

OPENING OF THE BANTU UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF THE NORTH



INTRODUCTION

On the 2nd of March 1960, the Bantu University College of the North, near Pietersburg in the Northern Transvaal, was officially opened by the Honourable the Minister of Bantu Education, Mr. W. A. Maree, M.P.

This university college, as well as the one at oNgoye, near Empangeni in Zululand, was established in terms of the Act for the Extension of University Education (Act 45 of 1959) and fulfils a promise made in 1948 by the then Prime Minister, Dr. D. F. Malan, when he stated that it was the Government's policy to let the Bantu have what the Europeans already had, but in their own communities and in their own areas.

During the past two years the Building Section of the Department of Bantu Education has been employed planning

and erecting the necessary buildings such as hostels for male and female students, lecture halls, laboratories, offices, etc.

On the opening day it was obvious that the buildings would soon be completed and that the university authorities would be able to start with the layout of the grounds and gardens.

Opening Ceremony

In the spacious, modernly designed dining hall a small platform had been erected to accommodate the Rector and his guests of honour, the Honourable the Minister of Bantu Education and the Honourable the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development and such speakers as were to address the meeting.

On the Rector's left hand the Bantu Advisory Council and the Bantu public were seated. On his right the College

Council and the White guests took their seats. Immediately in front of the platform the staff of 33 and 150 students made an impressive picture where they sat en bloc.

After a few words of welcome in three languages, Afrikaans, English and Northern Sotho, by the Rector, Prof. Dr. E. F. Potgieter, Rev. Hofmeyer opened the function with Scripture reading and a prayer. Professor C. H. Rautenbach, Rector of the Pretoria University and Chairman of the Council for the Northern University College then addressed the gathering.

Prof. Rautenbach

Prof. Rautenbach wished to impress upon the staff and students the fact that they were very fortunate to start off on such a strong footing. He drew a comparison between the way this Bantu University was being started and the way the old Transvaal University College (now Pretoria University) had to start. He pointed out, for instance, that the Pretoria University started off with only four professors in an old house. Only in 1919 did the university get a registrar and it was somewhere in the 1930's when the first librarian was appointed.

"The University College of the North", he said, "is the youngest college in Africa — the oldest is in Cairo. This university has a task to fulfil and I wish its staff and students Godspeed on this venture."

Mn. M. J. Madiba

Mn. M. J. Madiba, Chairman of the Advisory Council, then addressed the audience. He quoted an old Sotho-proverb which says that a young man never praises the good deeds of another young man, and connected the meaning of this proverb with the prevalence of adverse criticism of Bantu Higher Education at present. He pointed out that no matter what critics were saying, the fact remained that the College of the North was an impressive institution, and one which the Bantu might be proud of, and which would be to their benefit.

"Service to one's own people", he continued, "is the rent you pay for your stay on earth. This institution will enable us

TEACHING STAFF: FACULTY OF ARTS

Afrikaans-Nederlands:

Van Heerden, C., M.A., D. Litt (Pret.), T.H.E.D., Senior Lecturer.

Bantu Languages:

Endemann, Th., M.Ed. (Pret.), M.A. (Pret.), D. Litt. (S.A.), Professor, Ntsanwisi, H. W. E., B.A. (S.A.), H.P.E.D. Moloto, E., B.A. (S.A.).

Economics:

Swanepoel, J., B.A., D. Com. (Potch.), Professor.

English:

Smuts, M. W., B.A., (S.A.), M.A., D. Litt (Potch.), T2, Senior Lecturer.

Geography:

Louw, M. J., B.A., (U.O.F.S.), M.A. (S.A.), U.E.D., Senior Lecturer.

History:

De Bruyn, H. A. J., M.A. (Pret), T.E.D., Senior Lecturer.

Psychology:

Van Dyk, T. A., B.Sc. (Potch.) M.A. (S.A.), H.E.D., Professor.

Sociology:

Crause, H. L., M.A. (S.A.), D. Phil (U.O.F.S.), Professor.

Anthropology:

Hanekom, C., M.A. (U.O.F.S.), Senior Lecturer.

Mathematics:

Wiid, A. J. B., M.Sc., D.Sc. (Pret.), T.E.D., Professor.

to pay our rent. It is a small start but it will grow. People are watching us critically but we will not disappoint them. We will show them that we can use a university of this nature in the proper spirit."

Mn. Madiba then unveiled the memorial plaque to the left of the rector.



