Brethren Historical Review 15 (2019) : 00–00

Education at Chitokoloki, 1914–1924: The Vision of George Suckling*

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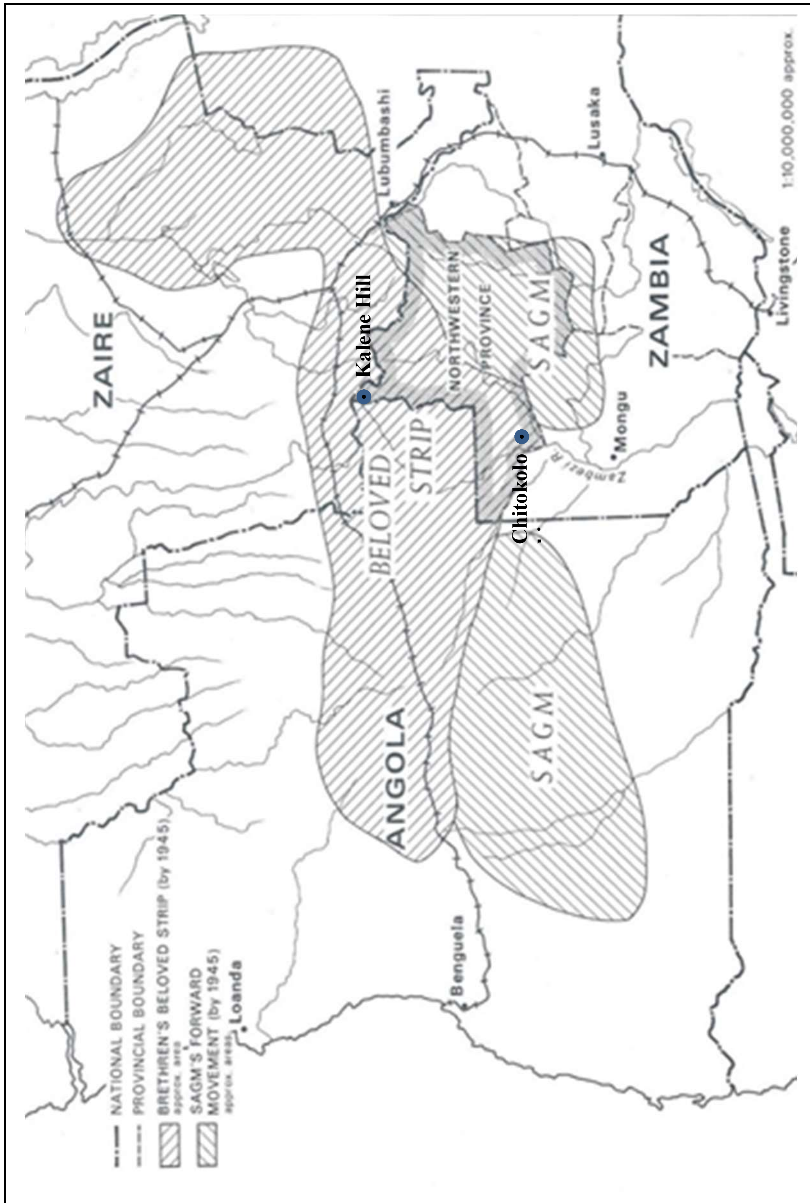
> Arnot Memorial School at Chitokoloki . . . is the most beautiful school I have ever seen in Africa. The roof is quite unique, thatched on the Barotse principle, with grass interlaced and cut off short, giving it the appearance of a great impervious mat, and very durable. This thatch is finished off at the top with a straw coping, or ridge, on the Lunda plan, which guarantees all watertight.
>
> William Hoste, *Links of Help*, 6 (1916–7), 100.

Chitokoloki (see Map) lies in the upper Zambezi valley in what was then called Balovale District (now Zambezi). While today, it is in the western part of the NorthWestern Province (NWP) of Zambia, Balovale was then part of Barotseland whose centre was at Mongu to the south; Lobengula was ruler under the British South Africa Company (BSAC).

Within only three years of its opening in 1916, Chitokoloki's educational programme was visibly successful. This was a stark contrast to other educational endeavours in what would become the rest of Zambia's NWP: those at Kalene and two South African General Mission (SAGM) stations. Two simple reasons contributed to Chitokoloki's success. First, in this early BSAC era, the socio-political environments of Chitokoloki in Barotseland differed from the other

* Much material in this article has been lifted from Chapter 8, 'Education at Chitokoloki, 1914–1924', of my dissertation: 'To the Bottom of the Heap: Educational Deprivation and its Social Implications in the Northwestern Province of Zambia, 1906–1945', Syracuse University, PhD, 1983. This chapter was later used without much change in my 2014 e-book. The titles of both the dissertation and e-book are the same and the contents have few differences, especially regarding George Suckling. The dissertation and e-book are both indefinitely available on my website: 'The NorthWestern Province of Zambia: Professional and Personal Reflections of P. David Wilkin and Friends', <www.nwpzambia.com>, webpage <https://davidwilkinnwpzambia.com/academic-writings-and-sources/>.



NATIONAL BOUNDARY
PROVINCIAL BOUNDARY
BRETHREN'S BELOVED STRIP (by 1945) approx. area
SAGM'S FORWARD MOVEMENT (by 1945) approx. areas
Loanda
Benguela
ZAIRE
ANGOLA
ZAMBIA
BELOVED STRIP
NORTHWESTERN PROVINCE
SAGM
SAGM
Kalene Hill
Chitokolo
Lubumbashi
Lusaka
Mongu
Zambezi R.
Livingstone
1:10,000,000 approx.

missions to the east and north in what was then Kaonde-Lunda 'Districts'. With regard to education, the former was 'progressive' and the latter was 'backward'. Second, was Suckling himself.

Although all the missionaries mentioned here were conservative evangelicals, the English Brethren missionary George Suckling (1883–1952) had a much wider educational vision. He made Chitokoloki's educational programme the heart and soul of the mission's evangelical campaign. As Dr Walter Fisher had done with his hospital and medical work at Kalene (see Map),[1] Suckling and his educational programme became almost synonymous. Consequently, the early dramatic successes and then the later failures at Chitokoloki become those of Suckling himself.

Background

To understand Suckling's strong early educational success at Chitokoloki, it is necessary to go back several decades to Frederick Stanley Arnot, the world-famous Brethren explorer in south-central Africa from the 1880s until his death in 1914. Then we must note the work of two men that he inspired: Dr Walter Fisher (Suckling's brother-in-law) at Kalene and Albert W. Bailey of the South Africa General Mission (SAGM).

Like many other Brethren in the mid- and late-nineteenth century, Arnot had been inspired by Anthony Norris Groves's evangelical travels. All shared the same religious philosophy, stated well by the founder of the Missionary Studies Classes, A. R. Short: 'The missionary embarks on no political reforms or agitations; he preaches the Gospel.'[2] With this religious philosophy as his inspiration,

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[1] Iva Peša, 'Serving in "The Beloved Strip": A Century of Missionary Activity in Mwinilunga District, Zambia', *BHR*, 6 (2010), 74–90.

