people saw the mission station as a place where western capitalist oriented goods were obtained.<sup>13</sup>

Evidence shows that Headman Sinafala's conversion signified another method of conversion; through converting societal leaders so that their subjects also followed.

Examples of this method among other missions were drawn from the Rusangu Mission's conversion of Headman Chikonga who surrendered his village dancing drum to the mission and also the Wesleyan Missionary Society's conversion of a Shona Headman Chiremba his wife, son and daughter in 1899 at Epworth mission.<sup>14</sup> The entire villages in the above cases followed Christianity.

To consolidate the process of conversion and to keep the converts committed to Christianity, a deliberate policy to isolate the converts from the rest of the African community, by settling them around mission stations, was adopted.<sup>15</sup> The Society thus began to transplant their converts onto the mission land to cut them off from 'heathen' village influences.<sup>16</sup> This policy was first put into effect at Jembo in 1940. The "uprooted" converts formed a buffer zone between the mission and the "heathen" people who lived in the surrounding villages. The converts severed from their natal communities permitted a thorough Christian rebirth.<sup>17</sup> The Roman Catholic missionaries at Chikuni and the Seventh Day Adventists at Rusangu in Monze District also used a similar strategy to win converts to their faiths.

Conversion was not left to the missionaries alone. Converts also helped to preach and converted their fellow villagers. Chief Siachitema, for example, pointed out that the Society made its converts foreign elements in their natal communities as black converts like Mwiikisa became strong witnesses of the gospel of Christ.<sup>18</sup>

The Society also converted the Tonga of Choma by opening their stations as centres of refuge and freedom for the victims of injustices such as women who were escaping from forced marriages, or people escaping from family quarrels and those accused of practising witchcraft. There was a feeling among the Church leaders that the

once rejected people made stronger converts and witnesses of the gospel and became true living examples of witnesses for the gospel.<sup>19</sup> To some extent, the LMS missionaries were able to plant the gospel among the Mambwe Lungu by providing shelter, food and protection against slave raiders.<sup>20</sup>

### **Education and Conversion 1930-1990**

This section examines the role of education in the conversion of the Tonga people in Choma District. It argues that education attracted many people to Christianity and that it was the vehicle through which conversion was done. The Society thus used education as an instrument of mass conversion as was mostly the case with the Jesuits and Adventists at Chikuni and Rusangu respectively. The Jesuits stressed the importance of school in church development and explained their involvement in education thus:

Why does he (missionary) not confine himself to teaching doctrines and practices of Christianity? Why does he establish school at all? The answer is because without the one the other would be impossible. The older pagans are beyond the missionary's reach, they are polygamists to a man and have not the slightest intention of changing their lives and embracing Christianity. It is... the children upon whom the missionary places his chief hope; but even these can he not gain without some sort of school. Only by being gathered day by day; by personal contact, instruction and exhortations can he be brought to see the wretchedness of the past state. Without a school a missionary can do very little, so school he must have. The native school is a means to the end.<sup>21</sup>

The school thus was considered as an effective and important method of conversion of Africans to Christianity. This section examines the Society's use of schooling as a means of converting the Tonga of Choma to the Christian faith.

## **The colonial period, 1930-1963**

Provision of western education began in 1930, immediately Jembo Mission station was established. It was done under trees until 1933 when the first school buildings were erected.<sup>22</sup> Between 1933 and 1945 there were thirty outstations which offered educational services but only eleven schools existed by March 1945.<sup>23</sup> Right from its inception, the Society used education in conversion and as a result the Society established many schools to achieve their objective of using education in conversion. The Society placed great emphasis on teaching Africans to read and write so that they could read the Bible and teach others what they learnt from their Bible studies. Underscoring the importance of education in conversion, Rev. Strikland pointed out that "after all Jesus Christ himself was a great teacher who went about all cities and villages teaching in synagogues and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven".<sup>24</sup> For this reason the Society strongly believed that literacy linked the potential converts with mission work and alienated the educated from the traditional life set up. The educated helped in the evangelisation and conversion process. This was common also among the Toka-Leya of Livingstone who were converted by the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society and the Church of Christ using education.<sup>25</sup>

In fact the school and Church were inextricably bound together since evangelisation and conversion meant one and the same thing in the minds of both the young and old generations as preaching was conducted on Sundays in school buildings.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the Society observed that pupils found it expedient to be converted whilst at school to make their periods of instruction as comfortable as possible. These pupils grew into Christian adults who became church leaders as was evidenced with the opening of



Kabwata Church in Lusaka by former pupils from the Society's schools.<sup>27</sup> Although not all pupils were converted while at school, most of them learnt the gospel stories. In 1935 the General Missionary Conference which was held in N-lola emphasised the importance of school in conversion.<sup>28</sup>

To enhance continued conversion through the provision of education, the Society opened five schools in Siachitema mission district in 1946.<sup>29</sup> In 1948, for example, the Society's schools had enrolled 2,500 pupils, although the actual church membership still remained only one thousand.<sup>30</sup> The majority of these members were either still in school or they had just left school. Teachers at these schools were drawn from the local mission educated and trained people. The use of local teachers gave more impetus to the conversion process. In 1962 a tremendous growth in education provision, conversion and evangelism was reported. Although the actual number of converts is unknown, evidence shows that the Church membership stood at two thousand two hundred and fifty five with most of them still school going and while six thousand, three hundred and ninety four pupils had been enrolled in forty-two mission schools.<sup>31</sup> The increased enrolment in schools offered more potential converts who sooner than later got converted to the faith. School offered the highest number of communicants and potential converts.

