

75th Anniversary of our Salem Seminary.

After the 2nd World War on the 14th June of 1949 inspector of missions Adolf Blanke gave a report on the work of the Lutheran missions of the Hannovarian Free Church in Scharnebeck near Lüneburg in Lower Saxony, Germany.¹ He reports among other things on the start of a Seminary in Salem in the S.E. Transvaal² in the year 1941³. This was on the mission station led by Superintendent⁴ Christoph Johannes⁵.

In this Seminary evangelists and pastoral assistants were trained in a 2 – 3 yearlong course. This was not funded by the regular mission budget, but by supportive friends of Lutheran missions. Subjects taught at this Seminary were biblical theology⁶, catechesis⁷, homiletics⁸, Church history, ethics, Dogmatics⁹ and other pastoral matters. Superintendent Johannes taught Catechesis and homiletics, the other subjects were taught by missionary Karl Meister, who had been transferred from Pella in Natal¹⁰ for this purpose.

The first course was in 1941-1942 and had 4 Zulu students and 2 Batswana. The youngest and brightest Zulu left after a short time. This is disheartening, but quite understandable according to pastor Meister¹¹. The others however continue to work faithfully in their various stations.

The second course was from February 1943 until October 1945. This had 3 Zulu and 6 Batswana students. And in the third course from October 1945 to December 1947 there were 6 students¹² and 2 in a preparatory course¹³. The latter were too young for the main course and therefore had to attend the next course, which was to start in February 1948 as well.¹⁴

1946 brother Meister reported, that all students are diligent, faithful and humble, so that it is a real pleasure to teach, especially if one considers that the teacher receives the greatest blessing anyway. Superintendent Johannes comments, that brother Meister joyfully teaches at the school for evangelists. No sign of rebellion or superiority has been noted. Daily they study the bible, Luther's

¹ The following is translated from the "Bericht über das Missionswerk der (ehemaligen) Hannoverschen Ev.-Luth. Freikirche. Gegeben auf der Synode der hannoverschen Diözese der Selbständigen Ev.Luth. Kirche in Baden, Hessen und Niedersachsen am 14. Juni 1949 in Scharnebeck bei Lüneburg von Missionsinspektor Adolf Blanke in Bleckmar (über Soltau). Pages 12-13.

² Today Mpumalanga province.

³ This of course was right in the middle of WW II.

⁴ Today we'd say Bishop.

⁵ He was the son of the pastor in Wittenberg (Tvl) Pastor Christoph Heinrich Johannes and was called "Bogocwane" (?) = the mill- or grinding stone.

⁶ Explanation of bible passages especially the Sunday lectionary

⁷ Luther's Small Catechism

⁸ Lessons on preaching

⁹ Doctrine of the church

¹⁰ Today KwaZulu/Natal

¹¹ This is not explained or elaborated in any way, so that we don't know, why P.Meister thought this was plausible. It leaves us with speculation only.

¹² It is no longer mentioned, how many of these were Zulu or Tswana.

¹³ The original quotes "Vorschüler".

¹⁴ Nothing more is known as yet to the reporter.

Catechism etc and it seems as if they are so preoccupied with this that they don't get other ideas. All this is very encouraging.