[2] A. R. Short, *A Modern Experiment in Apostolic Missions* (Bristol, n.d.), 14. Kovina Mutenda states the Brethren's religious philosophy elegantly in: 'The Brethren and the Bible in Central Africa', in Neil Dickson and T. J. Marinello (eds.), *Bible and Theology in the Brethren* (Studies in Brethren History (SBH): Glasgow, 2018), 87–94. For Mutenda's positive evaluation of Suckling's work, see his 'An Evaluation of Gospel Work in Zambia', in Neil Dickson and T. J. Marinello (eds.), *Brethren and Mission: Essays in Honour of Timothy C. F. Stunt* (SBH; Troon, 2016), 207–18, spec. 212. In addition to these articles, Mutenda has published two other works that I have

Arnot chose an area of the world—south-central Africa—that had been decimated by the slave trade in previous decades and where the gospel had not been preached.

Arnot simply walked from the Atlantic Coast in Angola inward into what is now the southern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (hereafter Congo), east of Angola, and north of the NWP. This was an area almost unknown in Europe. In the process, he also literally walked into an enormous political conundrum by plunking himself down in the kingdom of the African ruler, Msidi (Msiri). The Berlin Congress of 1884–5 was in the process of dividing this part of the African continent between Britain and Portugal and King Leopold of Belgium. Arnot's pietism, individualism, and apolitical single-mindedness made him an unwilling participant,[3] which greatly displeased the representatives of these powers.

Several years later, Arnot turned over his mission work in Msidi's kingdom to two missionaries he had inspired, Charles Swan and William Henry Faulknor. Then, just as he had simply walked into this conundrum, Arnot simply walked out via the same way he came in. By leaving south-central Africa in 1888 and returning to Britain at the height of international manoeuvring for control of south-central Africa, Arnot's political significance ended. His religious and social significance, however, had just begun. Britain immediately hailed him as a new David Livingstone. Throughout Britain, Arnot addressed not only Brethren assemblies but also the general public, including learned

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not been able to utilize for this article. They are: a) *The Christian Brethren in Zambia: Their Origins, Beliefs and Practices,* (Chingola, ZM, 2016); and b) *A History of the Christian Brethren in Zambia* (Chingola, ZM, 2002).

[3] The most recent biography of F. S. Arnot is Ian Burness's *From Glasgow to Garenganze: Frederick Stanley Arnot and the Nineteenth-Century African Mission* (SBH; Lockerbie, 2017). For an earlier short description of Arnot living an exemplary life for modern believers, see Frederick A. Tatford, *Frederick Stanley Arnot* (Bath, 1981); see also Ernest Baker, *The Life & Explorations of Frederick Stanley Arnot* (London, 1921), esp. 231–73; and W. T. Stunt et al., *Turning the World Upside Down: A Century of Missionary Endeavour* (Bath, 1972), 363–81. For brief, personal reminiscences by many of the early pioneers, see [Echoes of Service] *A Central African Jubilee: 1881–1931: or Fifty Years with the Gospel in "The Beloved Strip"* (London, 1932[?]).

societies and nobility. Being a man with seemingly unlimited energy, in the midst of this praise and publicity, he married, wrote *Garenganze* (his first major book), and laid plans to return to south-central Africa.[4]

Within a year of returning to Britain, Arnot led a party of thirteen people to the Angolan port of Benguella. Although several members died on the way, he and the group slowly moved inland, opening mission stations along the old slave-trading route. Dr Walter Fisher was one of those inspired to accompany Arnot (he and Arnot were now brothers-in-law). Fisher shared Arnot's long-enduring concern for the upper-Zambezi region. As part of this group formed in 1889, Fisher helped establish several new stations around the turn of the century. Moving south from Kavungu (Nana Kandundu) in 1899, he opened Kazombo and then Kalunda (Hill) in 1905. Both were in the eastern pedicle of Angola in the upper-Zambezi Valley.

A renowned medical doctor, Fisher not only wanted to preach the word of God, but also to build a sanatorium for missionaries who were then dying at an alarming rate from unknown or incurable tropical diseases. The upper-Zambezi Valley especially suited him because it was approximately halfway between the east-west string of Brethren stations. But Fisher also desired higher land. After deciding Kalunda was not suitable, he trekked east across the newly demarcated boundary and chose Kalene Hill at the northern tip of the NWP. Strongly believing that God guided his choice, Fisher moved to Kalene with his family in June 1906 and founded the first mission station in the NWP.[5]

Arnot did not limit his encouragement to Fisher. He remained 'burdened' about this huge area of south-central Africa that included

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[4] *Garenganze: or Seven Years' Pioneer Mission Work in Central Africa* (London, 1889). The events of 1889–1892 were the focus of Arnot's next book, *Bihe and Garenganze* (London, 1893). His later works included: *Garenganze: West and East* (London, 1902); and finally, *Missionary Travels in Central Africa* (Bath, 1914).

[5] For the life story of Dr Walter Fisher, see W. Singleton Fisher and Julyan Hoyte, *Africa Looks Ahead: The Life Stories of Walter and Anna Fisher of Central Africa* (London, 1948), and also the Zambia National Archives, Lusaka [hereafter ZNA], Walter Fisher Papers, HM/8. Fisher saw medical work as a useful tool in evangelism and in assisting new converts; e.g., see the ending to his letter, 14 June 1917, *Echoes of Service* [hereafter *EoS*], 46 (Oct. 1917), pt. 1: 309.

the NWP (it became known as 'the Beloved Strip' in the Brethren). Arnot felt that the peoples in and near the upper Zambezi Valley, whom the BSAC officially regarded as Lozi subjects, had been 'deserted and forsaken'[6] by all missionaries except Fisher. Conversely, he realized that the resources of the relatively small Brethren assemblies were too limited to extend much further. Most certainly they could not reach all the peoples south and east of the Beloved Strip, including the Kaonde/Lamba in what would become the NWP's Kasempa and Solwezi Districts. The Roman Catholics focused his concern since they seemed likely to enter if no evangelicals did.

Spending long periods in South Africa for reasons of health and his children's education, Arnot became acquainted with the South African General Mission (SAGM) whose inspirational leader was the Revd Andrew Murray. They helped answer his prayer.[7] Arnot's main SAGM contact was Albert W. Bailey, an American who had come to South Africa as a missionary less than two years before. After long conversations with Arnot, Bailey felt the 'Divine Call' to extend what would be called the SAGM's 'Forward Movement' into North-West Rhodesia. Although the SAGM's leaders hesitated because of severe staff and monetary limitations, Bailey finally received permission to become their pioneer among the Kaonde/Lamba.[8]

Arnot did more than just give Bailey moral support. In 1910 he preceded Bailey, surveyed the Kaonde/Lamba area, and then spent six more months helping him become settled. Together they chose a site

6 Arnot's diaries, quoted in Baker, *Arnot*, 303–4.

7 *South African Pioneer* [hereafter *Pioneer*], 22 (Sept. 1909), 142; African Evangelical Fellowship Headquarters, Wimbledon, London, Correspondence Files, vol. 9, F. S. Arnot to James Middlemiss, 9 July 1910.