### **The Post-colonial period, 1964-90**

At independence in 1964, mission schools assumed a different role from that of being centres of conversion to being centres of skills training so as to meet the labour demand that faced the Government. The Society thus reduced its emphasis on using school as a means of conversion. This was primarily because during the post-colonial

period, schools were no longer under full control of missions as the Government changed its education policy. The Government began sending teachers to all schools irrespective of the teacher's or school's religious orientation. The result was that the evangelical aspect of missionary education was slowly being lost and the schools were rendered ineffective in conversion. The Government also opened alternative schools throughout the country which challenged mission schools so that the non-church going pupils could also freely attend. In addition, the Government took over forty-seven of the Society's schools in 1968, leaving only four, namely: Jembo, Siachitema, Chabbobboma and Nakowa with only a total of 1,314 pupils.<sup>32</sup> This take over of mission schools by the Government reduced the number of the communicants and potential converts.

These policy changes meant redirecting the resources from education to purely church activities, although effective evangelism and conversion could not be easily achieved. Conversion was not only negatively affected by the Government take over of mission schools but also by financial crisis. In 1974 the Government completed its programme of taking over all the schools from the Society.<sup>33</sup> Despite the take over of schools, missionary influence continued in the evangelisation process as many people remained with a belief that the mission stations were centres of conversion.

In the early 1980s the Society realised that through the nationalisation of schools, it lost its school flock who had the potential to lead the future church. By 1982, the Society's leadership deliberately began sending their children to Chona Secondary School where they engaged in evangelical activities such as choirs, bible studies and other youth activities. For example in 1986 an average of thirty pupils were converted.<sup>34</sup>

## **Conversion through Pastoral Training and Women Activities, 1951- 90**

This section looks into the dynamics of conversion using women participation and pastoral training of the clergy. It deals firstly, with the role of women and secondly, pastoral training in conversion.

### **Role of Women in Conversion**

About the need for female education in Northern Rhodesia, Nyeko quotes Rev. Grey of the Wesleyan Methodist Society at Chipembi that:

As no stream can rise higher than its source, so no people can rise higher than the level of their women. It is they who are the repository of the teaching of the tribe and the upholders of old traditions and customs. Consequently, no Christian work can ever be permanent that fails to layhold of the women and girls and of the people to transform their lives.<sup>35</sup>

Nyeko argues that educated women fulfilled roles which had been mapped for them by missionaries and were active in religious, social and domestic spheres and were of higher social class.<sup>36</sup> The Christian mothers and wives taught those who did not go to school and conversion was thus enhanced. There was a realisation, therefore, that if women received good training they would be more beneficial in the process of conversion than they were at the time. This realisation was reaffirmed when the General Missionary Conference of Northern Rhodesia of 1935 emphasised the need to train women so that they could assist in evangelising and converting their fellow African women and even men. Miss M. Loew, the Society's representative at the Conference, particularly reaffirmed the position of the Society on training women in pastoral work. Following this affirmation, the Society pledged to train African women in pastoral work.<sup>37</sup>

Consequently, in 1936 women began to train as nurses, midwives, medical helpers and as teachers. They also trained to be better wives and mothers, so as to improve the general education and health of their children.<sup>38</sup>

The Government began supporting these missionary views. In 1944, for example, the Director of African Education, stressed the need for full Government and mission participation in female education and pointed out that:

Out of the 1350 certified government or 'Aided' teachers less than 100 were women and while the Medical Department had been offering equal conditions of training and employment to both sexes as 'nursing assistants' no women were in employment and only one was in training.<sup>39</sup>

In view of this state of affairs, the Department of African Education, in 1944, put up a deliberate policy to encourage female education as a primary aim.<sup>40</sup> The Society, therefore, just suited these demands. In the late 1970s the Society even went a step further to start training female pastors at Jembo; Margaret Tyaila, the first female pastor, was ordained in 1981 and by 1990 there were three trained and ordained female pastors, each running a Church<sup>41</sup>. Pastors wives were also trained to help sustain churches run by their husbands. At such churches they taught the local church membership, home management and hygiene, and in this way they provided avenues through which some women were converted.<sup>42</sup> This approach was not unique to the Society but also to the United Church of Zambia where women assumed the important role as preachers.<sup>43</sup> This shows that the Society's position on women was a liberal one, unlike that of churches like the Christian Missions in Many Lands which subordinated women to men and never allowed them to preach basing their argument on the Bible teachings regarding women.<sup>44</sup> This approach subordinated women as the disparities of educational provisions

between men and women only reinforced the subordinate position of women while men domination became an accepted fact.<sup>45</sup> Women increased the workforce in the field of conversion and they formed a strong arm of conversion which was known as the Pilgrim Wesleyan Women's Organisation which was composed of only baptised women of good standing.<sup>46</sup>

### **Pastoral Training of African clergy**

By 1951 it became apparent that school alone was not adequate enough for effective evangelism and conversion. The need to train African clergy became the pre-occupation of the Society. Using trained African converts to reach out to the unconverted yielded good results. As a result in 1951, Rev. C.G. Keith, the District Superintendent at Siachitema, opened a Bible Seminary there.<sup>47</sup> Other missions elsewhere had already realised this dream as was evidenced by the establishment of Nenguwo Training Institute in 1899 to train Shona Clergy for the Wesleyan Methodist Mission<sup>48</sup> and the Dutch Reformed Church Madzimoyo Theological School in 1940 among the Chewa in Eastern Zambia.<sup>49</sup> The Seminary at Siachitema mission trained pastors and improved the quality of service and pastoral work to further the development of the Society. The Seminary attracted some lay leaders into the church. The first intake was enrolled in 1951 it included Rev. Mwiikisa who when interviewed, remembered his experience thus:

It was a good experience to resign from teaching at a government school to join the crop of young men who had enrolled to train in pastoral work. These included Jack Munsaka, Simon Syabbamba, Bubala and others. These became the first locally trained and indigenous pastors of the church in Zambia who preached in a more indigenous way with full knowledge about African heathenism.<sup>50</sup>

The students from the Seminary increased the number of pastoral workers at Siachitema Mission who helped convert many people, among whom others joined pastoral work either as leaders or ordinary members.

