



F.R. BRADLOW. *Printing for Africa : the story of Robert Moffat and the Kuruman Press*. Kuruman Moffat Mission Trust : Kuruman, 1987. 36 pp. Illus. R14,95 (inclusive). ISBN 0 620 11489 4. (Obtainable from Kuruman Moffat Mission Trust, P.O. Box 34, Kuruman, 8460.)

Under the directorship of the energetic Rev. Alan Butler the Kuruman Moffat Mission Trust's decision to restore the entire old mission premises at Seodin was enthusiastically executed. At the request of Butler, the well-known Africana specialist Frank Bradlow wrote this paperback booklet to provide an overview of the history of translation and printing at Kuruman. It was there that the Gospel was first translated into an African language (Setswana, which was at the time not yet reduced to writing) by the likes of the great missionary pioneer Robert Moffat, bringing literacy and christianity to Africa.

The historic mission press, which arrived at Kuruman in 1831, has during the last 25 years become the object of bitter controversy between the Kimberley City Council (in whose public library the press has been accommodated since 1918) and the Kuruman Moffat Mission and town council. Since 1965 representatives of the old London Missionary Society, its successor the United Congregational Church and eventually the Kuruman Moffat Mission Trust endeavoured — without success — to have the press returned to Kuruman. This booklet could therefore also be regarded by some as Kuruman's side of the case.

*Printing for Africa* deals first with the background of translation and printing at Kuruman, and the hardships endured by Moffat and his fellow missionaries. Bradlow's frequent use of direct quotations is somewhat disturbing, while his self-confessed admiration for Robert Moffat also leads him to diminish the contributions of other Kuruman missionaries, in particular William Ashton.

The second part of the book deals with the Kuruman press itself — its history, productions and controversy. Written fluently, the work has been thoroughly researched and is neat in appearance. For the first time a comprehensive and complete list of publications which were printed on the old press during Moffat's term of service (1820-1870) has been published in the form of an annexure. Compiled by Cecil Northcott, this list includes scriptures, catechisms, spelling books, hymn books, tracts and periodicals.

The booklet is not only of general and literary interest, but also of value to those who are interested in the history of the printing industry.

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