8 For chronological details of the SAGM's early work in Northern Rhodesia, see the monthly correspondence in *Pioneer*. For the opening of new mission stations, see A. W. Bailey, *Commission and Conquest in South Africa: An Autobiographical Account of Pioneer Mission Work in Africa*, edited by his wife, Metha D. Bailey (Newark, NJ: privately duplicated and bound in book form, 1968). For the first days in Northern Rhodesia, see also a pamphlet by Bailey, *Lessons in an African Prayer School* (n.p., n.d.). Before coming to Africa, Bailey had been a pastor-cum-missionary in a lumber camp in a remote part of Maine, USA.

on the Chisalala River, a day's walk south of Kansanshi Mine in today's Solwezi District. The proximity of the mine enabled Bailey to minister to the European and African miners and to the local population.[9] Later in 1912 Bailey travelled west and opened a station on the Lalafuta River in Kasempa District. Then, some years later, after new missionaries arrived, Bailey moved on and founded a new series of stations in Angola, south of the Brethren's Beloved Strip (see Map).[10]

Although with his encouragement, Fisher and Bailey had opened mission stations in the north-western corner of North West Rhodesia, Arnot remained unsatisfied. The main Lunda/Luvale area of the upper Zambezi Valley just south of the Brethren stations in eastern Angola and the southern Congo and just north of the Lozi was unoccupied. And the perennial Roman Catholic threat enflamed Arnot's desire to work on his own mission station. He envisioned a location at the confluence of the Kabompo and Zambezi Rivers.

Meanwhile, George Suckling as a young missionary had joined Dr Fisher between 1908 and 1911. In 1913, he most willingly went with Arnot and Lambert Rogers to found the new station.[11] Arnot was at the height of his fame as an explorer and when they opened Chitokoloki, Arnot's dream was realized.[12] Sadly, repeated bouts of malaria had permanently damaged his health. Rainy weather, combined with the task of finding a suitable site in a swampy area, broke it completely. Shortly afterwards, in January 1914, Arnot's spleen burst. He was taken as rapidly as possible to South Africa where within two months he died as stoically as he lived. The story of his life

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[9] Baker, *Arnot*, 304–8.

[10] Bailey, *Commission*, 30 ff.

[11] Baker, *Arnot*, 314–26.

[12] For a general history of the mission, see Alma Turnbull, *Chitokoloki: Celebrating a Century of the Lord's Work in Northwestern Zambia* (Port Colborne, ON, 2014): reviewed in *BHR*, 11 (2015), 95–7. The website is: 'Chitokoloki Mission Hospital', <https://www.chitokoloki.com/>.

and death, told and retold, inspired several generations of Brethren to 'heed the Call', come to Africa, and 'pick up the sword.'[13]

The new mission immediately acquired an air of romantic tragedy within mission circles and retained it for some years. Before Arnot died, the youthful Rogers had mangled a foot in a gun accident, but had refused to leave and seek medical attention in South Africa. After Arnot's death, Rogers recovered and helped Suckling move the mission approximately fifteen kilometres north to the beautiful and more healthy site that it presently occupies (in place of Kabompo Mission, it was renamed Chitokoloki, but for many years most people still called it Kabompo Mission in honour of Arnot). Then just when Chitokoloki seemed to be prospering, Rogers abruptly died from blackwater fever. As he died while traveling to Kalene to marry his fiancé, an equally active young missionary, the aura of romantic tragedy continued. Arnot's and Rogers's deaths made them martyrs who illustrated Christian valour. Likewise, Suckling's determination to stay, despite the deaths of his two comrades, seemed to reveal Christian determination and tenacity. Chitokoloki and Suckling's new programmes received considerable publicity.[14]

With this founding of Chitokoloki on the eve of the First World War, three mission stations occupied the three major parts of what would become the NWP (see Map). From these, other Brethren and SAGM stations opened. By the time Arnot died, twenty mission stations were operating in the Beloved Strip. He had personally initiated many of them.

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[13] Baker describes Arnot's final journey from Kabompo to South Africa as an invalid and his inspirational death bed experiences, 320–30. For a memorial by someone who knew him as a fellow missionary, see Dan Crawford, 'Memories of F. S. Arnot', *Christian Express*, 2 May 1921, 74–6. For an interesting, but deficient, biography, see Tony Lawman, *From the Hands of the Wicked* (London, 1960).

[14] See the following issues of *EoS* for these dramatic events: Suckling, 15 Mar. 1914, 43 (June 1914), pt. 1: 215–6; Nov. 1914, 44; (Feb. 1915), pt. 2: 72–3; 45 (Oct. 1916), 356. I have posted extracts on Brethren educational activities from their missionary magazines at 'Brethren Articles: 1907–1940s', <https://davidwilkinnwp zambia. com/brethren-articles-1907–1940s/>.

Suckling's educational vision

Publicity enabled Suckling to rapidly develop an unusually comprehensive educational programme. This publicity resulted first from Arnot's fame and second from the romantic tragedies that first befell Arnot and later the youthful Lambert Rogers. After the death of the former, Suckling planned a worthy memorial, and Arnot's admirers enthusiastically responded to appeals for support. Then when Rogers died, Suckling became the sole survivor of Arnot's final missionary endeavour. The first visible result of this publicity was the beautiful Arnot Memorial School[15] as described by William Hoste in the epigraph above.

Suckling's character and vision differed greatly from Dr Fisher's, but both were equally determined. He made Chitokoloki and its educational programme unique. His letters reveal a strong-willed, sometimes contradictory personality that could alternatively displease, anger, and alienate, or charm and inspire. Like Fisher, he was a conservative evangelical. Unlike Fisher, Suckling's methods were more unorthodox and controversial in Brethren circles.

Suckling's attitude toward Africans contrasted with that of most colleagues. When writing to overseas supporters, many missionaries stressed negative perceptions of, or facts about, Africans and their way of life. While he was equally anxious to convert Africans, Suckling also tried to convey some of the positive things about Africa. His first annual report, while still at Kalene, reveals his frank and direct ways of dealing with African people and their way of life.

> Have you ever thought of the natives of Africa as being of a very dull type, differing but little the one from the other? I confess that is what I expected to find, but I have found the very opposite. There is a delightful amount of character and individuality in almost every one, both as to countenance and character. They have plenty of humour, some wit, and—among themselves—great conversational powers.[16]

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[15] For two examples of how the publicity of Arnot's death focused attention on Suckling, see *Links of Help* [hereafter *LoH*], 3 (1913–4), 204; and 5 (1914–5), 6–7. For two examples of appeals for supporting the school as a memorial to Arnot, see William Hoste, *LoH* (6 Nov. 1915), 5 (1915–6), 98; 117.

[16] 5 May 1912, *EoS*, 41 (July 1912), 274.

