

## *Double Life: The Story of Madikane Cele*

### The life of Madikane in his younger days

Madikane Cele was born at the beginning of 1830: he did not know the month and date of his birth, but it was during the reign of Dingane in KwaZulu.

According to Madikane the Cele people came from the Mthethwa people. He was the son of Mlomowethole, his father, and his mother was Zililo. Their home was next to the Nkandla Forest. They were under the Chief of the amaQadi, Chief Dube. The amaQadi were under the kingship of King Shaka. However, they were not regarded as an important clan by Shaka, who would comment in a mocking manner and say the Qadi people were not clever and did not have creative skills that would bring progress or encourage progress. The reason was that they were a nation of amaLala. (This refers to the type of dialect that was spoken by the amaQadi that was different from the dialect that was spoken by the amaNtungwa). All this information came from Madikane Cele during an interview with James Stuart, who was a Magistrate in Natal, who researched the histories of black people of South Africa.

UMlomowethole, who was the son of Bobo, who was the son of Ndlulisa, who was in turn the son of Mpinda, was a member of the Ntontela regiment of 1816. This regiment is known for the battles it fought during the time of Shaka, fighting with Zwide, Sikonyela and the Mpondo people. During the wars of Dingane, the amaQadi left KwaZulu and went across the Thukela. At this time this area was not ruled by English people. Chief Dube of the amaQadi died in a Battle in 1837, and his heir and successor, Dabeka, died in the same way in 1868. During this time Mqhawe was still young, and he was the age mate of Madikane: therefore he could not take power and become a Chief. So during his minority uMadluhune was the regent.

This was a period of conflict within the Qadi nation. According to Madikane, as he narrated the story to Stuart, the amaQadi moved down slowly and steadily until they settled in Natal. According to Madikane, UMawa, the sister of King Senzangakhona and Mangena, her Prime Minister, uNtanteleni, crossed to Natal with large herds of cattle. When Mawa arrived with these cattle she settled in an area known as Pikinint (Verulam). After a short while word came from King Mpande asking for the cattle that had been taken by Mawa and Mangena.

UKofiyana, a Prime Minister who lived at eMngeni, was asked by the Government of Mgingundlovu to collect the cattle and give them to emissaries from KwaZulu.

Kofiyane did as he was told - he took the cattle and gave them back to KwaZulu. That is how the amaQadi built their relationship with the Government of the white people.

Mqhawe became a Chief of the amaQadi towards the end of 1840 and Madikane became his assistant. One of Madikane's responsibilities was to organise the wedding of Chief Mqhawe. Madikane had three wives, namely Madelwane, Mafihwase and Sivono.

The amaQadi area or settlement was next to the American Board Church that was led by the Reverend Daniel Lindley. This was the first Church in eNanda built in 1849 by the Reverend Daniel Lindley.

Even though Chief Mqhawe was not a Christian convert, he worked well with Reverend Lindley, whom he supported. Chief Mqhawe admired the practices of the Americans: as a result he sacrificed the companionship of his heir Mandlakayise and sent him to the United States of America, so that he could come back and share what he had learned overseas with the rest of the amaQadi. When Mandlakayise travelled to America he was accompanied by Mabelubhelu, the son of Madikane Cele. Mabelubhelu never returned to South Africa (like the biblical dove of Noah).

Others within the family of Mqhawe played a role in the Inanda Church. U-James Dube from the amaQadi royalty and his mother uDalida, the widow of Chief Dube, both became strong and prominent members of the Church.

Christian spiritual teaching changed the life of Madikane Cele. One day, while in conversation with Robert Plant, Madikane narrated a story about what had happened to him, and this is how he told the story: "This story happened when I was thirty-five years old. There was an old man who wore **ngungunyane (this is not clear)** - both of us had three wives. I was a respected and honest man in the eyes of the Chief. I occupied an important position in relation to the Chief, and I played a role in his affairs which meant that I was always required to be near to him. This is what led to the opening of the abscess.

There was a Church and also a school next to my home. This made me realise the advantages of education. This realisation made me ask myself one question: if I could also be one of those who could read and write would this make me better able to do the work of the Chief?

Because of this longing to learn I was forced to lie to the Chief and say that I was going to visit my relatives at eMkhomazi if the Chief would give me permission. When he agreed I went to Adams Mission at Amanzimtoti.

This was the beginning of a different life for me. I had never thought that I might become a convert. What was in my mind was the wish to know how to read and write. It was in order to obtain this, and nothing else, that I went to school.

When I arrived at Amanzimtoti I found the Reverend sitting and reading a book. I greeted him and he greeted me back without raising his head. He asked what I was looking for and I told him that I wanted to learn about Christianity. Within a few minutes I felt guilty because I was lying: I was only interested in learning how to read and write.

The Reverend placed the book aside, stood up and looked me straight in the eyes and said "What are you saying? You mean an old person, such as yourself, can come to me and tell me that he wants to convert to Christianity? That is not the truth." "It is the truth Reverend; it's what has brought me here." Even as I said these words my conscience reminded me that I was not telling the truth.

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Nevertheless, in the end I was taken to the school where I found myself deep in Christianity, after receiving a full explanation regarding Christianity.

To the Chief I was still useful, and from time to time he would send for me, but I always went back to the school afterwards. At last I decided to accept Christ as my saviour and then I did that. After that I found myself in a difficult position, because by accepting Christianity I had to renounce polygamy (isithembu). That meant abandoning two wives and being left with one wife. This was very difficult because I loved them all and they all loved me.

This choked me in my throat: I didn't know how to say to them, "you two must go". However, I called on the name of the Lord to show me the way. Before I reached home I was met by someone, an emissary from my wives. The emissary told me that my wives were saying they had heard that I had accepted Christianity: therefore they thought it would be better if two of them left me to go back to their homes of origin. They said the first wife (the one that I had married first) would remain behind to be my only wife.

On my arrival home I invited friends to come to a gathering in my home. Traditional beer was brewed and a big ox was slaughtered. On the day of the formal gathering my guests arrived and they smoked and drank participating fully in the event.

During the ceremony I called all my friends, one by one, and I gave to each a piece of meat, and then I asked each to stand and listen to the following words: "My friends, we have lived together for a long time. Your homes were also home to me, so was my home a home to you. Today we have reached the crossroads. I am choosing a new path in life, where I will travel alone. But I don't want my being a Christian to cause animosity to you. I want us to part as friends. Therefore I have slaughtered for you my best special ox amongst my cattle, from within my cattle enclosure. Take it and eat it. And remember that Madikane is now a Christian but he is still your friend."

Things became difficult now for me, after separating from my friends, because I had to take off my head ring (isicoco). But I had to do it because I was leaving the old life and taking a new life. I took a chisel and went to a hidden place and I cut off my head ring, and when I looked at my head ring my eyes filled with tears and tears were falling from my eyes. I felt alone and estranged from my people.

I took my head ring and folded it nicely and sent it to my Chief, Mqhawe, together with one of my beautiful cows. Mqhawe accepted this although it was difficult.

USwano (this name is not clear) was the wife that remained with Madikane: together they had five children, Qadeyana, who was born in 1878, Agrippa, who was born in 1880, Sopane, who was born in 1884, Nehemiah, who was born in 1886 and Whit, who was born in 1891.

## **MADIKANE BECOMES A MINISTER**

Madikane became a minister at the Inanda Mission for some years. Then he was invited to the place of the Chief of the Khumalos, uBhulushe, who invited him to come and establish a church community at Matata. Chief Bhulushe was wealthy