In 1959 the Seminary Management Committee, under the Chairmanship of Rev. Bursch, resolved to transfer the Seminary to Jembo Mission because Jembo was on crownland unlike Siachitema which was on Native Reserve.<sup>51</sup> Inadequate staffing and accommodation at Siachitema was yet another reason for transferring the Seminary to Jembo and that Jembo was central.<sup>52</sup> The Seminary was finally transferred to Jembo in 1961 where it stands today as Pilgrim Wesleyan Bible College Seminary.

Graduates from the Seminary exerted a great impact in pastoral work thereby winning many more converts. Men dominated the pastoral training as their wives trained on how to be good pastors' wives and to receive church visitors.

### **Western Medicine and Conversion, 1930 - 1990**

The introduction of western medicine in Zambia dates back to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the pioneer missionaries, European travellers and traders traversed the country carrying with them medical First Aid Kits. Prior to the introduction of western medical systems many forms of traditional African therapy were carried out. The Tonga of Choma, for instance, developed their own traditional medical health delivery system which dealt with various diseases and illnesses. Their therapies ranged from home administered remedies to specialist healers, such as paediatricians, gynaecologists and diviners who diagnosed source of illnesses and diseases. The traditional healers used symptomatic healing which included the steaming remedies from

potent leaves and cupping and sucking blood.<sup>53</sup> Exorcism treatment or casting out evil spirits and incisions were used to treat rheumatic problems, backache and other distresses.<sup>54</sup>

The introduction of colonialism and the coming of missionaries introduced western medical services. In the early years of colonial rule, the government did not involve itself in the provision of medical services to the Africans. For example, when taking up the office of Director of Health in 1935, the New Director, Haslam, had this to say:

When I arrived in Northern Rhodesia in 1935 and took charge of the Health department, the Acting Director who handed over to me said, about African work, Haslam! Leave it to the missionaries; they have and government has not missionary spirit.<sup>55</sup>

The Pim Report of 1938 described the colonial activities of the Health Department as "amounting to very little as it put negligible effort in medical care"<sup>56</sup> The provision of western medical services, therefore, remained for most of the colonial period under missionaries.

The Society looked at the provision of western medical care and services as a Jesus Christ given commission<sup>57</sup> it also regarded the provision of medical services as a bait and a prelude to the gospel as healing of the sick was itself a gospel. Sickness was viewed as a kind of punishment resulting from sinning while faith was a prerequisite for healing.<sup>58</sup> Patients, therefore, provided an evangelical soft centre which led to their eventual conversion. The Brethren in Christ Church, for example, used medical provision to the people to further their gospel and conversion work at Macha in Choma

District.<sup>59</sup> The same was true among the Southern Tswana where the London Missionary Society treated western medicine "as a handmaid to the gospel".<sup>60</sup>

The Society preceded the treatment of patients with a sermon, hymn and prayer and diseases such as leprosy were regarded during sermons as evidence of sin and paganism.<sup>61</sup> Through such teachings, many people were converted to Christianity. Rev. Strickland argued that:

Since all people hated physical suffering, their confidence was won once they received medical assistance thereby paving way to get to their hearts with a message of salvation for conversion to take place".<sup>62</sup>

Rev. Strickland gave an example of one unnamed Society's outstations which was established after a woman who had been an "outcast" got healed of her pneumonia fever.<sup>63</sup> The Society thus regarded healing as a God-given instrument to be wielded in the course of conversion. This was also true of the London Missionary Society when it preached among the Tswana and other peoples where it concluded that the combination of healing and preaching was the best method of introducing Christian conversion.<sup>64</sup> Dr. Walter Fisher of the Christian Missions in Many Lands, while preaching and healing in the North-Western Province among the Lunda, also used medical care to win peoples' souls to Christianity as it showed them an example of the love of God for the sick.<sup>65</sup>

In 1949 the Society opened Jembo and Siachitema mission hospitals which catered mainly for the population of Chiefs Siamaundu, Moyo and Siachitema.<sup>66</sup> By 1951 Jembo hospital had an admission capacity for twenty-four patients.<sup>67</sup> The Society opened a clinic at Chabboboma in 1957 in the Gwembe Valley and at Zimba in Kalomo in 1958.<sup>68</sup> In addition to their main institutional roles of providing medical care and



services to the sick, the Society's hospitals also, like other mission hospitals in the country at the time, served as preaching and gospel spreading centres as some of the patients attending treatment got converted. Elsewhere such works prevailed as evidenced by Dr. Fisher's dispensary in Mwinilunga.<sup>69</sup>

In 1960 the Society appointed a committee to co-ordinate its medical activities. In the same year the Provincial Medical Officer at Livingstone reported that the Society's medical services had total admissions of fifteen thousand five hundred and sixty in-patients and that thirty nine thousand seven hundred and thirty four new out-patients had been treated, and had thirty six beds.<sup>70</sup> This entailed among other issues the need to increase the number of medical staff, thus by 1966 the Society had three white missionary nurses, ten local nurses and a fairly larger number of local dressers.<sup>71</sup> This increased the number of communicants from which some converts were netted. In addition, the increase in the number of workers at the hospitals meant that most of them got converted as employment at the hospital was preferably reserved for the members of the Society.