Suckling was also more pragmatic than most Brethren missionaries. He adopted a more conventional, hierarchical mission organization in his own little corner of the world. In the process, he delegated work and power to his trained African staff. As his son recalled, "He loved to see men taking responsibility."[17] While this repeatedly got him into trouble with Brethren colleagues, it endeared him to many Africans and enabled him to achieve a great deal with only a few white staff members. Besides the strong 'other worldly' orientation of all conservative evangelicals, he also aggressively attempted to develop Balovale District economically.[18]

Suckling's comprehensive educational programme, which came into full bloom during the First World War, did not suddenly spring forth like Athena from Zeus's forehead. It developed systematically from a humble, conventional educational endeavour much like those at Kalene and the SAGM missions. Following the drama of Arnot's fatal illness and Roger's serious injury, Suckling had moved the mission north to Chitokoloki and opened a little school. Here, he revealed his clear understanding of the close relationship between education and evangelism. Consider one of his first descriptions of the initial school's programme:

> We have already begun school on a small scale with twenty odd scholars mostly from the immediate neighbourhood. . . . We teach them to read and write their own language, and when they are not in school they have to work in the garden or in clearing round the station. In school they are also taught by heart the simple gospel texts and to sing our translated hymns.[19]

In 1914–15 after opening this tiny school, and while planning the Arnot Memorial School and formulating more comprehensive plans, Suckling visited Kalunda and Kalene Missions. Their schools made

[17] Interview with Gordon Suckling, Sachibondo, Mwinilunga, 26 Nov. 1977. My notes of this interview are currently available on my website.

[18] Interview with Gordon Suckling.

[19] *EoS*, 43 (Sept. 1914), pt. 1: 334–5.

him 'blush for what we call a school at Chitokoloki.' Kalunda's industrial programmes in both carpentry and printing deeply impressed him. He learned what 'may be expected of the A-lunda if ever the need arises to teach them the simpler forms of skilled labour.' Thus, his small initial school was only a beginning.[20]

Then in 1915, the Arnot Memorial School became a reality. On a brief visit to Britain during the First World War, Suckling gained financial support to begin. Thomas Hansen, a skilled craftsman, returned to Chitokoloki with him. Suckling together with Hansen, Rogers, and African brethren constructed the school. It looked very impressive.[21]

Meanwhile, several lengthy articles about the school appeared in *Links of Help*, the magazine of the Missionary Study Classes. Many mission supporters in Britain informally 'adopted' school boys. In fact, the response was so large that the editor reminded readers about continuing needs at Dr Fisher's boarding school. The end result of this publicity and popular support in Britain was the visit of William Hoste, a prominent itinerant Brethren preacher, who dedicated the school. Just as the buildings impressed Hoste, so did its evangelical potential:

> There are 130 boys at present in the school, and continual applications from far and near. It is difficult for anyone who does not know the circumstances of African life to appreciate fully what the existence of a centre like this means, if well-manned and equipped with its Gospel testimony and schools, to a considerable tract of dark Africa where Christ would not otherwise be named. A station like this is truly a lamp in a dark place, and its effect with God's blessing must be incalculable.[22]

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[20] 26 Jan. 1915, *EoS*, 44 (Apr. 1915), pt. 2: 157–8.

[21] Suckling, 24 Feb. 1916, *EoS*, 45 (June 1916), pt. 2: 236–7; Suckling, Rogers, and Hansen, 3 June 1916, *EoS*, 45 (Sept. 1916), pt. 1: 317; *LoH*, 5 (1915–16), 117, 144, and 194. Rogers died before Hoste visited and dedicated the school.

[22] Hoste, *LoH*, 6 (1916–17), 100. For other key articles in *LoH*, see: Suckling, 5 (1915–16), 75–7. For the support of schoolboys and the editor's reminder, see the following two notes in *LoH*, 5 (1915–16), 117 and 132.

Controversy over English

Even before Arnot Memorial opened, Suckling advocated the teaching of English so that it could become a lingua franca. Although the editors of *Echoes of Service* (hereafter *Echoes*) published one of his letters that treated the issue, they added that 'it would be inadvisable to attempt to make English a *lingua franca* for native Christians.'[23]

The problem of a lingua franca for the region provides a relevant example of internal Brethren disagreements that were difficult to solve and yet had widespread social significance. This issue raised long-term questions. Should the Bible be translated into many African languages? Or should more extensive educational programmes teach Africans to read and understand easier-to-translate European languages, especially English, French, and Portuguese? While Suckling and Charles Swan advocated the latter, most Brethren rejected this idea of a European lingua franca. They argued that Africans should read the Bible in their mother tongue. Thus, they advocated and later undertook the enormously time-consuming task of translating the Bible into many languages.

Even though mild, the *Echoes'* rebuke departed from the periodical's policy. Consequently, Suckling did not press the issue of English as a lingua franca so strongly again. Publicly, the issue died. Diverging feelings nonetheless remained and this difficult consensus relegated African education, beyond basic literacy for reading the Bible, to a lower place than translation work.

Suckling continued teaching English to advanced students at Chitokoloki but with less fanfare. In fact, he restated his plans to make them conform with acceptable Brethren objectives. In two important articles, he reassured readers that his aim was 'to teach the boys enough . . . to be able to read and understand the Bible as it was translated for them.' He had no desire 'to introduce the boys to higher education of either an academic or industrial nature.' Such training

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[23] *EoS*, 44 (Sept. 1915), pt. 2: 356–7. This controversy of European lingua franca within Brethren mission circles has always interested me. Thus, I brought together a number of Brethren documents in Appendix B of both my dissertation and e-book. See the following webpage: 'The Northwest Province of Zambia: Academic Writings', <https://davidwilkinnwpzambia.com/academic-writings-and-sources/>.

would only encourage them just enough for them to be able *to earn their own living* by rough carpentry or gardening work. They will then be able to teach others, to live intelligent and godly lives, and, . . . be able to teach and preach in their own villages without needing financial support from the missionary.'[24]

While suspecting the value of 'higher education' as did other Brethren in this era, Suckling believed that he must do more than help Africans read the Bible. His purpose becomes clear to the present-day reader when the phrase 'pay their own taxes' replaces 'earn their own living'. Like other missionaries in the NWP and all of Northern Rhodesia, Suckling was gravely concerned over the problems created by government taxation. Because they could not earn money locally, people had to flee the territory or migrate to towns, mines, and farms in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. Migration separated and sometimes destroyed families. It also exposed people to the worst sins in the new colonial societies.[25]

Possibly more than anything, Suckling wanted to stabilize Balovale's population. He felt this was necessary to properly evangelize the district. Thus, he aggressively sought a new solution.

Envisioning a new Christian utopia

Suckling decided to turn Balovale into the rural Christian utopia that Arnot had vaguely envisioned many years before. To reach this goal, he not only had to cope with traditional African 'backwardness', ignorance, and sin, but also with the new taxation/migration dilemma. As a result, Suckling developed comprehensive ideas about education's role in the evangelical effort. For example, Arnot Memorial School would not just be a physical monument to its namesake, but also a living memorial to Arnot's spirit and vision. An

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[24] *EoS*, 45 (June 1916), pt. 2: 236–7; 'Sun-dried Bricks in the Arnot Memorial School: The Question of School Work in the Kabompo District', *LoH*, 5 (1915–16), 109–10 (last quotation). The italics are mine.

[25] For the taxation/migration issue as a strong motivation in Suckling's expanding programme, see his 1920 letter in Appendix G in my dissertation and e-book (cited on my website); also other statements of his aims and objectives that were published in *EoS*, 43 (Sept. 1914), pt. 1: 334–5 and 48 (Nov. 1919), 257–8.

ever-expanding regional system would extend outward from this central school. Village out-schools would be at least partially self-supporting. Modern industrial and agricultural training would be taught. By training people to assume positions in the local cash economy, he hoped to create an environment in which Christianity would grow and flourish naturally.