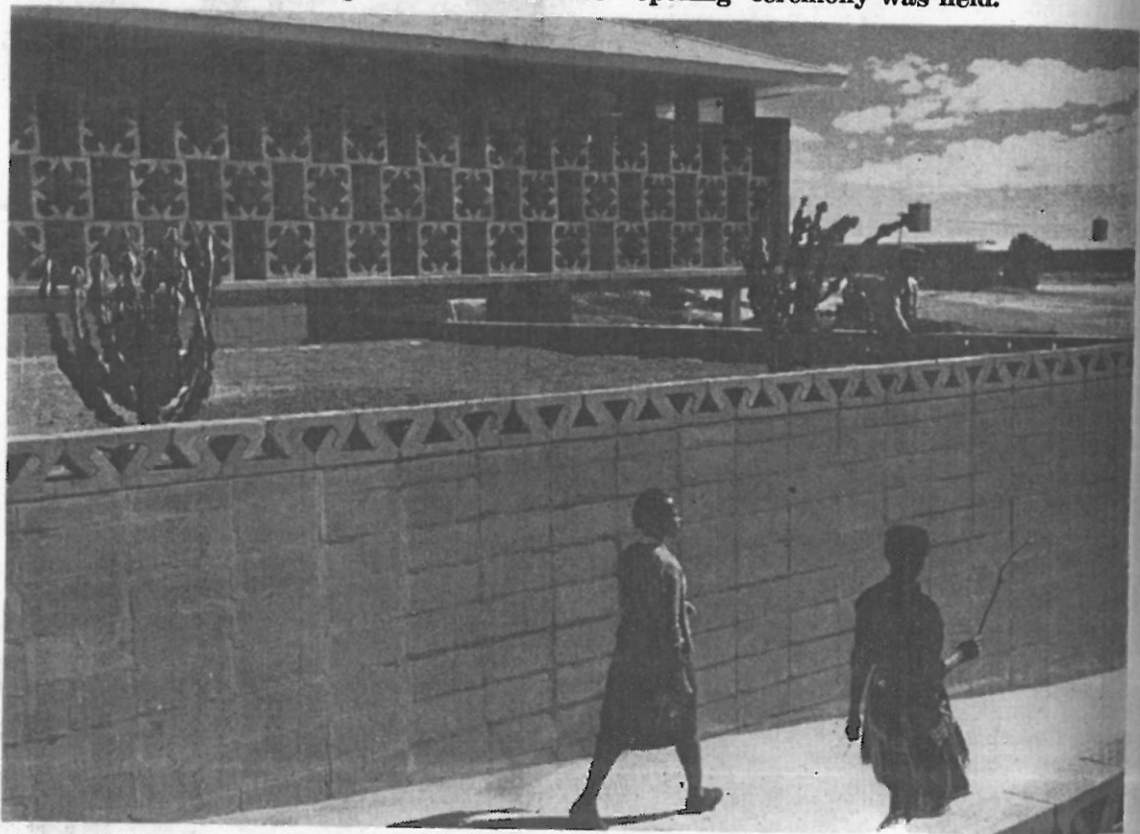
The Hon. Dr. M. D. C. de Wet Nel (left), Prof. Dr. E. F. Potgieter (centre) and the Hon. Mr. W. A. Maree.



Some of the members of the teaching staff of the University College of the North.



The Dining Hall where the opening ceremony was held.



One of the many colourful buildings that house the University College of the North.

MEI 1960

Mr. M. D. C. de Wet Nel, Minister of Bantu Administration and Development

Mr. de Wet said, inter alia:

"The work begun here today is a challenge to the Bantu of South Africa. At this University it will finally have to be proved that the Bantu possess the will, the ability and the sense of responsibility to choose the elevated path of progress and to follow it in practice. It is pioneering work which is being initiated here today. The beginning which I am witnessing here today is much bigger as regards number of students, teaching staff, syllabi, university buildings and other facilities than those with which our European Universities started, and yet they have grown and flourished. It will now depend entirely on the Bantu themselves whether these Universities develop in exactly the same way to take their place proudly and with honour alongside the best universities in the world

"This is no easy task. Remember that your road will be rendered difficult by unfriendly and depreciatory criticism from those who do not wish for your success. While it is an exacting task which you are commencing today, you should always remember that it is also a wonderful opportunity and a great challenge.

"I feel convinced, however, that the goodwill and sound educational principles on which this University establishment rests, the elevated ideals you strive for and mutual confidence and

co-operation, will enable you to survive the growing pains of a young University and to repel the envy and crocodile tears which you will experience from certain quarters, to the dismay of the wolves seeking to prey upon you. I believe that these Universities will develop into formative and creative sources of energy in the socio-economic and scientific structure of the entire life of the Bantu."

Mr. W. A. Maree, Minister of Bantu Education

After thanking various persons and bodies for their untiring efforts to com-



Mn. M. J. Madiba delivering his address.

plete the University College of the North — a name which the Minister pointed out was only temporary — he officially opened the university college. Besides unveiling a plaque to commemorate the occasion the Minister of Bantu Education held an impressive speech the main points of which were:

- The university college aims at efficiency and not luxury because the Bantu taxpayer must assist in financing this undertaking.
- It is the policy gradually to increase the Bantu Advisory Council's responsibilities, and when they have shown that they can hold their own, to give them the powers of the College Council and to make the present council the Advisory Council.
- Under the auspices of the University of South Africa this Bantu University College will gradually become part of the fine university tradition of South Africa.
- This institution must serve the Sotho, Venda and Tsonga, and the academic education of the College must keep in mind the practical and most pressing needs of the people it serves.
- Separate Development has opened new doors for the Bantu: some will use these doors to attain status and honour for themselves, but only when these doors are used to enter the field of community development and service to the community will this College have a real meaning.

Prof. Potgieter, the Rector

Prof. Potgieter thanked the Ministers for their presence and the tasks each had performed on this occasion. He pointed out that 150 students had qualified for enrolment and that they were more or less equally distributed amongst the three faculties i.e. Arts, Education and Natural Science.

He then announced that the Regional Authority of Sibasa had made 14 bursaries available some of which exceeded £84 per year. The Bafokeng Tribal Authority

had also made bursaries available, while the Institute of Race Relations was financing one student.

He thanked various donors for items such as microscopes, curtains, laboratory equipment, books, etc. and pointed out that Chief Mamabolo, in whose area the college was erected, donated £100 to the college as well as two oxen to be slaughtered on the opening day.



Chief Mamabolo: a generous contributor.

Conclusion

The opening of the Bantu University College of the North can justly be regarded as one of the highlights in Bantu Education during the past fifty years. In 1910, when Union was formed, schools for secondary education were scarce and institutions for post-matric education did not exist. The Bantu masses were to a very large extent illiterate and the State as such had very little say in their education. Today after fifty years the pace of progress is simply phenomenal