The medical field continued to grow and attracted many people. In 1973, for example, there were one hundred and forty eight beds; one hundred and twenty one thousand, one hundred and twenty eight out-patients and four thousand, eight hundred and forty one in-patients treated at Jembo hospital and there were three hundred and eighty four deliveries.<sup>72</sup> This exposed more people to conversion and as a result in 1976, there were:

1,613 preaching services conducted. 281 patient seekers of the gospel and 6,893 total number of hours of tape ministries and thousands of tracts were given to patients and visitors and those who cared for patients. A total of

186,773 patients were treated in addition to 7,669 ante-natal attendance and 700 babies born.<sup>73</sup>

The large attendance at medical centres suggested a wider number of would be converts from amongst the entire evangelised population of both the young and the old. At this time the medical field remained the best spinner of converts since the schools had been taken over by the State. The Society, like the London Missionary Society among the Tswana, for example, believed that medical missions had often acted as a key to unlock the hearts of many people to conversion the world over.<sup>74</sup>

In 1986 Rev. A.D. Houston, the Mission Co-ordinator pointed out that:

The work in hospital continued to be a blessing to the sick in body and that God's hand could be seen at work in the medical field and that when bodies were healed, hearts were open to the word of God and that God wanted to use this arm of church evangelisation to even greater degree than experienced before<sup>75</sup>

Therefore the hospital became an important centre of conversion among the Tonga. By 1990 the medical field had proved the most persistent and piercing method of conversion as it promised dramatic relief from affliction, disease and death.

### Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the Society used various methods to convert the local people to its faith. Some of these methods were: the use of women in evangelism, provision of social services such as education and health facilities, giving material rewards such as clothes, soap, and blankets to village evangelism and pastoral training. The most effective among these methods were the use of women, material rewards and

provision of social services as some got converted by admiring what the Society offered. These methods attracted a reasonable number of local people to the Society. It must, however, be mentioned here that the methods of conversion did not supplant the Tonga cosmological beliefs. Therefore, this made conversion limited.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE SOCIETY AND STATE RELATIONSHIP, 1930-1990**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter examines the relationship between the Pilgrim Wesleyan Missionary Society and the State in the period from 1930 to 1990. It examines the society and state cooperation in politics, education, health and agriculture. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section gives a brief overview of the relationship between the State and the Society in politics during the colonial and post-colonial periods. Section two discusses the State and Society relationship in education during the period under review and has shown that before the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, the state provided aided and government directed system of education. Soon after the war, the provision of educational services rapidly expanded. During the post-colonial period the state gradually took over the mission run schools. The third section examines the society's relationship with the state in the provision of health and medical services. The section points out that most of the medical services during the colonial period were provided by Christian Missions while in the Post-colonial period, the state increasingly took over the provision of medical services. Nevertheless, it continued using mission infrastructure and its staff. The fourth section discusses the Society and State cooperation in agriculture from 1930 to 1963.

## **The Society and State Cooperation in Politics 1930 to 1990**

During the colonial period the Society and State relationship in politics fluctuated according to the prevailing political and economic situation and according to the way issues at hand were perceived and conceptualised by the two institutions.

### **The colonial period 1930 – 1963**

The colonial church was seen as a state partner in the subjugation of Africans, hypocritical and insincere of its self-appointed role as protectors of the rights of Africans.<sup>1</sup> These sentiments however, do not apply to all missionary societies and their churches as some upheld justice. The Society, for example, cooperated with the state to champion the rights of Africans. Its representative at the General Missionary Conference of Northern Rhodesia held in Ndola in 1935, for example, affirmed its political position that “the Society remained objectively non-partisan in dealing with state policies.”<sup>2</sup> Thus the Society, together with the other members of the Conference, condemned the state’s use of excessive police brutality against the striking African Mine Workers on the Copperbelt in 1935.<sup>3</sup> Three years later the Society, with other members of the Conference opposed the move to amalgamate Northern Rhodesia with Southern Rhodesia.<sup>4</sup> In addition the Society became party to a masterly document published in 1938 which attacked the racially discriminatory Acts of Southern Rhodesia.<sup>5</sup> Even though the Society was going through antagonistic relationships with the state in matters that negatively affected African rights, it allowed its members to join and participate in active politics.<sup>6</sup>

The Society also opposed the creation of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. In 1953, for example, its representatives, Blann and Bussette, at the newly formed Christian Council of Northern Rhodesia, which replaced the General Missionary Conference of Northern Rhodesia, reaffirmed the Society's stand on the issue. The two argued that the Federation had been hastily conceived and carried out.<sup>7</sup>

Although the Society appeared to have been a critic of the Government on matters of politics, it also opposed the radical stance sometimes taken by the Africans. For example, in 1953 when the African National Congress called upon all African workers to stay away from work in protest against the establishment of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the Society and other members of the Christian Council of Northern Rhodesia condemned the action and strongly argued that only the State had the power to declare a work boycott.<sup>8</sup> They even went further to support the State's decision to terminate employment of all the workers who complied with the African National Congress call for the boycott.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the support the Society gave to the Government against the African work boycott, it also supported the African National Congress to oppose the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. It gave logistical support to the Congress. The uncompromising stand to do correct things by the church was exhibited by independent observers such as Weller and Linden who noted that:

Under normal circumstances the church is bound to support the state and forces aimed at preserving the law and order. Where the state is misusing its stewardship of power not adequately fulfilling its function of protecting the God given freedom of all citizens, where it is favouring one section of the community to the detriment of others; the Christian is called to protest and make whatever action compatible with the Christian gospel.<sup>10</sup>

In view of the above assertion by the Christian organisations in Northern and Southern Rhodesia, the Society began to politicise its evangelism even on the pulpit and some of its mission stations like Jembo and Siachitema became centres of political activism.

The Christian Council of Northern Rhodesia further resolved that 'It was a Christian's duty to influence Government by his vote or other means to take part in or take office in political parties, Trade Unions and so on'.<sup>11</sup>

To this effect, the Society got entrenched in politics as a corporate body and through its individual members so as to show the will of God in a positive way by approving and promoting what was right. The Society went on to embrace the enfranchisement of Africans as a way of self expression and self determination.<sup>12</sup> It is worthy to note that the Society at this time was viewed with suspicion by the State and cooperation continued at a rather reduced level.