Suckling's educational system became the foundation of an ambitious district development plan. When implemented, he hoped that it would enable ever increasing numbers of people, especially converts, to pay their taxes and still have money for basic needs. The plan included new cottage industries that, in turn, required retail stores and improved transportation. To complete it, he included the development of local agriculture. Since taxation was permanent, this plan was long-term.[26]

Suckling believed that small, local industries not only had to be started, but also had to quickly become self-supporting. The taxation/migration problem was serious and his funds were very limited. Consequently, he encouraged basic agricultural activities, especially the cultivation of crops like groundnuts (peanuts), cassava (manioc), and rice. The people could sell them downstream in Barotseland and Livingstone. He also expanded lumbering operations and encouraged the production of dugout boats, which were much in demand on the Barotse plains. Likewise, he trained carpenters to make high quality furniture for Europeans living in Barotseland, and for the people themselves. Finally, he used the canoes as part of an improved transport system between Chitokoloki and Barotseland. The transport

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[26] Suckling's vision and objectives have to be deducted from: his published letters in *EoS* and *LoH*; the reminiscences of Gordon, his only living son; and surviving early African supporters. Suckling never wrote an autobiography and his personal papers were destroyed after his death. His only other writings seem to be two short pamphlets by him for supporters: *Chitokoloki on the Zambezi: A Story of Development* (privately printed at Chitokoloki, n.d. [*c*. 1946]) and *Mission Work in the Kabompo Valley* (n.pl., 1915). I have only seen the former; the latter, however, is referred to in *LoH* and by Robert I. Rotberg, *Christian Missionaries and the Creation of Northern Rhodesia: 1880–1924* (Princeton, NJ, 1965), 214.

system in turn allowed him to bring in supplies for new retail stores. Here people could buy necessities after they paid their taxes.[27]

In 1920 these new endeavours reached their peak. The Balovale District Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 1920 describes them:

> The carpentry boys have been making progress and their number is now fifteen, half of whom can now do useful work. Twenty boys have been taught saw-pit work and others are about to learn. The carpenters and the sawyers who are able to work by themselves are paid piece work and at reasonable rates are able to make from twenty to forty shillings a month. The sawyers make their pits in the neighbourhood of the trees and bring in the planks for sale. In the course of a year they would cut down about a hundred trees but by adopting the method mentioned it is possible to distribute the boys over a wide area. Some of the school boys are taught type setting and distributing and simple machine printing work. . . . The learning of trades, however, can only be accomplished by a few and so the Mission encourages cultivation of rice, nuts, grain and manioc. The store . . . provide[s] a market for the natives.[28]

While working to achieve this broad development, Suckling did not forget his final aim: to prepare young men to 'teach and preach in their own villages without needing financial support from the missionaries.' The teachers would be self-supporting farmers and carpenters, and

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[27] For details of this comprehensive plan and how it initially developed, see the following: Suckling, 12 Apr. 1919, *EoS*, 48 (Aug. 1919), 183–4; ZNA, W. E. M. Owen (Native Commissioner [NC]), Balovale Sub-District, in Barotseland District [Province] Annual Report [AR] for the year ending 31 March 1920, Secretary for Native Affairs [ZA] 7/1/4/2 (also ZA 7/3/8). In the 'Trade and Commerce' section of the latter, the NC describes the new stores that originated from the mission. For a photograph of some products from the carpentry shop, see *EoS*, 49 (June 1920), 132–3. By 1928, this industrial programme included printing; see: Suckling, (30 Sept. 1918), *EoS*, 48 (Mar. 1919), 65. Also, see Douglas Hume, *Voices from the Vineyard*, 16 (Nov.–Dec. 1921), n.pp. Also, in my interview with him, Gordon Suckling described his father's wide interpretation of his evangelical ministry: see <https://davidwilkinnwpzambia.com/academic-writings-and-sources/interviews-1971-1978/>.

[28] ZNA, Barotse District [Province] AR for the year ending 31 Mar. 1920, Balovale Sub-District, ZA 7/1/4/2.

though modest, their places would be 'outposts of evangelism' where Christianity would be stressed. Reading and writing skills would be of less importance.[29]

In 1917, government officials and the African populace successfully encouraged Suckling to begin village out-schools. He opened the first on the Mumbeji River 'at the capital of the Mambunda chief, Chinyama.' The people built the school themselves, and over one hundred pupils 'representing three different tribes—Mambunda, A-lunda, and Va-Lwena'—attended. The chief, who had been to the Barotse National School and spoke some English, supported the effort. The teacher was Thomas Chinyama, one of the original members of the Chitokoloki assembly.[30]

The rapid expansion of village schools continued. At the end of the 1917–18 rainy season, Suckling reported that 'the seemingly impossible [had] occurred.' Despite the 'native church [being] very small,' they opened a second village school at Chinonu among the Luvale. Suckling assured his supporters that 'already at both places there are those who profess to have found life in the Lord Jesus.' Two other schools opened soon after.[31]

In September 1918, Suckling described this rapid, joint educational-evangelical missionary expansion:

> We have now four out-schools, where native Christians have made their homes, and in addition to teaching the rudiments of education, are carrying on an active evangelistic work. The four schools are as follows: Mumbeji, 27 miles east, in charge of Thomas and his wife Chivivi. Chinonu, 20 miles west, in charge of Ndumba and Sayikumba (the latter's wife is in fellowship). Kakonga, 17 miles south, in charge of David Njapawu and Kamwandi, whose wives are professing Christians. Lwampunga, 22 miles north and close to the Government Post. It has been in charge of Manongu and his wife, who

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[29] Suckling, *EoS*, 45 (June 1916,), pt. 2: 237; Suckling, 10 Sept. 1917, *EoS*, 47 (Mar, 1918), 72.

[30] Suckling, 28 Dec. 1917, *EoS*, 47 (Apr. 1918), 101–2. Also, see Suckling, 20 Sept. 1917, *EoS*, 47 (Jan. 1918), 20.

[31] Suckling, 15 Apr. 1918, *EoS*, 47 (Aug. 1918), 205–6.

> have been helped by Samalesu, but the people are so unresponsive that the work is particularly trying, so we are thinking of relieving Manongu, that he may return here for refreshment and instruction, and of sending other Christians for a month or so at a time to look after the work.[32]

By the end of the First World War, less than five years after the mission began, Suckling's very comprehensive educational endeavours started yielding a wide assortment of fruits. Hidden inside, however, were several worms!

Dual Barotse administration and the African populace

Suckling's innovations flourished, at least for a time, because conditions were right. Unlike other NWP missions, Chitokoloki received the general support of both the administration and the African people. Even the tensions within the district initially worked in his favour and/or goaded his own educational efforts.

In 1914, the political, economy, social, and even geographical situation for opening a mission in Balovale was very different from opening missions in Mwinilunga in 1906, or in Kasempa/Solwezi in 1910/1911. Unlike these other places, Balovale had natural water transport. The Zambezi River connected it with Mongu and Livingstone, the government centres of the new colonial society.

By 1914, the BSAC and Lewanika, the powerful Lozi king ('litunga'), Barotseland's dual government, used each other for their mutual benefit: the Lozi's nominal rule provided the Company with an excuse for entering the district, and Lewanika made his claims of sovereignty over Balovale a reality with BSAC power. Both also found enforced taxation a useful thing. Through the 'bush telephone', Lewanika's visit to Britain and his ability to talk to the white man in English were widely known. Taxation showed Balovale's recalcitrant Lunda and Luvale that Lewanika was their ruler and that the white man's gun worked on his behalf. Meanwhile, by collecting tax

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[32] Suckling, 30 Sept. 1918, *EoS*, 48 (Mar. 1919), 64–5. In an entry dated 12 June 1918, Suckling gave the names of five village schools and their teachers. According to this, they were located at Mumbeji, Chinonu, Kakonga, Lwampunga, and Makondu: ZNA, KDE 2/30/7.

revenue, the BSAC consolidated its own rule. It also started a stream of black migrate labour down the river to the mines and farms of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. This exploitative, dual government wanted missionaries in Balovale to further consolidate its rule and to provide cheap and ameliorating social services. For the same reasons, Balovale societies urgently needed an intermediary, an interpreter, and if possible, a saviour.[33]

Despite the general short- and long-term destruction caused by high taxation, Barotseland received a little tax money back. Unlike other parts of Northern Rhodesia, the BSAC put a small percentage of the collected tax moneys into the Barotse Trust Fund because of an early agreement. 'Control of the Trust Fund remained firmly in the hands of the Company, but Lewanika's request that first priority be given to education was accepted.'[34] Lewanika was both the advocate and patron of modern education. Educational projects particularly centred on the Barotse National School, but some money was ear-marked for sub-districts such as Balovale. Consequently, this Fund made Barotseland the most educationally progressive area of Northern Rhodesia prior to 1924.[35]

Arnot, Suckling, and Rogers had arrived at a crucial time. In 1914, the dual government had planned to open an out-school in Balovale District with money from the Fund. Threatened by the prospect, Suckling hastened his own educational efforts. Several years later, in

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[33] For the complexities of this Barotseland political setting, see Chapters 4 and 6 in either my dissertation or e-book.

[34] P. D. Snelson, *Educational Development in Northern Rhodesia, 1883–1945* (Lusaka, ZM, 1974), 123.

[35] Mutumba Mainga, *Bulozi Under the Luyana Kings: Political Evolution and State Formation in Pre-Colonial Zambia* (London, 1973), 205. For the best accounts of the Barotse National School, see Snelson, *Development*, 123–6, and M. C. Mortimer, 'History of the Barotse National School—1907 to 1957', *Northern Rhodesia Journal*, 3/4 (1957), 303–10. See also, Gerald L. Caplan, *The Elites of Barotseland, 1878–1969: A Political History of Zambia's Western Province* (London, 1970), 93–4. I am not certain how much funding came to Chitokoloki and Balovale District prior to 1924, but it was small at best.

one of his letters to the Missionary Study Classes, Suckling explained his opposition to the government school and the situation in 1914:

> In the Barotse Kingdom to the south of the Kabompo, a large school had been opened, according to the treaty. . . . The education therein is purely secular, and the aim is to fit the natives who attend the school for work in the offices and the mines, or on the farms near the railway to the South. This training does not fit the natives to return to their villages to seek the general uplift of the community. It tends rather to the breaking up of tribal life, and to the drifting of the natives into a worse condition morally and spiritually than they were in before, by introducing them to the example and influence of degraded white men.
>
> In connection with this school the Government proposed opening an out-school in the Kabompo District by sending a trained native teacher to give rudimentary education. His life and teaching would have been irreligious and his influence general bad. Soon after Mr. Arnot had settled Mr. Rogers and myself in the district we heard of this suggestion and in order to make the opening of such a school with all its possibilities of evil unnecessary, we proposed starting a school ourselves. . . . The Resident Magistrate . . . promised not to open a rival school in the district so long as ours proved to be efficient.[36]

After 1914, the Barotse National School and Barotse Trust Fund continued to goad Suckling, just as they had initially. The school provided a yardstick for evaluating Suckling's educational work; the Fund later partly subsidized his efforts. Suckling had to justify his requests, however, since the Fund also gave money to the Paris Evangelical Mission's schools to the south. Even the initial enthusiasm for English must be seen in this educational environment with its special goads and incentives. Unlike Dr Fisher at Mwinilunga, or SAGM missionaries in the adjoining Kaonde-Lunda Province, Suckling never had the independence to do only as he pleased.[37]

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[36] *LoH*, (1915–16), 110; quoted in Appendix E of the dissertation and e-book. Suckling also said something very similar in *EoS*, 45 (Jan. 1916), pt. 1: 17.

[37] As stated in n. 35 above, I am not certain how much came from the Barotse Trust Fund prior to 1924.

The constant threat of mission competition also kept Suckling active. If he disliked the Barotse National School, the thought of Roman Catholics and Seventh Day Adventists entering the district and opening schools horrified him. Though no other mission actually began work and started schools until the 1930s, the threat persisted from Arnot's days. Unlike the Kaonde-Lunda Province with much more scattered populations, rival missions considered the upper Zambezi Valley a highly desirable field. Realizing Suckling's fears, the Barotse administration used the threat as its final trump card. Like the territorial administration, the officials did not want too much competition, but they never objected to a little. Limited competition kept missionaries busy providing social services and kept government expenses down.[38]

Suckling actually worked well with senior officials in this dual administration. His disagreements were generally with junior white administrators or African police/messengers, who exceeded and abused their authority. Available records indicate that his contacts with Lewanika and his successor Yeta were cordial. This was even more true with the Resident Magistrate, the senior BSAC official in Barotseland. George Lyons, the BSAC's Resident Magistrate in Mongu, came to Suckling's defence during his troubles in the early 1920s. George Suckling even encouraged his twin brother to become Principal of the Barotse National School. The latter, an Anglican clergyman, briefly served in this capacity from August 1921 to October 1923.[39]

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[38] No single available government record shows that officials intentionally manoeuvred Suckling, but I get this impression from general reading. Furthermore, rival missions intended to enter the upper Zambezi long before they did.

[39] Information on these personal relationships between George Suckling and other members of the colonial elite is limited. Likewise, so is information on the Revd F. C. Suckling. For the latter, the best is given in ZNA, ZA 1/9/119/2/1, P. R. Holland, 1932, 'History of the Barotse National School'. Also, see Stanley R. Coad, Nov., *EoS*, 51 (Mar. 1922), 64. Gordon Suckling also kindly supplied information about his late uncle in a letter dated 18 Oct. 1982. He informed me that his uncle later changed his name to Macdonald, his wife's maiden name. For Suckling/Macdonald's time from *c.*1925–45 as the governor of Dr Barnardo's school, Goldings, in Hertfordshire see: 'Old Boys Memories', <http://web88.extendcp.co.uk/ goldings.org/page205.html>.