### **The post-colonial period 1964-90**

Northern Rhodesia became independent as the Republic of Zambia in 1964. This created a new period of politics of African determinism and opposition against political violations of African rights.

The Society progressively adopted an attitude of neutrality and to some extent of actual silence. Siamwiza argues that the post-colonial church became a withdrawn one, one which did not see the importance of involving itself in secular affairs of the State.<sup>13</sup> He goes further to assert that, whenever the church participated in politics it never led the debates but rather concurred with others.<sup>14</sup> The Society was no exception in this

case. In the early years of the post-colonial period, for example, the Society remained passive in politics and this somehow worried the Government. Consequently, in 1967 President Kaunda encouraged the church to work hand in hand with the state that. He said:

The state like the church is there to serve the world and the state like the church, cannot exclude any of life's aspects from this service. The church and the state are inseparably bound together for both are called to the service of one and the same world.<sup>15</sup>

In spite of the encouragement by Kaunda, the church remained inactive in politics and this prompted Sikota Wina, a Cabinet Minister, to re-inforce Kaunda's encouragement. Addressing a church seminar on the Copperbelt in 1971, Wina told the participants that: "Nobody can be a true member of the church who is not a good citizen of the state".<sup>16</sup> These addresses encouraged the Society to support the state in future political decisions. In 1972, for example, the Society hosted the signing of the Choma Declaration at Choma Secondary School which ushered in a one party system of Government in Zambia.<sup>17</sup> In the same year, the Society's leadership persuaded its members to accept the newly introduced one-party system of governance and stated that: "Christians, nevertheless, belong to a one-party system that is one God's governance".<sup>18</sup> The Society thus remained in close cooperation with the State. In 1978 the General Superintendent of the Wesleyan Church, Dr. Melvin Snyder, re-emphasised the Society's stand on the introduction of one party state at its Field Conference which was held at Jembo mission. He advised that "the Society and its members, had it as their duty to obey the Government because it was God given."<sup>19</sup> In the same year the Society hosted the Southern Province United National Independence Party (UNIP) Conference at Choma

Secondary School at which teachers and pupils participated in the deliberations.<sup>20</sup> At the end of the Conference a UNIP Youth League Branch was opened at the school. By allowing its school to host a UNIP Provincial Conference and accepting the creation of a youth league in its school, the Society demonstrated the extent to which it was willing to cooperate with the State in political activities.

The situation, however, slightly shifted in the early 1980s when the church in general began to offer opposition to a number of political statements issued by the State. When President Kaunda called upon the church to take an active role in national development,<sup>21</sup> the church observed that such participation meant involvement in socialist praxis on its part. As a result the church could not cooperate with the State and this lack of cooperation created a new kind of relationship between the church and the state. In 1987 the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, the Christian Council of Zambia and the Zambia Episcopal Conference called upon Christians to take a very active part in promoting justice and the liberation from exploitation affecting the country as it was not just enough to talk about Humanism.<sup>22</sup> This situation was not confined to Zambia alone but also obtained in other African countries such as Zimbabwe, where the church heavily criticised President Mugabe's adoption of socialism.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Society and State Cooperation in Education, 1930 – 90**

Missionaries introduced western education in Zambia, just like in many other countries in Africa and Latin America. Africans adopted Western education system so as to cope with the new demands of the colonial rule and economy. Ranger identified a general pattern of initial African suspicion and rejection of colonial education followed

by a growth in acceptance and demand beyond the capacity of either governments or missions.<sup>24</sup>

### **The colonial period, 1930-1963.**

Policy changes in education began to take place in 1924 when the British Colonial Office took over the administration of Northern Rhodesia from the British South Africa Company. Soon after the take over, in 1925 the State created a Department of Native Education to coordinate African education.<sup>25</sup> However, at that time the colonial government still depended on mission schools for provision of education. Between 1925 and 1936, the government passed a number of legislations to transform the education system from mission dependence to state run. In 1927 an ordinance of African education, for example, was passed which laid down a criterion for the classification of schools and also encouraged a deliberate policy to build more schools to meet African demands for education.<sup>26</sup> As a result, soon after its establishment in 1933, the Society opened its first school at Jembo.<sup>27</sup> However, the implementation of this policy was met with serious financial difficulties because this was a period of the economic depression. Consequently, the State either suspended or reduced allocations of grants on mission education. The Society responded favourably and maintained the teachers at its schools from its overseas funding.<sup>28</sup> It even went further to work hand-in-hand with the local communities in the provision of education. This catered for the shortfall created by the reduced state funding on education.

By the beginning of the Second World War in 1939, however, educational problems had waned as copper earnings improved due to war demands for the metal. As

a result another African Education Ordinance was passed in the same year which streamlined the grant structure and management of the education system in the country.<sup>29</sup> It also provided for the participation of local education authorities in the running of educational services. This Ordinance compelled the Society to establish local education committees at all schools under each main mission centre.<sup>30</sup> This encouraged the locals to participate in the running of educational institutions in their areas.

The 1939 Ordinance notwithstanding, by 1946 it became apparent that mission societies were failing to meet the one-third share of their teachers' salaries, which they were obliged to pay. The Society was forced to ask the government to assist. In response, the State added fourteen mission employed teachers and five helpers to the grant aided list of the Society. This totaled £261 for teachers salaries per month and also provided other school requisites.<sup>31</sup> At the same time the state provided a grant of £425 to cater for forty-three boarding pupils.<sup>32</sup>

This cooperation in educational development between the State and the Society continued. In 1945, for example, the government passed a Ten year National Development Plan which identified, among other things, education as one of the vital areas of national development and as such increased funding on education. The Society embraced this plan and increased its educational service. At Jembo boarding school, for example, the number of boarding pupils increased from forty three to one hundred and fifty while the total enrolment at all the Society's schools rose from two thousand five hundred in 1945 to nine hundred thousand in 1947.<sup>33</sup>

The State and the Society continued working in harmony. In 1954, when the State created the Unified African Teaching Services which gave general conditions of



service for all teachers in the country, the Society allowed its teachers to join the Government Teaching Service thereby developing the policy of equal salaries for both State and mission employed teachers.<sup>34</sup> In the same year the State gave the Society £225 grant to build a dining room and a kitchen at Jembo.<sup>35</sup> As was the case with the Society so it was with other missions including the London Missionary Society at Chitambo<sup>36</sup> which began to follow the conditions of the Teaching Service.