The mixed ethnic population of Balovale also supported Suckling's educational innovations. First of all, they knew that he directed his efforts to everyone in the region, not just particular groups. Although he spoke Lunda, he continually stressed Chitokoloki's non-ethnic, district-wide ministry. As he, Hansen, and Rogers explained in 1916:

> Some have thought of us as working among the Va-Lovale (or Va-Lwena); some as being entirely confined to the Va-Lunda. Neither idea is right. We feel that this station is more for a district than for a tribe. In the district, there are representatives of at least seven different tribes, of which the Lunda and the Lovale are the most numerous.[40]

Second, Suckling's programme balanced evangelism and social service in a manner acceptable to the local population. Lack of interest among Africans is mentioned infrequently in the early records. The contrast between Chitokoloki and especially the SAGM missions is striking. For example, in mid-1919, less than six years after Chitokoloki opened and at a time of grave crises both at Kalene and the SAGM missions, one visitor marveled at Chitokoloki's size. He recorded, 'We . . . saw something of the extensive educational and industrial work there. One day [we] preached to 350 people.'[41]

Suckling's early success clearly was achieved, at least in part, because he worked well with the people, instilled confidence and loyalty in them, and even defended them. For example, when Suckling initially walked from Kalene, fifteen young men 'none over seventeen years of age at most' walked with him.[42] Although most left because they could not deal with the warmer climate, Suckling quickly attracted other able young people. He identified the most capable, trained them for specific tasks, and gave them the power and authority they needed to help in his work. He also helped defend the local people when necessary. For example, at one point some Barotse police/messengers cruelly mistreated tax violators and Suckling came to their aid.

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[40] 3 June 1916, *EoS*, 45 (Sept. 1916), pt. 1: 317.

[41] Douglas T. Hume, 10 July 1919, *EoS*, 48 (Nov. 1919), 257.

[42] Suckling, 15 Mar. 1914, *EoS*, 43 (June 1914), pt. 1: 215–6. See also Suckling's *Chitokoloki on the Zambezi*. For his defence of African people, see esp. ns. 4 and 17 in Ch. 6 of my dissertation or e-book.

Suckling's faith in people was returned. A far higher proportion of his best trainees remained with him. Fewer went off to the towns than did the SAGM's young adherents. These young assistants received minimal salaries for their work and were not necessarily satisfied. They were, however, able to earn money locally by using skills learned at the school. Their general support in turn enabled Suckling to expand rapidly, despite having few missionary colleagues at Chitokoloki.

Suckling and many Balovale Africans used the possessive form of speech when referring to each other. Just as Suckling considered everyone 'his' people, in the best sense of paternalism, Africans regarded him as 'our' missionary. Lozi overlords lumped the Balovale peoples together as inferior *wiko* and the British rulers did the same. Missionaries in the Zambezi Valley prior to this time centered their work further north in Angola or further south among the Lozi. Suckling was the first member of the new elite to consider the Balovale peoples as important, both as individuals and as a group. Also, as one former Chitokoloki pupil, Silas Chizawu recalled, Africans liked the way his "door was always open."[43] Suckling proved to be a worthy white friend: he was their interpreter of the new political economy and a potential buffer against administrative abuses. They appreciated and remembered his intervention.[44]

Suckling's fading vision

Despite its impressive beginnings, Chitokoloki almost abruptly closed down in 1921. Just as its initial success focused on Suckling, so did its travail. He kept the mission alive, but his comprehensive educational vision had slowly faded by 1924.

Suckling's business methods caused the immediate crisis. In his enthusiasm, he over-committed his budget and over-estimated his ability to keep control of ballooning enterprises. The formal school system at the station and in the villages made up only one part of his

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[43] Silas Chizawu interview, 15 June 1976, quoted in Wilkin, *To the Bottom of the Heap* (e-book), 129.

[44] In my interview, Silas Chizawu stated everything eloquently. See Appendix J of the dissertation or e-book.

comprehensive educational programme. His stores, trading down the river, selling of crops, lumbering, and boat building were not only too much work for him to direct, but too peripheral to his personal evangelical ministry. When he realized that his complex, multiple endeavours were getting out of hand, he requested help.[45] In response to his pleas, several Brethren businessmen formed the Kabompo Trading Syndicate, a limited company with £2,000 sterling. In 1920 a Mr and Mrs M. Rodgers from Johannesburg arrived at Chitokoloki to represent this company.[46]

Problems began. The Rodgers totally disapproved of Suckling's methods. When he left the station on overseas leave, these newcomers sent strong letters to his main supporters in Britain. As Suckling himself reported, Rodgers wrote: 'All my reports about the work are inaccurate and untrue; that I hinder Hansen from doing proper missionary work by imposing industrial work upon him; that there is no spiritual work carried on.' A very sensitive situation developed. The Resident Magistrate in Mongu supported Suckling and became deeply involved. No case came to court, but seemingly only because the Brethren preferred not to use secular courts. In the process, the new company broke up.[47]

Brethren supporters in Britain asked Dr Fisher to make a personal investigation. Fisher's report no longer seems to exist. Because of the controversy, however, Fisher mused that Suckling 'seems very anxious minded about the report sent to Mr. Vine. . . . [We] are sorry that he shows no signs of sorrow for the mistakes he has made, and I fear if reproved by Mr. Vine will sever his connection with *Echoes* for which we are very sorry.'[48]

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45 *EoS*, 49 (October 1920), 230–1, especially the first paragraph.

46 Ibid.; ZNA, ZA 7/3/8, 'Extracts from the Annual Report of the Barotse District [Province] for the Year Ended 31st March 1920', p.1.

47 ZNA, KDE 2/30/8, 'Barotseland: Mission, School, 1920 January—1922 December', Suckling to George Lyons, 4 Nov. 1920; also ibid., Mrs M. Rodgers to Lyons, 22 Dec. 1920; and Montague Goodman (London) to Lyons on 22 Dec. 1920.

48 ZNA, Fisher Papers, folios 1752–5, Walter Fisher to Singleton Darling, 4 Apr. 1921.

Suckling did not sever his connection and survived the crisis by sheer stubborn determination. His big plans for an educational programme that moved far beyond direct evangelism and rudimentary education, however, had received a fatal blow. When the crisis started, Suckling told Lyons, 'It is impossible now to carry through the scheme for industrial development until confidence is re-established in me.' Actually the scheme had died, and his industrial and development plans, unprofitable at least on a short-term basis, had to be permanently abandoned. Not only did support decrease, but his remaining friends now strongly opposed the scheme's continuation under the auspices of the mission. In his Annual Report for 31 March 1923, the local Balovale official lamented:

> The chief industrial work is still carpentry and some of the work turned out is very good. I understand, however, that the work has been a failure financially with the result that the elders of the Mission have strongly advised Mr. Suckling to close down this branch of the work. This is to be regretted, as the work employed directly and indirectly hundreds of natives during the year, and this is a district where work is difficult to find.[49]

Suckling's formal educational system contracted because of this crisis. The number of new village schools stopped increasing and several closed. Likewise, the decline in financial support forced Suckling to abandon boarding at the ageing Arnot Memorial School. Its glitter, now tarnished, failed to inspire as much overseas support. Nor did it command the original attention and enthusiasm of the Balovale populace. In 1922 he described the formal educational system and its troubles:

> We are not sufficiently settled to have a regular boarding-school as before, and we find it so difficult to ensure that each boy allocated to supporters will remain for a complete year, that we shall not attempt just the same arrangement. The money we are receiving at present we

[49] ZNA, KDE 2/30/8, Suckling to Lyons, 4 Nov. 1920. ZNA, ZA 7/1/6/2, Bruce Miller (Acting Assistant Magistrate), 'Barotse Province Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 1923, Balovale Sub-District'.