In 1957 the Department of African Education, established a 75 percent funding for building mission schools so that the State could have more control of mission guided education.<sup>37</sup> The society took advantage of this funding and increased its schools from twenty eight in 1955 to over forty in 1958.<sup>38</sup> There was also a corresponding need to increase secondary education and in response the Society, working in partnership with the Brethren in Christ Church, opened Choma Secondary School in 1960 and the school received full government support.<sup>39</sup> Thereafter, the Society continued to provide educational services. In 1962, the Society's field superintendent, Dr. Bursch, for example, reported that there had been an impressive interaction between the State and the Society in education. He stated that:

Government supplemented the Society's efforts by paying salaries to a total of one hundred and twenty African teachers, five managers of schools, an education secretary, eight missionary teachers, one missionary builder with several general workers who worked for the society.<sup>40</sup>

This was a clear indication of the cooperation between the State and the Society in the provision of educational services. John Mwanakatwe pointed out that most of the schools at independence were still mission run because of the good relationship that existed between the State and the church.<sup>41</sup>

### **The Post colonial period, 1964-90**

At independence Zambia faced a serious problem of lack of skilled manpower. This could only be solved by a deliberate policy of expanding higher education. From 1964 to 1970, the period covering the transitional period (1964-65) and the period of the First National Development Plan (1966-70) the State emphasised the provision of higher education. In response to this policy, the Society, in 1966 completed building forty three teachers houses and fifty three classroom at its mission schools, which was greatly appreciated by the Government.<sup>42</sup>

It is also worthy to note that since the attainment of independence in 1964 the Zambian educational system remained a carbon copy of the British system. School leavers, were required to sit for the Cambridge Overseas Schools examination before entry into a college or university. The system, therefore, faced many problems which prompted the State to initiate measures to control education. Consequently, in 1968 the government passed the policy of State take over of schools which was extended to all schools and the Society cooperated. In 1968, for example, it handed over to the Government 47 out of 51 of its schools and in 1974 all the Society's primary schools were taken over by the Government.<sup>43</sup>

Between 1976 and 1982 the State passed educational reforms which contained the proposal to introduce compulsory "Scientific Socialism" or Marxism in all institutions of learning in Zambia.<sup>44</sup> Initially the entire church accepted this proposal but later criticised it. The bone of contention being the exclusion of religious education from the curriculum and the turning of church halls into classrooms.<sup>45</sup> This attracted the first ever serious

church criticism of the state reforms on education. The Zambia Episcopal Conference, the Christian Council of Zambia and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, issued a joint pastoral letter to all Christians in Zambia informing them about their rejection of the introduction of *Scientific Socialism*.<sup>46</sup> *The Society confirmed its rejection of Scientific Socialism* through collective responsibility with the Christian Council of Zambia. The Government did not give any immediate reaction to the churches' stand until in 1982 when President Kaunda tried to persuade them to accept the proposal. He explained that *Scientific Socialism* would be taught in schools as a component of political education and not as a replacement of religious education.<sup>47</sup> The church, however, could not be persuaded to accept the proposal thereby forcing President Kaunda to ban open discussions on the subject and even abandoned the idea altogether in 1982.<sup>48</sup>

### **The Society and State in relation to provision of Health and Medical Services, 1933-90**

The provision of health and medical services were seen as some of the most important secular activities of many Christian missions. These are the only services which missions continued to provide since their inception in the colonial period. This section examines the relationship between the Society and State in this area during the colonial and post-colonial period.

#### **The colonial period, 1933-63**

The society embarked on a holistic provision of health and medical services from its inception in 1933. During the colonial period, missionary provision of medical services was viewed variantly. The colonial Government saw it as a means of preserving

the labour force that was required to exploit the economic potential of the colony. Albert Sarraut, argued that:

Medical aid is our duty, but more than that one would also say that it is our most immediate interest, the one that is most down to earth for the whole work of colonisation, the whole need to create wealth is overshadowed in the colonies by the question of manpower.<sup>49</sup>

Missionaries found it feasible to cooperate with the State. Since missionaries had already established clinics and rural health centre in their spheres of influence, the State took advantage of the already existing institutions in the provision of health and medical services. It is common knowledge that the colonial Government made very little advancement in the provision of medical services for Africans. In 1935, Haslam, the newly appointed Director for example, was amazed that when he arrived in the country and took charge of the Department of Health, the Acting Director, he was to replace, advised him that "about African work, Haslam, leave it to the missionaries; they have and Government has not the missionary spirit."<sup>50</sup>

The Pim Report of 1938 also confirmed that the activities of the Department of Health amounted to very little, if not none at all.<sup>51</sup> This situation created a very health environment for church and state cooperation in the medical field. In compliance with the State demands of providing health and medical facilities in rural areas, the Society opened a dispensary at Jembo Mission in 1935.<sup>52</sup> Dispensaries were also later opened in the outlying areas. The Society cooperated with the State in many other medical activities. In 1941, for example, the Northern Rhodesia Legislative Council directed that all mission and Government health institutions inoculate children against diphtheria.<sup>54</sup> The Society, without any demur, carried out this directive in the Jembo Mission district.

*The District Commissioner for Choma, overwhelmed by the Society's participation in the programme, recommended that Jembo Mission be paid an additional 10% of the grant in aid.*<sup>54</sup>

The State went a step further in its cooperation with the Society by helping the missionaries to upgrade some dispensaries and clinics. In 1948, for example, it gave the Society money to upgrade Jembo clinic into a hospital with a capacity of 22 beds and was officially opened in 1949 by the Provincial Medical Officer for Southern Province.<sup>55</sup> In 1950 the District Medical Officer for Choma, Dr. J.W. Nelson, pointed out that: "the Society was doing the most important medical work in Choma District and that Jembo hospital deserved "maximum government grant".<sup>56</sup> Because of Dr. Nelson's "recommendation" the Government increased its grant to Jembo hospital from one-third of its total expenses in 1949 to two-thirds and also paid a recurrent expenditure of £217 per annum in 1951.<sup>57</sup>

Another area of cooperation between the State and Society in the health and medical area was manifested in 1952 when the two combined efforts and fought against smallpox, tuberculosis, syphilis and nutritional related diseases.<sup>58</sup> This kind of cooperation was also displayed by the Christian Missions in Many Lands in the North-western provinces.<sup>59</sup> In 1953, the Northern Rhodesia Government Medical Officer, Dr. L.S. Gauntlett, stated that the State would pay forty percent of the salary received by the missionary dresser and the mission would pay the rest.<sup>60</sup> The Society also benefited from this policy and as such brought into the country more medical personnel from the USA who were put on the government pay roll.<sup>61</sup>

During the years that followed, the Society continued to maintain its cooperation with the state. In 1962, it established a medical committee on which the District Medical Officer was ex-officio.<sup>62</sup> The committee worked in conformity with the state medical policies and regulations. The colonial period, therefore, saw continued Government and Society cooperation in the provision of medical services:

### **The post-colonial period, 1964-90**

When Zambia became independent in 1964, the new Government made a lot of changes in the area of health and medical services. The First National Development Plan (1966-70) gave priority to health care. During this period the number of hospitals and bed spaces in hospitals and health centres increased tremendously. The number of beds, for example, increased from 9,889 in 1964 to 27,801 in 1968.<sup>63</sup> O'Keefe, says that this spatial improvement was achieved because the State increased its financial support to the health sector by an average of ten percent between 1967 and 1968.<sup>64</sup> For the Society this was a double benefit as its funding was also increased by the overseas office in the USA.

In 1970 the Church Medical Association of Zambia was established as an umbrella organisation for mission administered health institutions. The Association signed a memorandum of understanding with the State which stated that "from then onwards the Association had assumed the task of liaison with the Government and donors in the running of church medical institutions".<sup>65</sup> The Society became a member of the Association and so its medical institutions were brought under the Association's control. In the same year the Society's Chairman of the Medical Committee, Dr. H.C. Burchel confirmed the Society's membership to the Association and he reported that the state

had increased the number of medical personnel working at the Society's medical institutions.<sup>66</sup>

The Society and the State also achieved great cooperation in the area of staffing medical institutions. In 1982, the Government seconded sixty staff members who included missionary nurses and other workers to the "ranks of the Society".<sup>67</sup> This gesture helped to boost the Society's efficiency in the provision of medical care.

In spite of the deteriorating economic conditions in the country, the State continued supporting the Society. In response to the continued Government support, in 1982 the Society published a joint pastoral letter to thank the Government's increased grants to mission hospitals.<sup>68</sup> President Kaunda also re-affirmed the State's commitment to the provision of medical care through the Church Medical Association of Zambia.<sup>69</sup> With the support from the Government the Society was able to upgrade Zimba Mission Clinic into a hospital in 1985.

### **The State and the Society in Relation to Agriculture 1933-1963**

Besides the partnership in the provision of education and health care services, the Society also concerned itself with the need to develop agriculture in its areas of operation in line with government policy pronouncements. In 1933 the State issued a memorandum for the Department of Agriculture to train Africans in food production and called for close co-operation between the Department of Agriculture and Native Education and the missionaries.<sup>70</sup> The Society quickly adopted this policy. Its leading missionary at Jembo, Rev. Reynolds, began to conduct agricultural demonstration lessons on improved farming practices and livestock management skills<sup>71</sup> as was the case with the Catholics at Chikuni

and the Adventists at Rusangu missions respectively.<sup>72</sup> African farmers began to combine the knowledge they acquired while working on White farms and training at mission schools with traditional methods of agriculture. The new methods caused soil deterioration and erosion in some of the reserves by the mid 1930s.<sup>73</sup> The Department of Agriculture thus began to examine the problems posed by African farming methods and as a result in 1936 it embarked on agricultural extension work on the Tonga Plateau to arrest the deterioration of the land. The Department also established the Kanchomba Agricultural Station in Chief Siamaundu's area in Choma District at which the famous 'Kanchomba system' was inaugurated.<sup>74</sup> The system emphasized the use of kraal and compost manure and crop rotation.

The Society adopted the Kanchomba system and strengthened its already existing programme on agriculture. In 1938, the Society at Jembo mission cultivated four plots to demonstrate crop rotation to the local farmers in accordance with the government directions.<sup>75</sup> In addition it taught agricultural science and the Kanchomba system at its farm where many locals had been employed as labourers. This was not unique to the Society. The Primitive Methodists at Kanchindu mission in Chief Mweemba's area trained local people in practical agriculture such as cattle management, poultry and farm mechanics.<sup>76</sup>

Following the outbreak of the war in 1939, the Department of Agriculture began concentrating on more food production for feeding the troops at the war front. This increased the need for agriculture. Therefore at the end of the war, in 1945, the Department organised a land survey on the Tonga Plateau, which recommended the formation of the Improved Farming Scheme (IFS). During the planting season of 1946-



47, farmers in the Mazabuka and Choma Districts were invited to register with the IFS.<sup>77</sup> The scheme was well received in Siamaundu area because the Society encouraged it to a great extent. The Society even went further to invite Government Extension workers to help with contour - work at its field from which most of the local people learnt the IFS methods.<sup>78</sup> The missionaries carried out these Government plans to all their mission stations and achieved a considerable improvement in soil conservation among the local farmers around Jembo mission.