> are using for general school expenses. . . . Carpentry seems the only form of employment that we can give to many boys without incurring loss. . . . From the villages around us, we have nearly 200 boys in school, . . . Although we are thus able to have quite a large school without boarding many, we cannot have many boys from distant villages. . . . Schools cannot be opened everywhere; there is no doubt that the school in the past enabled us to reach a very much wider area than is usual within so short a time. . . . As we are given opportunity, therefore, we shall still try to gather boys from the distant villages and have them living on the place while attending school.[50]

The gloom in Suckling's letter is clear. His vision faded fast. Furthermore, the tide continued to ebb until the end of this period. The educational programme remained mediocre.

Suckling's problems did have another dimension. He had dreamed an impossible dream, not only for himself, but also for his overseas supporters and for the Africans around him. For him, education became the symbol of a rural Christian utopia in Balovale. This dream was progressive, but unrealistic. It attempted to resist the unresistable. The central BSAC government/business enterprise did not just want tax money; but it also desired men to migrate to the towns. It did not expect development in this district. Consequently, local BSAC officials did not hinder Suckling, but except for moral support, neither did they help. He sank quietly beneath the weight and burden of his own development dream.

Because of his forceful personality and enthusiasm, both Suckling's overseas supporters and Chitokoloki's African parishioners also dreamed their own impossible dreams. To each, the little-school system became a golden key. To overseas supporters, God seemed to be using Suckling in a wondrous fashion to glorify his name. In the comprehensive educational programme they saw the hand of God bringing salvation to the district. The 1921 events had awakened the dream. To African supporters, Suckling offered a superior programme. He unintentionally raised their hopes for a better life in this world and

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[50] 30 Sept. 1921, *EoS*, 51 (Jan. 1922), 14–15. For another good description, see Henry Faulkner, 2 June 1922, *EoS*, 51 (Sept. 1922), 208–9. The latter notes that the school met weekly from Monday until Thursday and the pupils were younger than before.

the next, faster than he could fulfil them. The 1921 events, which hurt Suckling's finances and diminished his programmes, had also awakened their dreams.

Suckling began his 1922 lamentation by stating that 'Satan' had been at work. The result was that 'some of the Christians have stumbled very badly.' Of these, some returned to 'pagan' customs and/or migrated to other places to seek work. By 1924 these included some of his finest Christian leaders.[51] After Suckling stubbed his toe in 1921 and new development projects ended, young African church leaders fell. Voluntary funding, which Suckling coaxed from overseas, had permitted his big development schemes. These, in turn, enabled young African Christians to earn their tax money and sometimes a little more besides. Consequently, Chitokoloki and its environs placidly prospered in the midst of crises resulting from taxation/migration, the First World War, and influenza.

As noted above, however, much of this funding came from supporters dubious of projects stretching far beyond personal evangelism. When the events of 1921 increased their doubts and they reduced their support and government showed little interest, development had to end. This change hit the new African Christian leaders the hardest. They lost their chance to earn their tax money locally. Since the mission could not so readily fulfil their more mundane needs, Christianity's future promises of heavenly riches had much less appeal. Hopes had been artificially raised and the ensuing reality brought gloom. 'Pagan' ways developed renewed appeal, and the Congolese copper mines now seemed to promise what Suckling had failed to fulfil.

Among those who stumbled was Mwondela, Suckling's right-hand man. In 1916, Mwondela came from Kazombo as an African Brethren 'faith missionary'—i.e., without a guaranteed wage. His purpose was to help Suckling establish Chitokoloki, and his Luvale complemented Suckling's Lunda. Although Mwondela had no regular salary, he not only industriously assisted Suckling at the Mission but also employed other men to run his own farm. Suckling repeatedly praised

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[51] *EoS*, 51 (Jan. 1922), 14–15.

Mwondela's work to overseas supporters. But by 1924, Mwondela left both the church and the area to seek work in the Congo. The exact reason for Mwondela's change of heart and the total split with Suckling is not clear. Nonetheless, Mwondela kept in touch with his wife, small children, and extended family near Chitokoloki.[52]

The departure of Mwondela and other young leaders never became a continual exodus of Chitokoloki's best young men, at least in comparison to that among the SAGM missions. The hardships of the journey to towns north in the Congo or south in South Africa, caused some to return to the fold. Mwondela's premature death in 1927 possibly discouraged others from following in these dissenters' footsteps.[53]

With the dual loss of overseas supporters and of key African church leaders in 1924, Suckling's greatest schemes died. Though failing in many ways, Suckling planted a seed between 1914 and 1921. It took a longer time to germinate than he anticipated, longer than his lifespan.[54] However, these early efforts were not forgotten. They became part of the district's traditions and would be re-examined when the Zambian Government attempted to implement large-scale development plans in

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[52] For three specific laudatory descriptions of Mwondela, see *EoS*: 3 June 1916, 45 (Sept. 1916), 317; 12 Apr. 1919, 48 (Aug. 1919), 183; and 19 July 1919, 48 (Nov. 1919), 257–8. No writer said much about Mwondela's leaving the church at the time. Oblique references to his departure many years later, however, indicate how deeply Suckling felt the loss. See for example, Suckling, 14 Mar. 1931, *EoS*, 60 (July 1931), 159–60. John Mwondela spoke at length about his father and what he knew of his work in the Congo. However, in my interview with him at Lusaka in 1979, he did not mention the split with Suckling, let alone the cause. Although I now regret it, I hesitated in directly posing questions to him on this delicate, but key, topic.

[53] With possibly a touch of glee, Suckling described what befell three of the Christians who attempted to proceed 'secretly' to the Congo in 1919. See Suckling, 19 July 1919, *EoS*, 48 (Nov. 1919), 257–9. For Mwondela's death, see my notes of the interview with John Mwondela, Lusaka, 8 Jan. 1979, presently on my website: <https://davidwilkinnwpzambia.com/academic-writings-and-sources/interviews-1971-1978/>.

[54] Kovina Mutenda has several interesting paragraphs about Suckling's long-term effects on Zambian society in his 'Gospel Work in Zambia', 212. He cites a source which notes that the school at Chitokoloki had the largest number of individuals (19) educated at a mission school in *Who is Who in Zambia* (1968).

the 1960s and 1970s. Suckling's timing was off, but he alone had a legitimate educational vision in the NWP in the BSAC era.[55]

[55] Chitokoloki's total evangelistic programmes would always be wider than most NWP missions as indicated by Suckling's later pamphlet, *Chitokoloki of the Zambezi*. Nonetheless, there would be considerable differences between these early efforts and those later. In looking back on my days in the NWP during the post-independence era, I am surprised at how often Suckling's early endeavours were mentioned, even as high as the Provincial Development Committee.