In 1949 the Improved Farmers formed an Association which was used by the State to convey its plans to the general farming community.<sup>79</sup> The Society supported the Association and even went further to persuade the other farmers outside the Association to embrace the new policies of cattle-dipping and soil conservation.<sup>80</sup> In 1955 the District Commissioners for Choma reported that the State and Society's cooperation led to the local farmer's adoption of use of sledges and grinding mills, maize shellers, tractors and harrows in their agricultural activities.<sup>81</sup> In this way the Society worked as a vehicle for carrying out Government policies. The State and Society cooperation continued to grow. In 1956, the State introduced a Cattle Improvement Scheme.<sup>82</sup> The Society took the lead in the area to encourage the local cattle keepers to accept the scheme. Nelson Chitenge, a local farmer and convert of the Society observed that:

If the Government did not use the mission to disseminate the Cattle Improvement Scheme, no farmer in the area could have agreed to do so. But the mission convinced us because we trusted them unlike the Government officials.<sup>83</sup>

In 1958 the State noted that one of the serious problems affecting cattle was trypanosomiasis which had killed a lot of cattle in the North-Western part of Choma District.<sup>84</sup> To help out, the Society at Siachitema Mission began to sensitise the people to

spray or dip their cattle with disinfectants in order to kill tsetse flies.<sup>85</sup> Chief Siachitema thanked the State initiative to convey its tsetse control measures through the Mission which managed to teach the local farmers some of the effective methods of controlling trypanosomiasis. Veterinary Camps were established at Siachitema main station and at Kalonda, Chifusa and Bilili mission sub-centres.<sup>86</sup> In the same year Government, through the Veterinary Department, carried out the inoculation of cattle against diseases. This was done at a time the African National Congress had launched an anti-inoculation campaign. In fact, the Congress even warned the Government officials who had been instructed to sterilise traditional cows and to kill the bulls to stop the practice forthwith. Farmers in Chief Simaundu's area refused all the services offered by the Veterinary Department and also refused to pay the fines that the Government imposed against those who did not accept its instructions until the police forced them to do so.<sup>87</sup> But the situation changed from that of resistance to that of cooperation when the Society reinforced Government efforts.

In the early 1960s the State's and the Society's cooperation in agriculture reduced because the State began to face more challenging issues of contending African Nationalists who were demanding for self rule. At independence the new Government demanded that "the church in general was not to become a land lord".<sup>88</sup> And in response to this State pronouncement, the Society sold most of its land at Jembo Mission farm to the local farmers.<sup>89</sup> This marked the end of State and Society cooperation in agriculture.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter set out to examine the relationship between the State and the Society in politics, education, medical care and agriculture during the period between 1930 and 1990. It has argued that the relationship led to the advancement of western education, medical care and agricultural techniques. While on one hand the Society opposed policies and measures that discriminated against Africans and also led to moral decay. On the other hand, the Society and the entire church assisted the State to implement some of the unpopular policies such as destocking. Africans accepted them because the Society convinced them that the policies had been formulated to assist them. The chapter has further demonstrated that the State and Society relationship in education, health and agriculture remained cordial.

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## CONCLUSION

This study set out to reconstruct a history of the Pilgrim Wesleyan Missionary Society in Choma District between 1930 and 1990. It concerned itself with the tracing of the establishment and development of the Society and examining some strategies it used to convert the Tonga of Choma District to the western religion. The study also concerned itself with investigating the relationship between the Government and the Society.

Evidence suggests that the early history of the Pilgrim Wesleyan Missionary Society in Choma was characterised by a number of constraints and setbacks. The study has shown that in spite of the many problems the Society faced, it managed to establish itself firmly among the Tonga and even became one of the main Christian missions to evangelise and preach in the district. The study has demonstrated and argued that prior to the introduction of Christian missions among their ranks, as the case was among other Zambian and indeed African tribal groups or clans, the Tonga of Choma District had their own traditional religion and beliefs centred on the concept of *Leza* (God). The study has demonstrated this fact by outlining and discussing some of the aspects of Tonga cosmology, rituals and rites that formed the basis of their religion.

In the context of the above issues, the study has also discussed the Tonga concept of macrocosm in the context of shrine rituals and rites. The study has also discussed the concept of microcosm which covers some Tonga beliefs in ancestry worship at both domestic and individual levels. It has demonstrated that there existed shrines through which individual specialists attempted to enhance their successes in skills such as rain

calling and hunting. The study has also discussed the Tonga spirit world in the context of the Tonga religious beliefs.

After discussing and reflecting on the Tonga cosmology, this dissertation looked at, in a rather narrative form, the development and establishment of the Pilgrim Wesleyan Missionary Society in the area of study. It provides data on the evolution of the Society from the United States, through South Africa, to Zambia. This narrative is followed by a more analytical approach which looks at the conversion strategies used among the Tonga between 1930 and 1990. In this part the study argues that the Society's conversion strategies, centred around the provision of education, medical services, material rewards and evangelism and pastoral training.

The study also examined the relationship between the Government or State and the Society. In this area, the study concerned itself with the manner the two institutions cooperated in politics, education, health and agriculture. The study argues that during the colonial period the relationship between the Society and State in politics did fluctuate according to the political and economic situation that prevailed or obtained during that material period. In the area of education the study points out that there existed a fairly harmonious relationship in that State policies in education were embraced and implemented in the schools run by the Society. This approach was also evident in the manner the State and the Society related to one another in the areas of health and agriculture.

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